

Ten-thousand, five-hundred, twenty-seven people die a year in a handgun related incidents in the United States. This number, by far, out weighs those gun related deaths in countries such as Sweden, Great Britain, and Japan, which number 13, 22, and 87 respectively.

What is the reason for such drastic differences in numbers? The latter mentioned countries have stricter gun control laws and they require bare arm safety courses. These laws have a direct relationship to the number of gun deaths which occur each year from country to country. Perhaps if the U.S. would adopt some of those laws the number of deaths would drop accordingly.

Winthrop addressed such a dilemma almost 350 years ago in his "Speech to the General Court" in 1645. Winthrop's two main problems were where do the rights of people stop and the magistrates' authority begin. According to Winthrop, people are naturally evil, and if left to their own devices, they will become even worse. Therefore, authority is a necessity. This same principle holds true for gun control. People here in the U.S. have the "right to bare arms," but with that right comes responsibility. As an American with that right you're not free to shoot anyone or anything at will. Government should create laws to protect the rights of others.

I believe stricter gun control laws and better education on the use of guns is necessary. People of the U.S. aren't as rigidly regulated by gun laws compared to our European neighbors. In the United States it takes anywhere from a few days to a couple of weeks to get a permit to carry a handgun. However, in most crimes committed with a handgun, the gun isn't even licensed. More authority is necessary to control the illegal handling of handguns. In England, guns which are permitted for hunting are required to be signed out, purpose of use stated, and the type of gun.

I also feel the person requesting a permit should first be educated on the proper use, cleaning, and handling of a firearm. This would help to avoid any accidental shootings from occurring. They should be made aware of all the laws regarding the handling of firearms.

To some this may seem severe. But as I stated earlier, these stricter laws do affect the difference between the U.S. and Europe in the amount of handgun related deaths.

In these controversial issues about gun control, it is my opinion that the United States should have stricter gun obtaining laws. If a criminal was convicted for a gun related crime, he should be unable to purchase a gun. For the average human being, if one wants to purchase a gun, he should have a complete background check, take a course, and pass it to show that you are capable of using such dangerous equipment, like a gun.

Just as Winthrop struggled with the conflict between people's rights and the authorities impending on their rights, we today, have those same struggles. The right to bare arms and the responsibilities that go with those rights is just one of the many of those struggles we as American citizens have to face today. Had there been a better screening process to own a gun, the Lock Haven Massacre in 1969 may have been prevented.

