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INT seminar 2

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Moving Forward: School Shootings

On April 20, 1999 in Columbine, Colorado thirteen innocent people lost their lives to the hands of school shooters. With twelve students killed and twenty one injured the two perpetrators, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, sparked a nationwide debate over gun control. ¹

On April 16, 2007 in Blacksburg, Virginia thirtytwo people were shot and killed and seventeen others were injured during two separate attacks carried out by senior Seung-Hui Cho. Just two years earlier Cho was sentenced by a judge to seek outpatient care after he made suicidal remarks to his roommates. ²This shooting brought up the debate regarding gun violence, problems in the U.S. system in terms of treating mental health issues as well as other topics.

On December 14, 2012 in Newtown, Connecticut twenty year old Adam Lanza took the lives of twenty children and six adults at Sandy Hook Elementary. ³The gun control debate was then

¹ "Columbine High School Shootings Fast Facts." CNN. March 25, 2018. Accessed April 26, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2013/09/18/us/columbine-high-school-shootings-fast-facts/index.html>.

² "Virginia Tech Shootings Fast Facts." CNN. May 02, 2018. Accessed May 14, 2018. <https://www.cnn.com/2013/10/31/us/virginia-tech-shootings-fast-facts/index.html>.

³ "Sandy Hook Shooting." History.com. Accessed May 14, 2018. <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/gunman-kills-students-and-adults-at-newtown-connecticut-elementary-school>.

renewed with the addition of proposing that background check be universal and that certain semi-automatic firearms should be banned.

On February 14, 2018 in Parkland, Florida one of the deadliest school massacres occurred. Seventeen people lost their lives with an additional seventeen being injured. Nineteen year old Nikolas Cruz confessed and was charged. ⁴With multiple tips regarding Nikolas Cruz's threats of a school shooting many students and staff alike were concerned about their safety. In response to the shooting, Stoneman Douglas students then began to campaign for gun control, while lawmakers created waiting periods for background checks, made laws that allowed properly trained teachers to be armed and raised the minimum age for buying rifles in Florida to 21. ⁵

Despite the continuous renewal of speaking about gun reform and other solutions to end school shootings since the Columbine Massacre, America has only made school shootings normalized. In spite of the normality, many people are ready to fight back to protect their lives. The momentum and unity shown around the world after the most recent school shootings in the United States will be able to implement new changes and push us to move forward and end the gun epidemic in educational institutions.

⁴ Segarra, Lisa Marie, Katie Reilly, Eli Meixler, and Jennifer Calfas. "Florida School Shooting: Suspect, Death Toll – What to Know." Time. February 14, 2018. Accessed May 14, 2018. <http://time.com/5158678/what-to-know-about-the-active-shooter-situation-at-florida-high-school/>

⁵ Lee, Kurtis. "The NRA Says Florida's Law Raising the Age Limit on Buying Guns Is Unconstitutional. But Is It?" Los Angeles Times. March 13, 2018. Accessed April 27, 2018. <http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-florida-gun-law-20180312-htmstory.html>.

Certain current plans suggested and implemented are not working. In order to move forward from school shootings there needs to be direction, focus and momentum. Without keeping up momentum the movement can be considered a loss cause and therefore we will repeatedly see gun violence in schools.

After so many shootings continuously occur in schools, we must question the security/safety of our nation's schools. Many school administrators believe they can attempt to prevent school shootings from occurring in various ways. Each prevention attempt needs to be analyzed to see how it affects students, staff and if it is generally effective.

One of the many ways a number of the nation's schools have begun taking action to prevent school shootings is to provide access to mental health services for students. Many school shooters have had mental evaluations done after they've been caught, with many of them proving they're not in a correct mental state. If schools provide better mental health services to students we might be able to catch the warning signs of a school shooter before anything detrimental happens.

A different approach has been implemented by a bill backed by the NRA would provide training to detect early signs of violence. This training would be given to teachers, students, and law enforcement. Through this bill anonymous hotlines would also be funded in order for people to

report suspicious activity. The legislation believes that this bill will be able to prevent would be offenders from committing terrible acts.⁶

An even more controversial way that was implemented after the Parkland Florida shooting is to arm teachers and other school staff on a volunteer basis. Although this method has already been used in schools throughout multiple states within the past three years, the idea of arming teachers does not sit well with many people. "If we want to talk about preventing school shootings, we should be talking about stopping kids getting their hands on guns in the first place," said Mr Skaggs, chief counsel at the Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence. "Those are the laws we should be looking at."⁷

Changing laws regarding the trade of guns is crucial to implementing change. The major problem with changing gun laws is that many Americans believe it is infringing on their second amendment right to bear arms. Despite this some gun laws have changed in certain states in reaction to recent school shootings.

Changing age limit for buying guns has been a controversial topic in many states. As Florida works to change the age limit for purchasing a gun from eighteen to twenty one some

⁶ Gaudiano, Nicole. "House Passes School Safety Bill as Students Protest Inaction on Gun Violence." USA Today. March 14, 2018. Accessed April 27, 2018. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2018/03/14/congress-turns-school-safety-students-protest-inaction-gun-violence/422217002/>.

⁷ Gunter, Joel. "After Another Deadly School Shooting, Is It Time for US Teachers to Carry Guns?" BBC News. February 15, 2018. Accessed April 27, 2018. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-42804741>.

organizations such as the NRA claim that raising the age limit for those who are purchasing guns is unconstitutional. “At 18 years of age, law-abiding citizens in this country are considered adults for almost all purposes and certainly for the purposes of the exercise of fundamental constitutional rights. At 18, citizens are eligible to serve in the military — to fight and die by arms for the country,” said the NRA in the lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida. The change would also require a three-day waiting period for most gun purchases. The successfulness of this new bill has yet to be proved, but the bill has been used in the case of Parkland Florida shooter Nikolas Cruz’s brother Zachary by preventing the eighteen year old from purchasing firearms.⁸

Movements and protests have emerged as one of the major ways to rally people who stand together in opposition to the loose gun laws and regulations. In rallying together in solidarity, citizens are able to express their dissent while also proving that there are many who agree that change needs to come. One of the organizations formed is “Never again MSD”. This group was formed by twenty Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School students just four days after the fatal school shooting that occurred at their school in Parkland, Florida. The group petitions for more thorough background checks for gun buyers as well as advocating for change in our communities so that one day the normalcy of gun violence will not exist.

⁸ Lee, Kurtis. "The NRA Says Florida's Law Raising the Age Limit on Buying Guns Is Unconstitutional. But Is It?" Los Angeles Times. March 13, 2018. Accessed April 27, 2018. <http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-florida-gun-law-20180312-htlstory.html>.

Although “Never Again MSD” has worked to organize town hall meetings all throughout the nation in order for citizens voices to be heard in regards to Congress members being held responsible for their positions on gun control, one of the most pivotal protests they have created was March for Our Lives.⁹ On March 24, 2018 thousands across the nation came together to advocate for change. More than eight hundred protests were planned in every state, led by activists, and survivors. With the election impending in 2022, voter registration was also present at the marches encouraging those who had not registered to vote, to do so in order for their voice to be heard and to make a change in the next election. The group’s mission statement remains “demand that a comprehensive and effective bill be immediately brought before Congress to address these gun issues.”¹⁰

In a different approach to demonstrations, on Tuesday March 13, 2018 activists laid 7,000 pairs of childrens shoes on the Capitol lawn in order to memorialize the children who have lost their lives to gun violence since the Sandy Hook shooting.¹¹ This was deemed effective as it was able to force congress to face the issue of gun violence face on. As a community we need to continuously hold events and unit together frequently and effectively as has been done in the past few months in order to show that this subject has not been forgotten.

⁹ "Our Mission to End School Shootings | March For Our Lives - March 24, 2018." March For Our Lives. Accessed April 26, 2018. <https://marchforourlives.com/mission-statement/>.

¹⁰ "- Neveragain.org." Neveragain.org. Accessed April 26, 2018. <http://neveragain.org/>.

¹¹ Quackenbush, Casey. "7,000 Shoes Outside Capitol Represent Kids Killed by Guns." Time. March 14, 2018. Accessed March 21, 2018. <http://time.com/5198721/capitol-gun-death-protest-shoes/>.

In moving forward from gun violence as society we need to implement changes that will end gun violence. Whether that be from changing laws, making social or mental changes, or a combination, it should be agreed that the amount of lives lost to guns in the U.S is one too many. The U.S should continue to push forward with the utmost momentum in order to solve this issue.

Annotated Bibliography

Quackenbush, Casey. "7,000 Shoes Outside Capitol Represent Kids Killed by Guns." Time. March 14, 2018. Accessed March 21, 2018.

<http://time.com/5198721/capitol-gun-death-protest-shoes/>.

A Times article explaining how demonstrators took a different approach to showing how they feel about gun violence. This article helped with explaining different movements that have come about since recent school shootings.

"- Neveragain.org." Neveragain.org. Accessed April 26, 2018. <http://neveragain.org/>.

A website made by the creators of the Never Again movement that explains their mission statement. This helped me explain in my papers what the movement does and how it was created.

"Our Mission to End School Shootings | March For Our Lives - March 24, 2018." March For Our Lives. Accessed April 26, 2018. <https://marchforourlives.com/mission-statement/>.

A website by the March for our lives movement explaining what they plan to do, how they plan to do it and how others can help. This helped again in the portion of my research paper where I spoke about emerging groups and movements.

"Columbine High School Shootings Fast Facts." CNN. March 25, 2018. Accessed April 26, 2018.

<https://www.cnn.com/2013/09/18/us/columbine-high-school-shootings-fast-facts/index.html>.

An article by CNN that explains in detail what happened at the Columbine shooting. This article contained quick and useful information that helped me explain in short how the columbine shooting happened.

Gaudiano, Nicole. "House Passes School Safety Bill as Students Protest Inaction on Gun Violence." USA Today. March 14, 2018. Accessed April 27, 2018.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2018/03/14/congress-turns-school-safety-students-protest-inaction-gun-violence/422217002/>.

This article speaks about a new way in which schools are attempting to prevent gun violence by doing training for students and teachers to detect warning signs. This was an interesting article that proved useful as a different way that was included in preventing gun violence.

Gunter, Joel. "After Another Deadly School Shooting, Is It Time for US Teachers to Carry Guns?" BBC News. February 15, 2018. Accessed April 27, 2018.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-42804741>.

A controversial article tackling the debate of whether it is a good idea for teachers to carry guns in school in order to prevent school shootings from happening. This article was interesting as it showed both sides of the argument rather than a biased view.

Lee, Kurtis. "The NRA Says Florida's Law Raising the Age Limit on Buying Guns Is Unconstitutional. But Is It?" Los Angeles Times. March 13, 2018. Accessed April 27, 2018.

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-florida-gun-law-20180312-htlstory.html>.

A article explaining the NRA's stance on changing the age limit on buying guns and Florida, what other states think, and if the law will go through or not. I used this piece in the portion of my paper where I spoke about how gun laws have attempted to be changed.

"Virginia Tech Shootings Fast Facts." CNN. May 02, 2018. Accessed May 14, 2018.

<https://www.cnn.com/2013/10/31/us/virginia-tech-shootings-fast-facts/index.html>.

A fast facts article by CNN explaining the events of the Virginia Tech shooting and how it sparked a gun violence debate. This was useful in the beginning of my paper when I explained how this shooting happened after the Columbine shooting.

"Sandy Hook Shooting." History.com. Accessed May 14, 2018.

<https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/gunman-kills-students-and-adults-at-newtown-connecticut-elementary-school>.

A article detailing the tragic Sandy Hook Elementary shooting and how it changed America. This article gave me insight to the mass shooting and how it has affected gun control debates.

Segarra, Lisa Marie, Katie Reilly, Eli Meixler, and Jennifer Calfas. "Florida School Shooting: Suspect, Death Toll – What to Know." Time. February 14, 2018. Accessed May 14, 2018.

<http://time.com/5158678/what-to-know-about-the-active-shooter-situation-at-florida-high-school>

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A article explaining the parkland Florida shootings events from before it began to the events occuring after. This article was extremely helpful for understanding all of the details of this tragic event in order to reiterate in my paper what happened.