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Assault vs. Non-Assault Weapons

**Introduction**

In this paper, there will be a discussion on the significant differences between Assault weapons and Non-Assault weapons. The differences will be highlighted in reference to the laws regarding gun restrictions described in the second amendment to the constitution of the United States of America. Moreover, this paper will also look into the regulations regarding firearm restrictions in the state of New Jersey. Lastly, the shooting incident of Stoneman Douglas High School will be compared will two similar events on the basis of infrastructure damage and the costly loss of human lives.

**Discussion**

Second Amendment to the U.S Constitution and Gun Restriction Laws

The second amendment to the constitution of the United States of America was made in 1791 when there was an inclusion in the ‘Bill of Rights’ which said that the U.S citizens should have full access to armed weapons for personal security (Rossum, p. 56). According to the constitution, it is the fundamental right of people to protect their lives with firearms if they seem it necessary for themselves. However, in 2008, the amendment was revised following the unfair advantage U.S citizens took of this amendment and made the country fall into a situation of chaos. Therefore, the amended bill now states that:

1. The weapons cannot be used on the property owned by the government
2. Children cannot possess weapons such as handguns; such possession will be deemed as illegal.
3. There will now be a requirement of a permit to carry a weapon which is concealed.

Forefathers of the Nation and the Second Amendment

The U.S founding forefathers were more devoted to prevail the rule of democracy across the nation where people are given complete freedom to live as first-class citizens. Therefore, along with granting people various other rights, they introduced the second amendment to the US constitution regarding the rights of American citizens to hold and use armed weapons. At the back end of this amendment, there was an ideology of our forefathers which was to make citizens responsible for protecting themselves from dangerous situations all on their own. They thought that people should not rely on one standing army which will protect them in a crisis. Therefore, considered it necessary that every citizen should have a gun with them all the time and use the weapon when required to protect their right to live in a free country.

This ideology became debatable after numerous shooting incidents where the U.S citizens used conventional as well as assault weapons for mass killings. The rights which our forefathers seemed significant for us to have are now used unfairly; which may lead to a situation of anarchy because gun laws are still kept light among various U.S states despite frequent shooting incidents such as the one of Stoneman Douglas High School.

Difference between Assault and Non-Assault Weapons

There is no such thing as "non-assault weapons." A weapon is synonymous to assault, and almost every type of firearm can be used to exert a charge over the opposition directly through open fire or indirectly by just hitting the weapon body. However, there are certain weapons which are more deadly than others. For example, the AR 15 ‘Military Assault Rifle’ used in the shooting incident of Stoneman Douglas High School did extensive damage due to which numerous precious lives were lost. This is because these assault rifles are semi-automatic and cause massive killings in a short period. If the attackers could have used non-automatic weapons such as handguns or snipers, they could not have caused damage on a large scale. Nevertheless, any weapon is a threat to human life and security of the general public.

Firearm Restrictions at State Level

There are different firearm restrictions for various U.S states. For this paper, there will be a discussion on gun restriction laws in the state of New Jersey. The limits on weapons in New Jersey are the strictest in the U.S. Numerous petitioners even challenge some restrictions in state courts and also in federal courts (Kalesan, p. 4). The deadly military assault rifle used in the incident of Stoneman Douglas is almost banned in the state of New Jersey; with severe punishments on carrying these assault rifles without a valid license. However, while referring to the small weapons such as handguns, there is no requirement of a license for them. Nevertheless, from an overall perspective, New Jersey keeps stern check & balance regarding the movement of weapons in and out of the state.

Other Shooting Incidents across the U.S

In 2012, the State of Colorado witnessed a deadly shooting incident at Aurora in which the attackers used a shotgun, pistol, and a semi-automatic rifle. During the attack, 12 precious lives were lost, and more than 70 people were injured (Fox et al., p. 4). In another incident, the Washington Navy Yard was attacked in 2013 where the shooters used a shotgun and a semi-automatic pistol. Thirteen people were killed including the perpetrator while 7 to 8 people suffered non-fatal injuries during the assault. This was one of the deadliest attacks on U.S military (Fox et al., p. 5).

Comparing these two incidents with the shooting of Stoneman Douglas, there were 17 people killed in the school shooting, and a similar number of individuals were injured. This is more significant as compared to the damage done in the above-described incidents because, in Stoneman Douglas, only one type of weapon was used to cause massive killings and injuries. In contrast, multiple weapons were used including shotguns to kill a similar number of citizens equal to which were killed in the school shooting.

**Conclusion**

The second amendment to the U.S constitution needs to be further revised, and there needs to be a clear distinction in the mind of the American public that which weapons can be used for personal safety and which can cause damage to others. Our forefathers although envisioned rightly to make citizens more empowered while granting them access to weapons, but this right should not be misused to inflict terror on fellow Americans. Therefore, gun laws and restrictions should be revised to avoid further incidents in the future that can sabotage the peace of America.

Works Cited

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