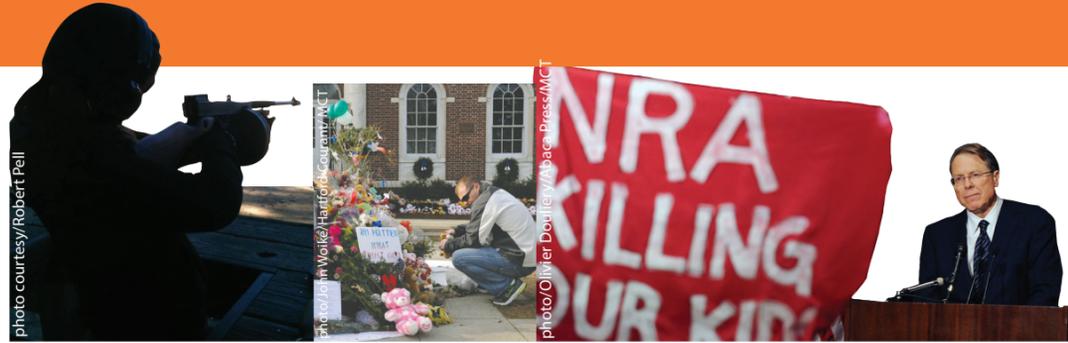


know and TELL

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK
Putting a numerical value on
the issue of gun control

READY, AIM, FIRE. At the shooting range, senior Savannah Winship fires a vintage Thompson rifle. **CRY A RIVER.** A man grieves in Newtown, Conn., after Adam Lanza went on a rampage at Sandy Hook Elementary on Dec. 14, killing 26 people, including 21 children under the age of seven. **SPEAK OUT.** National Rifle Association vice president Wayne LaPierre conducts a news conference on Dec. 21, to address gun control.



*statistics from TIME and dosomething.org



of Americans supported more restrictions on gun control

of Americans opposed stricter gun control



VIOLENCE SPARKS debate

increased firearm attacks prompted public to consider tightening gun control

THE CURVED GRIP felt cool to his touch, and the oiled metal glinted as he lifted the weapon. Within seconds, a misfired bullet torpedoed into his toddler brother's chest.

The case of Louisiana 18-year-old Terrance Varisse and the death of his younger brother, Travin, was not exceptional. Instances of gun violence resulted in over 32,163 deaths in 2011. This figure, compounded by rampage shootings in Aurora, Colo.; Newtown, Conn.; and New York, NY, sparked a debate over whether the U.S.'s firearms restrictions were too imprecise to be effective. Students and other community members remained divided over whether gun control was an unnecessary interference of constitutional rights or a crucial responsibility of lawmakers to ensure the safety of their constituents.

"It's our Second Amendment right, and we should be able to bear arms to protect ourselves and our loved ones. It shouldn't be taken away," senior Savannah Winship said.

Pro-gun activists referenced the Second Amendment, which assured "the right of the people to keep and bear arms" as an unsuspendable and fundamental freedom. Other community members, however, felt the American public needed to behave accountably to deserve this right.

"With freedom comes great responsibility. To live in such a large society, we need organization. [Events like the Newtown shooting] always make you worried that a) there are people willing to do such horrific things and [b] makes you think 'Have we missed identifying any potential issues?' It's very concerning," school resource officer Scott Daniels said.

Indisputably, the Newtown, Conn., shooting, in which Adam Lanza opened fire at Sandy Hook Elementary School on Dec. 14, killing 26, including 21 5 and 6 year olds, caused public outrage and raised the issue of violence in schools.

"It was devastating news. They were a bunch of innocent kids. I just can't fathom what would drive somebody to do something like that," junior Kaelem Mohabir said.

In response, activists proposed employing more armed guards in schools; before the shooting, only a third of U.S. did so.

The Newtown attack and the movie theater shooting in Aurora, Colo., on June 20, also brought attention to the accessibility of guns, especially to young people. Lanza, 20,

obtained his weapons from his mother's locked cabinet, after slaying her prior to the school attack, and 24-year-old Aurora perpetrator James Holmes amassed weapons with little difficulty.

"Guns are too common in the United States. Obviously an inanimate object cannot kill someone of its own accord. Guns do, however, facilitate the rapid and effortless killing of people. Something needs to change," Mohabir said.

Anti-firearm activists proposed more rigorous restrictions on purchases, as only two states, California and Rhode Island, mandated background checks for all gun sales. Pro-gun authorities like the National Rifle Association stated that background checks were a waste of time and would be largely ineffective, citing that less than 10 percent of firearms used in vicious crime, including burglary and homicide, came from federally-licensed dealers who required checks.

Pro-gun protesters further argued that extra precautions, even the prohibition of firearms, would be ineffective in preventing mass shootings. They maintained that weapons would still be readily accessible and that the incidents were the fault of mentally-disturbed gunmen and not the firearms themselves.

"Crazy people or anybody [else] are still going to be able to get a hold of guns. Guns don't have a mind of their own. It's the people who pick them up and fire them," Winship said.

However, to those who saw the devastating effects of gun violence first-hand, the cause of the incidents was unimportant. If they did not culminate in death, gunshot wounds could cause numerous dangerous complications, including paralysis, loss of limb and extensive internal injuries.

Dr. John Promes, director of the Orlando Health trauma center, recognized the detrimental effects of firearm violence on society and hoped that a balance could be reached for the benefit of all, especially younger generations.

"I see how [violence] keeps [people] from being productive members of the community, so it absolutely makes a difference to me. It's very disturbing to me when I see a young person who has been involved in gun violence. [If firearms disappeared,] I wouldn't have to tell any more mothers or fathers or sisters that someone died because of gun violence," Promes said. ///

content by **AMELIA CHEATHAM** and **EMILY NUSBICKEL**

I feel terribly [about gun violence]. I try to empathize with the families of the victims, but there is no way I could possibly grasp the depth of their despair. I just hope that it inspires change.

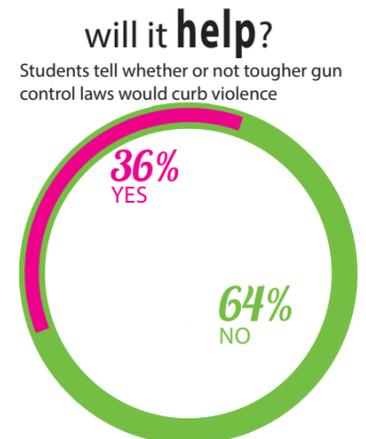
"I believe people have their own motives, and they're behind the gun. The gun doesn't have a mind of its own. It can't pull the trigger by itself."
-Makenzie Figuerado, a senior who supported gun availability for the public

SHOOTINGS IN GUN-FREE AREAS
Every mass shooting since 1950, with the exception of one, occurred in a place where laws prohibited citizens from carrying guns.



SCHOOL ZONE

Passed in 1995, the Federal Gun Free School Zone Act prohibited guns within 1,000 feet of primary and secondary schools.



Approximate number of firearms belonging to civilians in the U.S.

*394 students polled Feb. 4