

School shootings have become a common occurrence in the United States. It is distinctly affecting students, families, and school communities. A substantial instance is a notable record of more than 240,000 students encountering school shootings since the year 2000. This serious problem is against the SDG Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. Furthermore, these tragic and heartbreaking events are gradually becoming more and more frequent, with many schools in threat. And in order to preserve a safe learning environment for American students, strict measures must be taken. This essay will discuss the causes, effects, and plausible solutions for school shootings in the US.

There are several factors identified as potential causes of committing these brutal acts. One of the most plausible and obvious causes is the lack of gun control. Solely in the US, lethal weaponry is easily accessible and can be legally purchased by whoever meets the infirm criteria. This means any individual who wants to perpetrate a shooting can effortlessly do so. And even if some are not legally allowed to buy firearms due to their age, they can be "readily accessible at home or not meaningfully secured" (Pierre 42-43). Additionally, according to a Gallup poll, a shocking 45% of the households own a gun (Gallup). This means there is a strong likelihood that anyone willing to commit school shooting has access to a firearm in their house. And even if they don't, it can be easily purchased from both weaponry stores and online. This is mentioned in a *New York Times Article*: "As easy as a few mouse clicks to find a gun for sale from a private seller" (Oppel, Jr 16-17). An alternative explanation of school shootings is mental illness. Many initiators of the shootings have been found to suffer from mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and other disorders. These mental issues are very likely to have been developed since childhood. They range from individual lack of parental care to mob bullying in schools. According to "Number of K-12 school shootings in the United States from 1970 to June 16, 2020, by age of shooter" provided by CHDS, 65% of the shooters were astoundingly teenagers who have faced mental hardships (CHDS). These issues can prompt them to make impulsive decisions as a means of revenge or potentially suicide. For example, on February 14, 2018, a young shooter Nicolas Cruz shot up the Parkland Highschool

in Florida, due to his parent's death since childhood (Laughland 67-68). Another similar instance is a recent mass school shooting in Texas, 2018, the young shooter Grace Johnson, aged 18, was indicated to have undergone severe emotional damage due to mob bullying (Hobbs 11-12).

These incidents have a profound impact on the students, teachers, and communities affected by them. While trials are taking place to determine the fate of the initiators, there are various perspectives on looking these awful happenings. The effects of school shootings can be felt for years after the event and will heavily impact one's life permanently. One of the most obvious effects of a school shooting is fatalities. Students and teachers who are killed in these incidents leave behind grieving families and friends. The melancholy of losing a beloved person to gun violence can be devastating, and it can take years to recover from such a loss. For instance, in 2022, a proximity of 6000 children were murdered in school shooting incidents, which is practically 6000 families in total desolation (Hauck). In addition to this, the psychological effects of school shootings can also be significant. Survivors may experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, including flashbacks, nightmares, and anxiety. They may also struggle with depression, anger, and feelings of survivor's guilt. These mental health issues can have long-lasting effects on a learner's academic performance, and well-being. Unfortunately, teachers and staff members may also be affected by the incident and have to suffer even more. It is written: "They return daily to the site of their trauma, forced not only to cope, but also to teach children who are healing in different ways" (Asbury 10-11). Thus, the repercussions of student suffering are felt not only by the individuals, but by teachers, and essentially the entire school community.

It is compulsory for affective resolutions against school shootings and must be proceeded promptly. To do so, actions should be taken from individual school communities to governmental management. A prominent approach to this is to embrace multifaceted plans to aid schools with ways to minimize the hazard caused by shootings. These methods comprise upgrading school security, awareness drills to prevent potential assaults, and direct contact with a nearby police station. However, these methods must be effective and viable. For example, previous attempts such as

providing the teachers with firearms were taken but described as: "Invites numerous disasters and problems, and the chances of it actually helping are so minuscule" (Pierre 24-25). A different solution could be gun control. This includes raising the age limit for gun ownership from 18 to 21, because the shooters of recent mass school shootings were all under 21 (Pierre 34-37). Conversely, even though gun management is the most direct maneuver, there could be severe side effects. As experts argue that "Gun control is off key. It's unhelpful" (Bruni 22-23), they must be effective yet sensible laws.

In summation, acknowledging that the causes and effects of school shootings in the U.S is shocking, and optimal solutions must be conducted before another injury of our future generation. Actions should be taken, starting from a smaller goal to gradually advance nationally. Moreover, it is important to recognize that preventing school shootings is a community effort before taking action.

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