

Gun Laws Challenging Citizens Safety

BY ELLA OLDS

American citizens continue to remain unphased everytime they see a shooting being covered on the news.

Mass shootings have become a prominent issue all across America. Along with that, school shootings have become a growing problem but that doesn't mean people should be used to this horror. This fact raises the question if we should change gun laws in America.

While there were school shootings prior to the Columbine High School Massacre, this shooting is known to be the one that began the long list of horrific school massacres. The Columbine shooting took place on April 20, 1999, where 13 people were killed and over 20 others were wounded. Following the Columbine shooting is the Sandy Hook shooting that happened at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, Dec. 14, 2012. Twenty-seven people were killed that day and nearly 2,300 people have been killed and almost 8,400 have been wounded since then in school shootings. According to Vox News, "Since 2013, there has been only one full calendar week — the week of Jan. 5, 2014 — without a mass shooting."

When school shootings happen they can be detrimental to the school and the community. After a school shooting happens, students and staff will all be in different stages of shock and will not be able to immediately come back to school, causing disruptions in schedule and lessons. Throughout the community, citizens will be invoked with fear, making it hard to focus while also mourning those who have passed.

This has been such a prevalent problem in the United States that Beto O'Rourke, a former United States Representative and 2020 presidential candidate, has begun using his twitter account to bring light to the issue. He has posted tweets with the number of people who have died from gun violence that day, just to show copious amounts of people that are dying from this issue.

As more mass shootings happen across the nation, it proposes the question of whether or not guns are the real issue. Opinions on the issue differ between whether or not guns are the issue or if the issue is within the person pulling the trigger. People who stand behind the fact that guns are the issue believe that there should be stricter gun laws in America. They believe this because of the already lax gun restrictions and because at certain places, such as gun shows, hardly any background checks are required to purchase a gun. Therefore, they believe that stricter gun laws would lead to a decrease in the

number of mass shootings. Others stay firm in the belief that "people kill people" and that guns are not the problem. Mental illness is seen as a contributor to mass shootings, causing people to believe that mentally unstable people are the real problem. With this mindset, they believe that people with a mental illness cannot distinguish right from wrong and that they will still find ways to get a gun, even if it's illegal. People with this mindset believe that their second amendment right to bear arms should remain untouched, no matter how many people die from gun violence.

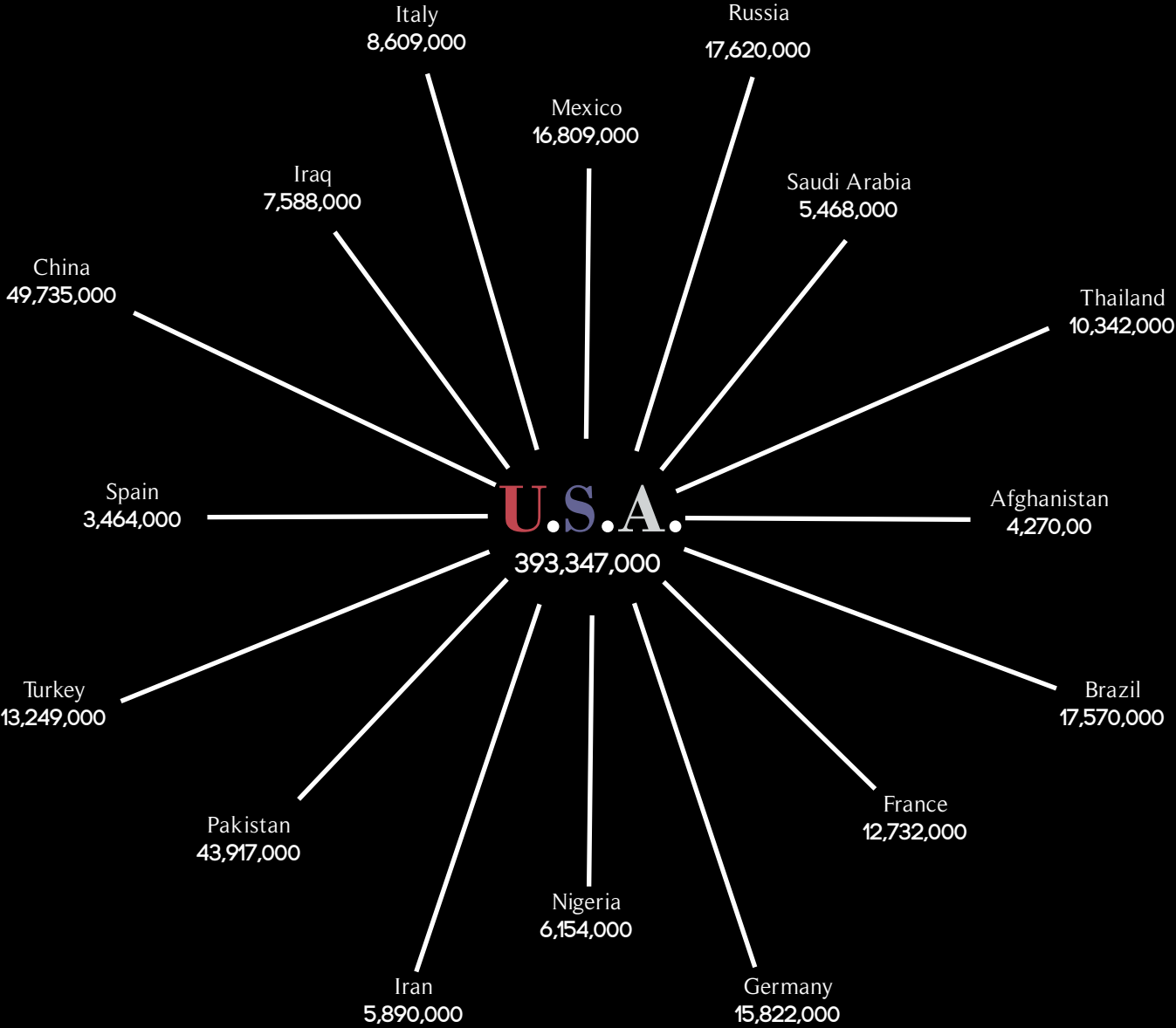
When asking the Bullitt East community through a poll conducted on the Livewire Instagram if they felt safe/protected at school, 67 percent replied yes and 33 percent replied no. For the majority of yes voters it was because of the police officer located in school and the doors staying locked. When looking at the no responses more than half of their reasoning was because of school shooters and how they are more prominent in today's society. Junior, Mallory Roby says she feels as if our CCC doors are one of the biggest loopholes in and out of the school. "I think half the time the doors in the back of the CCC are open or unlocked which is a huge safety issue. I also have seen people open the doors from the inside and let people in which is another issue since there is no where to sign-in in the back of the school," said Roby.

In the same poll, viewers of the Livewire Instagram were asked if they thought there should be stricter gun laws in America, 44 percent replied yes and 56 percent responded no. Senior Eric Couch believes that there shouldn't be stricter gun laws in America. "Criminals don't care about the law so restrictions only affect those who do. People kill people, not guns," said Couch. In agreement to him, other responses on the poll said mental health is the issue here and we shouldn't take away our second amendment.

With the rise in mass shootings, Bullitt East has started to take precautions. One of these precautions being a change in our fire drill procedure. Several school shootings started because the shooter pulled the fire alarm, causing students and teachers to think there was an accidental emergency which causes the students fill the hallways at an attempt to evacuate, but instead of there being a fire in the building there's someone with a gun. Now during drills students have to stay in our classes with the alarm ringing until our teachers get an all clear text, then they proceed like they normally would.

Even people who aren't direct victims of gun violence are affected by the fear the rise of mass shootings has caused.

Amount of Guns per Country (2017)



When totaled the amount of guns throughout the 16 countries is 239,179,000, excluding the United States. Although, there are 16 countries the amount of guns in them doesn't even begin to encompass the magnitude of guns within the United States. Some believe that the amount of guns and lax gun laws in the United States correlates to the amount of mass shootings. Henceforth, why some strive for stricter laws.

Diagram made by Ella Olds and Molly Shannon. Data released by a Small Arms Survey, an independent study research project.

America Since 2000

Data taken from the Gun Violence Archive

2000

Center Township, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania - 5 dead
New York City, New York - 5 dead
Wakefield, Massachusetts - 7 dead

2002

Maryland, Virginia, and Washington D.C. - 17 dead

2003

Meridian, Mississippi - 7 dead

2004

Fresno, California - 9 dead
Meteor, Wisconsin - 6 dead
Columbus, Ohio - 5 dead

2005

Brookfield, Wisconsin - 8 dead
Red lake, Minnesota - 10 dead

2006

Goleta, California - 8 dead
Lancaster County, Pennsylvania - 6 dead

2007

Salt Lake City, Utah - 6 dead
Blacksburg, Virginia - 33 dead
Crandon, Wisconsin - 7 dead
Omaha, Nebraska - 9 dead
Colorado Springs - 5 dead

2008

Tinley Park, Illinois - 5 dead
Kirkwood, Missouri - 7 dead
DeKalb, Illinois - 6 dead
Skagit County, Washington - 6 dead
Covina, California - 10 dead

2009

Samson, Alabama - 11 dead
Carthage, North Carolina - 8 dead
Binghamton, New York - 14 dead
Fort Hood, Texas - 14 dead

2010

Appomattox, Virginia - 8 dead
Manchester, Connecticut - 9 dead

2011

Tucson, Arizona - 6 dead
Grand Rapids, Michigan - 8 dead
Copley Township, Ohio - 8 dead
Carson City, Nevada - 5 dead
Seal Beach, California - 8 dead

2012

Oakland, California - 7 dead
Seattle, Washington - 6 dead
Oak Creek, Wisconsin - 7 dead
Minneapolis, Minnesota - 7 dead

84

Mass Shootings

2013

South Valley, New Mexico - 5 dead
Riverside counties, California - 5 dead
Santa Monica, California - 6 dead
Hialeah, Florida - 7 dead
Washington D.C. - 13 dead

2014

Isla Vista, California - 7 dead
Spring, Texas - 6 dead
Marysville, Washington - 5 dead
Montgomery County, Pennsylvania - 6 dead

2015

Tyrone, Missouri - 8 dead
Waco, Texas - 9 dead
Charleston, South Carolina - 9 dead
Chattanooga, Tennessee - 6 dead
Harris County, Texas - 8 dead
Roseburg, Oregon - 10 dead
San Bernardino, California - 16 dead

2016

Kalamazoo, Michigan - 6 dead
Kansas City, Missouri - 5 dead
Wilkesburg, Pennsylvania - 6 dead
Pike County, Ohio - 8 dead
Orlando, Florida - 50 dead
Dallas, Texas - 6 dead
Citronelle, Alabama - 6 dead
Burlington, Washington - 5 dead

2017

Broward County, Florida - 5 dead
Rothschild, Wisconsin - 5 dead
Lincoln County, Mississippi - 8 dead
Orlando, Florida - 6 dead
Plano, Texas - 9 dead
Las Vegas, Nevada - 59 dead
Sutherland Springs, Texas - 27 dead
Tehama County, California - 6 dead

2018

Melcroft, Pennsylvania - 5 dead
Parkland, Florida - 17 dead
Yountville, California - 5 dead
Santa Fe, Texas - 10 dead
Scottsdale, Arizona - 7 dead
Annapolis, Maryland - 5 dead
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania - 11 dead
Thousand Oaks, California - 13 dead

2019

Sebring, Florida - 5 dead
Livingston Parish, Louisiana - 5 dead
Aurora, Illinois - 6 dead
Virginia Beach, Virginia - 13 dead
El Paso, Texas - 22 dead
Dayton, Ohio - 10 dead
Midland-Odessa, Texas - 8 dead

809

Lives Lost