

AMERICAN VOICES: THE SECOND AMENDMENT

LIZ

I guess when you live in this country and you have this history and know how passionate people are for it, I don't think we can take the Second Amendment and throw it all away. I don't think that is realistic. I don't believe that is going to happen. Changes tend to happen in bits and pieces. We have a right to freedom, liberty and pursuit of happiness. It is always a matter of keeping a balance.

I don't keep a handgun for self-defence. That would be the last thing I would want for self-defence. I would rather use a fire extinguisher. When I lived in Minneapolis, which is a big city, I would sometimes be worried because there are some bad guys out there. Sometimes I would be alone and be afraid that someone would break in. Then I would have a fire extinguisher by my bed. That was my choice of weapon for self-defence.

PEGGY

Is there a country in the world that does not deal with murder? I don't think so. I don't believe that the present law here is the right answer. At the same time I ask myself, would people stop killing each other if we took away the Second Amendment?

AMANDA

I am a mother of three young children. They are between the ages of 1 and 5. We have guns stored in our house. Do I ever worry about this? Yes and no. First of all, they are locked up and the key is in a totally different place than the guns. And they are unloaded. But if we have a break in our guns are close enough for us to be able to reach them.

You may argue that I can call the police, but they are not going to get there in time. If you have somebody coming to your house you have a problem that needs to be dealt with immediately.

JOHN

I think the Second Amendment is good. I think it means exactly what it says. I think it should be kept exactly the way it is and interpreted the way it is. It says that you have the right to own and bear a firearm. It is held for a well-regulated militia and the right of the PEOPLE to own and bear a firearm. They say a well-regulated militia. If you want to go back and look at it, the militia was the people. The Minute Men, the militia. When the Founding Fathers put the words "the right of the people" in the Second Amendment they were referring to all of us. It was not just for military. That is MY interpretation. So I believe that as an American I have the right to own a firearm.

I have been a National Rifle Association (NRA) member for many, many years. I got the license to carry a gun when I was 12 years old. I got my certificate saying I was a legal hunter and that I was allowed to carry a gun in the woods. I have two sons. They also got their licenses when they turned 12. I believe firmly that without having completed the gun safety program, a person should not have the right to carry a gun. I chose to be a member of the NRA because they lobby in Washington for me to keep my rights to have a gun.

To say that the gun was the reason for the crime is like saying that the pencil was the reason that the word got spelt wrong. It just doesn't make sense.

TJ

The Second Amendment is an important right that I have. I am a hunter and I have been in the military for a number of years. I have young children and, therefore, I take precaution so that they are always safe with the firearms we keep in our home. The children are taught at a very young age never ever to touch those.

The ammunition is locked separately, right below the guns. So all I have to do is get my key. I unlock the safe, I grab my shotgun, I grab my shells and I have a chance, right? If I don't have access to a firearm, I don't have a chance.

I don't think I live in fear. I think it is prudent to want to have a chance to defend your family. So I think it is the same way to look at having fire detection equipment in your house. You want to have a forewarning. You want to have a chance to get out in the event of a fire. You have a smoke detector, right. I have a security system and if that goes off the first thing I do is I'm going to get my gun. And that guy is going to get through me before he can harm the rest of my family.

POINTS OF DISCUSSION



Why do Amanda and TJ feel that they need to meet a burglar with a gun?

How would you (or your parents) react if you found a burglar in your house?

MICHAEL

I am a hunter. I hunt for our meat, for our food. I am happy that we have the right to have privately owned weapons. I have very strong opinions about what kind of weapons they should be. I don't see any need to have a weapon that is used for anything other than for the hunting of game or animals.

I don't think handguns should be permitted. Anything more than a shotgun that shoots with pellets should not be allowed. I can use that to hunt an animal as large as a deer, to ducks and birds. When we talk about the Second Amendment, I would feel strongly if there was ever a movement to take THAT type of gun away.

I would like to see the regulations on having handguns be a little more stringent. I think it is probably too easy to get handguns, but part of the issue to me is that this has been going on since the conception of this country.

I find there is no need for any regular citizen to have a semi-automatic weapon. You don't NEED that to hunt elk, the biggest animals we have. These guns that shoot multiple shells at a time make no sense at all to me.

IN 2004, GUNS MURDERED

5 PEOPLE IN NEW ZEALAND

37 IN SWEDEN

56 IN AUSTRALIA

73 IN ENGLAND AND WALES

184 IN CANADA

AND 11, 344 IN THE UNITED STATES

GOD BLESS AMERICA.



Brady Campaign

TASKS

1 VOCABULARY BUILDING

Worksheet

2 LISTENING EXERCISE

Worksheet

3 IN GROUPS OF FOUR: PRO OR CON

Worksheet

4 LISTEN TO THE EXPERTS



JIM

I am not opposed to people having weapons in their homes at all. I think that it is an individual choice. However, I don't think that people should be allowed to stockpile unlimited amounts of weapons, and I don't think that criminals should be allowed to have weapons in their homes. So I think that with the Second Amendment there should be limitations or constraints. Would the Second Amendment ever be

overruled by a new amendment? I don't think that would ever happen in America because even people who don't have weapons in their home aren't easy about no one having access to weapons.

In our house we don't have any weapons stored. We haven't found it necessary. I think we feel comfortable with the police.

