Title

Name

Institution

**Gun Control Act of 1968**

**Executive Summary**

Before the Gun Act of 1968 there were many previous laws that were introduced to limit the use of weapons but it is also a fact that before the mid-60s possession of weapons was not a big issue because at that time the weapons used to be quite expensive, so it was not possible for a common man to own one and secondly the use of weapon was not a political interest at that time. But when the 1960's started weapons started to be quite common throughout the US due to the import of weapons from China in cheap costs. Due to their availability, the mid-1960s saw the mass killing of political leaders. As a result, the state felt to strict the laws of weapon possession. The Congress Leader President Johnson was concerned about that, and he wanted to pass a bill as soon as possible but in June followed by the murder of JFK he finally motivated the Senate to pass a bill before enough damage. As a result, June 1969 marked the pass of this bill with the majority. It is noteworthy that not everyone was happy once the bill was passed there were opponents too, and they united and tried to dissolve this law; as a result, concessions were given to them, and laws regarding sale and license of the weapons were made flexible. But then the Court intervened, and it ruled that banning the ownership of weapons is completely constitutional so all should obey the law since then the law is effective and possession of the weapon by mentally ill, children and also without a license is strictly banned. In the recent era, we saw many incidents where innocent's lives were lost due to the possession of these weapons by adolescents and by mentally sick people which shows that this law is not fully effective and it should be revised and followed by all the people

**Introduction**

The firearms of any country play an important and vital role in the security and also the development of that country. After almost three full decades of inactivity in the area of gun control politics the destructions that took place in the 1960s revealed demands from the masses for revised and effective gun control legislation. On November 22, 1963, when President John F Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, the country was stimulated to pay deep attention to the regulation of the firearms which was hunting the security of the entire country, its leaders and its citizens. Then came the riots of 1964 and 1968 that begin by the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr and Senator Robert F. Kennedy fired a blaze of anger and barbarity that claimed congressional action right away. Following all these actions the government was forced to come forward and present a law that would make the citizens and the entire country free of illegal weapons because at that time the security of the entire country was on the stack and the citizens were insecure and scared of their security. In order to ensure them that the government is making an effort to secure them it came forward with the Gun regulation act of 1968 which was then signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1968. The legislation of 1968 did not comprised the owner licensing and also the registration of gun provisions that was desired by President Johnson, the act was passed by the Congress along with the crime control and safe streets, comprised the most vital restrictions on the firearms since Congress passed the National Firearms Act in the year 1934 (Zimring, 1975).

President Johnson in the year 1965, aggressively permitted the cause of resisting crimes and also by controlling the firearms by introducing a new and stricter gun control legislation that was proposed in the Senate by Dodd. But because of some severe pressure from the NRA, the proposal of Johnson administration suffered a series of defeats over the next few years. The National Riffle Authority opposed this rule strictly, and some of the parties who supported were key congressional leaders, the American Legion and also some of the gun makers and deals along with the importers. The difficulties of the administration further increased by the lack of a planned and fully organized pro-gun control lobby to check the persistent attack against the regulation by the NRA. Considering that in 1968 President Johnson and his allies strengthened their struggle and to do that Johnson started to use the oppressor pulpit of the presidency to blame Congress openly to pass his policies of gun control. While addressing the state of the union in 1968, Johnson urged Congress to enact the law that will eventually stop the mail-order murder. After few months President Johnson cleared to Congress his wish to control the use of guns by registering every gun that is present in the United States of America and also the license of all the owners of guns in the country. In response to that both the Senate and House of Representatives supported the President’s admonishment. This measured that was originally titled as the Safe Streets and Crime Control received quite strong opposition from the people and parties who were against such legislation (Babat, n.d.).

It is noteworthy here that by 1968 the entire leadership of the National Riffle Authority provided full resistance to any form of gun regulation. In order to undermine the legislature, the group commenced a mass-mailing lobbying effort, and over time, their efforts were successful in wiping out support for gun licensing and also restrictions of registrations. Congress by that time passed the Safe Streets and Crime Control Act. This act then stopped the delivery of guns including both the revolvers and pistols to individuals but along with that the shipments of shotguns and rifles were fully permissible, and they were exempted from any law. But then the Americans had to face the murder of John F Kennedy which was quite a setback for the nation and after that entire support for the regulation of tough gun control reached to an entirely new level and the government in this regard also received an immense response and support (Hagan & Hagan, 1997). Finally, on June 6 a day after Kennedy's assassination Johnson signed the Safe Streets and Crime Control Act but mourned on the fragile provisions of the laws. After becoming President Johnson used to appear on national television to persuade Congress to pass a new and tougher law to control gun use and supplies throughout the country. Finally, after making so many efforts and facing opposition President Johnson was able to sign the law on June 22, 1968, it was first considered as lost due to the resistance it had to face earlier. This legislation and its acceptance was a political victory for the President, Senators and all the supporters of Gun Control who struggled for so many years to pass the bill that would bring the real change and make the people safe.

This law had three main features. The first one was the prohibition of regional transportation in firearms and bullets. Secondly, a feature that is also the most important feature of this law is that it doesn't allow the possession of a gun by minors, drug addicts and also by those individuals who are not mentally stable. Thirdly the importation of all the guns and weapons were prohibited that were not federally certified. Although the bill was passed, it was not a complete victory both for the supporters and also for the opponents. The supporters of gun control failed to obtain the owner licensing and also the firearms registrations, the opponents of gun control suffered another hindrance when their efforts regarding governmental regulation of gun control were rejected (Murray, 1975). When this happened then, the NRA united themselves against the government because all of a sudden they felt isolated and politically vulnerable. In contrary, the supporters of gun control were not prepared for the long-term politics; therefore, their political impact started to fade off, and as a result in 1986 the National Riffle Authority successfully debilitated the requirements of the 1968 laws by directing the passage of the Firearms Owner Protection Law. But the events that followed after this law, the state and all its people felt the need to strict the laws regarding gun supply and exchange due to which the government enacted this law. This law received its first challenge in Court in Lewis and United States in 1980; the court talked that whether prohibiting the firearms with weapons is constitutional or not. The court ruled that the right to have weapons is not a basic right and considered that the ban on weapons by this law is constitutional.

**Policy in Act**

Though the of 1967 was a revolutionary act in case of weapons regulation and distribution the majority of the people were quite concerned that the law did not address the reaffirm registry and federal licensing requirements for the gun owners. They argue that to make the law stricter and strong, the government might be waiting for another series of the unfortunate event because in US alone the incidents that take place due to the loose regulation of gun control are quite high and severe. Although before 1968 the movement to control the possession of weapons by the citizens were resonating in the environment but it became quite severe when JFK was murdered, people were concerned that everybody should not be allowed to purchase guns from interstate mail. Congress was a supporter to ban this weapon possession, but its efforts were not going anywhere, but in 1968 the country was facing urban revolting but from late 60’s crime in the area began to increase due to which the concern was higher about the guns and their availability and accessibility throughout the country. King Martin Luther was assassinated in April of that year, and in June Robert Kennedy was murdered which proved to be a final push in the approval of that law. The most important policy that was introduced in this law for the very first time was the prohibition of guns by the people who were mentally unstable because some of the cases that were in highlight in the country at that time were the causalities that were caused by these people due to the possession of guns. The law also supported the requirements of the gun dealers to maintain a full record of their business and also to possess a license. This move was also very significant because up until this time the gun dealers were not required to have an organized inspection although little efforts were made in the laws of 1938 to establish a fee which was supposed to be paid to the government to be a licensed dealer. The import of foreign-made firearms was also banned except for those that were used for sporting purposes. The law underwent some changes and amendments in 1986, which was the Firearms Owners Protection Act, which required to abolish even more of the law although this basic modification did not succeed it did modify and change some of the aspects of the 1968 laws (Lester & Murrell, 1986). But what it did was allowing the local sale of guns and rifles keeping in mind that the weapons and the procedure is completely legal in the states of the purchasers and sellers and also some of the requirements of licensing and record keeping was lifted by this particular law (“How the Gun Control Act of 1968 Changed America’s Approach to Firearms And What People Get Wrong About That History,” n.d.). Once this amendment was made, then it became easy for the sellers to possess and sell guns without having a license. The 1986 law was an end of the efforts that were made to demolish the 1968 Gun Control Act. The need to have a strict rule on the possessions of the gun is much required in today's time then it was required before because the right to possess weapons is politicized now then it was before. The mass shooting of political leaders at that time forced the state to pass a bill to strict the rules and minimize the possession of guns by the public (Pappas, January 14, & ET, n.d.).

**Policy Support or Policy Dissent**

When the Gun Control Act of 1968 was passed, then there were mixed feelings about the law. Some people were supporting this law due to increased risks of national security, but there were also those people who were opposing this law due to multiple reasons. At first, possessing weapon was not a big issue because it was not readily available in the market and even if they were available they used to be expensive until the Chinese started to export weapons which were cheap from that point the possession of guns started to take off. Once that happened then the incidents started to speed up from the killing of political leaders and also the mass shootings that happened, forced the authorities to take some practical steps. The one main strong point to the law was the security of the nation and its citizens before this law everyone had the right to own a weapon which became a serious concern for the state to control it, so Congress with all its allies passed this law. But not everyone was in favor of passing such law. The businessmen and also the NRA opposed this law strictly because then their business might get in danger so it will be safe to say that both supporters and opponents were there when this law was presented and passed in the court (Kessler, 1983).

**Future Consideration and Conclusion**

For almost a century the firearms policy in the United States of America entered into the agendas. The legislation related to gun control in 1968 was a predicted change from a non-restrictive approach to policy on weapons, but the following year was the year of growing opponents in this law. The opponents were those firms and people who used to get benefit from the business of weapons so they became united and it was quite hard for the government to do something in this regard. At first, the government faced an issue, but with the right policies, it was successful in passing the bill in the Senate. After this bill having a license and prohibition of weapons by children and mentally unstable people was not allowed. Even after the bill, there are still many incidents that are taking place across the United States of America; as a result, students and other citizens are giving up on their lives. The last few years have seen rise in such incidents, and reports showed that most of the firing that is taking place in the US is because of the possession of weapons by psychopaths which shows that this law is not fully implemented and people have still weapons with them legally or illegally. To complete enactment of this law, it is the responsibility of the state to make the law more effective by joining hands with the opponents and coming forward with something that is also acceptable for them so that everyone works together to make the country and its citizens secure.

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