

ACADEMIC GUIDE



Department of Justice:
Firearms and Explosives
division

Department of Justice

Level: Medium

Language: English

Topic A: Laws around Colt AR-15 and Smith/Wesson Glock Pistols

Topic B: Open Agenda

Dear delegates,

We are immensely grateful that you all chose to be part of the Department of Justice of the thirteenth edition of MMUN. This is a committee in which we hope you will put all of your creativity and debating skills to good use so that you manage to not only challenge yourselves but also enjoy the experience to the fullest. We will do our best to make this an amazing event for you all. We believe that all of you have something unique to bring to this committee in order to make it a fun and exciting learning experience. It is our goal to help you learn more about the world in this academic environment. We hope you enjoy the topics we've selected for this committee and that you can fully immerse yourselves in these three days of debate. This study guide was written by us to help you prepare but remember that you need to do your own research as well. If you have a problem or a question about anything, don't hesitate to contact us, because we are here to help you. We hope you enjoy this experience, and we're looking forward to meeting you all.

Sincerely,

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Introduction to the committee:

The Department of Justice (DOJ) is the federal executive agency that enforces federal law. Also referred to as the Justice Department or the DOJ. Its mission statement is “to enforce the law and defend the interests of the United States according to the law; to ensure public safety against threats foreign and domestic; to provide federal leadership in preventing and controlling crime; to seek just punishment for those guilty of unlawful behaviour, and to ensure fair and impartial administration of justice for all Americans.”

The Department of Justice is based upon certain principles and values that go as follows:

Independence and Impartiality. The Justice Department works each day to earn the public's trust by following the facts and the law wherever they may lead, without prejudice or improper influence.

Honesty and Integrity. The Justice Department's employees adhere to the highest standards of ethical behavior, mindful that, as public servants, we must work to earn the trust of, and inspire confidence in, the public we serve.

Respect. The Justice Department's employees value differences in people and in ideas and treat everyone with fairness, dignity, and compassion. (United States Department of Justice official website: About DOJ)

Officially coming into existence on July 1, 1870, the Department of Justice was designated to handle all criminal prosecutions and civil suits in which the United States had an interest. To assist the Attorney General, the 1870 Act also created the Office of the Solicitor General, which represents the interests of the United States before the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Judiciary Act of 1789 (ch. 20, sec. 35, 1 Stat. 73, 92-93) is the foundation for the Department's authority, but the structure of the Department of Justice has changed over the years, with the addition of the offices of Deputy Attorney General, Associate Attorney General, and the formation of various components, offices, boards and divisions.

(U.S. Department of Justice, n.d.).

Laws around Colt AR-15 and Smith/Wesson Glock Pistols

Introduction to the topic

The Colt AR-15 has become the sad protagonist of the latest massacres perpetrated against civilians in the United States and other countries in the world. The last one occurred this at an elementary school in Uvalde (Texas), where 19 children from Robb Elementary School and two teachers were killed by Salvador Ramos, who bought weapons the day before on his 18th birthday (BBC, 2022) The current model is manufactured with three barrel lengths -between 406 and 991 mm.-, always ammunition with 223 Remington cartridges (in its version for sport shooting) or 5.56 mm x 45 NATO (for military use) - the same of the HK G-36 used by the Spanish Army. It is also sold with different barrel lengths from 410 mm to 610 mm.

Given Colt's "success" with this weapon, as with the 1911 pistol before it, other manufacturers market replicas of the AR-15. In the United States, it is the rifle/carbine most purchased by citizens for self-defense, as allowed by the second amendment to the country's Constitution.

On the other hand, the Smith Wesson Glock Pistols are extremely reliable handguns with police departments around the USA, choosing either one as their officers sidearm of choice. Specifically, two of their best selling pistols, the M&P9 2.0 and the Glock 17 Gen have been protagonists in several school shootings in the 21st century. Both are full size 9MM polymer frame pistols, making these amazing firearms.

Debates surrounding Gun Control and Ownership of Firearms:

Gun violence is a highly political issue, pitting gun control advocates against sectors of the population fiercely protective of their constitutional right to ownarms. Considering that there is a range of alternatives for the issues surrounding the ownership of guns, even this way of speaking oversimplifies the choices since there are two distinct scales on which to place alternatives. One scale concerns the degree (if at all) to which guns should be abolished. This scale moves from those who want no abolition of any guns to those who wish to moderate abolition (MA)— that is, to forbid access to some subclasses of guns—to those who wish absolute abolition (AA). The second scale concerns the restrictions (if any) on those guns that are available to private citizens. This scale moves from those who want absolute restrictions (AR) through those who wish to moderate restrictions (MR) to those who want no restrictions (NR) at all. Restrictions vary not only in strength but also in content. We could restrict who owns guns, how they obtain them, where and how they store them, and where and how they carry them

Top 10 civilian gun-owning countries

Estimated number of firearms per 100 residents



Source: Small Arms Survey, 2018

BBC

Small Arms Survey's data shows that gun ownership grew significantly over the last several years. One study, published by the Annals of Internal Medicine in February, found that 7.5 million US adults bought their first guns between January of 2019 and April 2021. This alone, means that around 11 million people are exposed to firearms in their homes, including 5 million children.

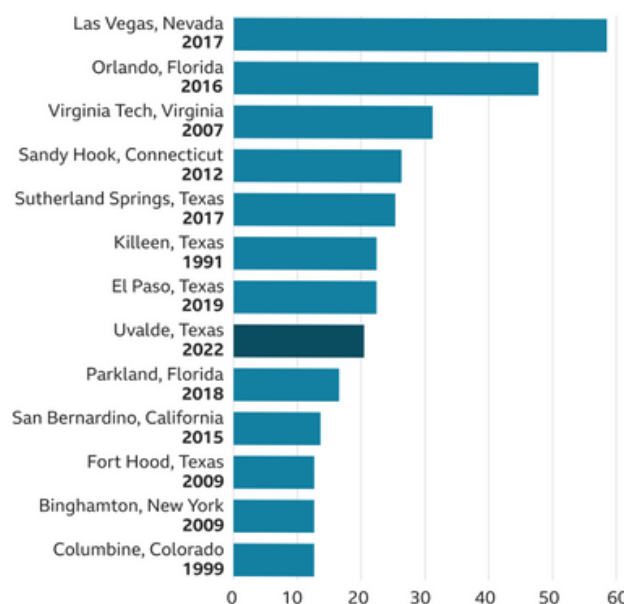
Mass Shootings:

Although the US government doesn't have an official definition for "mass shootings", the FBI has been tracking these incidents surrounding guns for more than 10 years and this Bureau defined these as "an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area". (FBI, 2021) According to the FBI, there were 345 "active shooter incidents" in the United States between 2000–2020, resulting in more than 1,024 deaths and 1,828 injuries.

The deadliest such attack, in Las Vegas in 2017, killed more than 50 people and left 500 wounded. The vast majority of mass shootings, however, leave fewer than 30 people dead. (BBC, 2021)

Worst mass shootings in the US since 1991

Victims killed



Source: FBI

BBC

Key concepts

Colt Ar-15: The Colt AR-15 is a well-balanced rifle, light weight, fully adjustable and has great

shooting power. This weapon was originally designed to be a military endowment weapon but it's now adopted by numerous security forces, a favorite of collectors and sport shooters. **We recommend that you research about the process of getting this rifle.**



Source: The San Diego Union Tribune

Smith/Wesson: Smith and Wesson is an American firearm manufacturing company. They make the best weapons for law enforcement duty used, conceal carry, home defense and general use. **We recommend researching more about the process of purchasing a weapon from Smith and Wesson.**



Source: Smith & Wesson

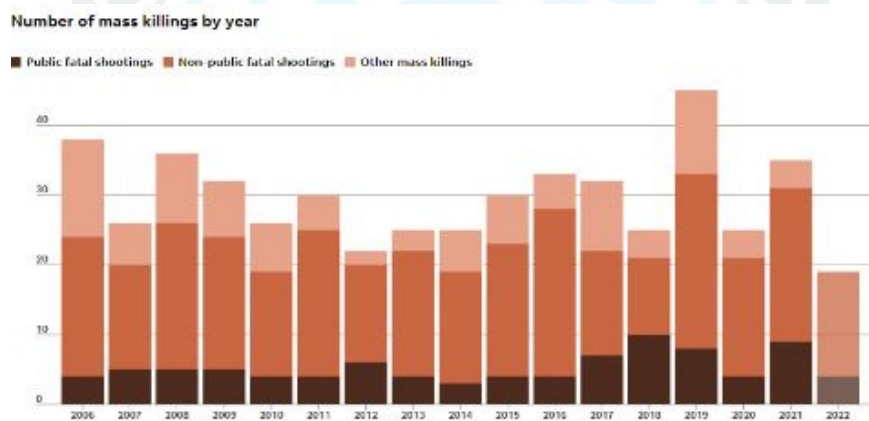
Mass shootings: An incident involving a shooting with one or more firearms of a random, typically large, number of people. **We suggest you research about the most recent mass shootings.**

Right to bear arms: The second amendment of the United States Constitution states that the right of the people to bear arms shall not be infringed, seeing as this is a free country.

Historical Context

The horror and tragedy of mass shootings in schools, churches and other public places capture the world's attention ever since media has made these cases visible.

Over the past decade, USA TODAY, along with Northeastern University and The Associated Press, has been tracking all mass killings in the United States, we suggest the delegates consult these sources for more information about casualties in these shootings that have been visible for over a decade and approximately since 2006, as data shows.



Source: USA Today, 2022

We encourage the representatives to conduct a deep research on mass shootings in America to have a well developed debate and understand the history of what is being discussed in the committee.

The Second Anmenment:

The Second Amendment, ratified in 1791, was proposed by James Madison to allow the creation of civilian forces that can counteract a tyrannical federal government and its origins can be traced all the way back to England in the late 16th century when Queen Elizabeth I instituted a national militia in which individuals of all classes were required by law to take part to defend the realm. (Britannica, 2022). This amendment grants the American citizens their right to own firearms for self-defense. Of course, the Second Anmenment has evolved since its ratification, as well as the citizens' opinions surrounding it, so it is important for the committee to always take this into account when daebating: "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." (US Constitution)

Present situation

In the most recent years the debate on gun ownership in the United States has been very present among the citizens. There are two opinions that are most prominent:

1. Save the Second Amendment: It is believed that bearing arms is a basic human right. People who support this opinion believe that the problem with arms distribution isn't the fact that the country allows people to have firearms, it's the fact that there isn't enough security to guarantee that the guns are being purchased legally. The demand of legal guns is so high that the price goes up because of that, and this is why people opt to buy illegal firearms instead.

We suggest you research about the ways in which people acquire guns illegally.

2. Gun control is necessary: Some others believe that the number of mass shootings is much higher in the United States than any other country, and they believe that gun control is possible. They believe that the second amendment was approved under the idea that citizens would need them to defend themselves from the newly appointed government and they believe that this idea is outdated.

We suggest you research about alternatives to guns in other countries that you could apply to this situation.

Relevant approaches

We believe that you should focus your discussion on these aspects:

The difficulty of getting firearms in the United States:

Due to the second amendment, the acquisition of firearms in the United States is notoriously uncomplicated, we believe it is important to discuss how this affects the citizens.

Events in which Colt AR-15 and Smith/Wesson Glock Pistols were used:

Research about mass shootings or other kinds of events in which these firearms were used, and in this debate we hope that you can use these events to discuss the laws around these weapons.

Repercussions that should be applied when using these weapons illegally:

We want you to evaluate existing consequences for the misuse of these weapons and whether they should be revised.

QARMAS

1. Do you think the second amendment should be revised and possibly changed?
2. Should guns be more or less accessible to the citizens?
3. Should a process be implemented in the acquisition of guns? If so, what should it entail? If not, why?

Recommended links

<https://edition.cnn.com/2022/06/02/us/gun-ownership-numbers-us-cec/index.html>

<https://doi.org/10.2307/1602739>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Rb5yPW_LtE

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Open Agenda

Introduction to the topic

The Open Agenda means that you, the delegates, won't be informed of the topic that will be discussed in this committee ahead of time. This is due to several reasons. For starters, actions and decisions you make in Topic A might impact Topic B, and since we don't know what will be done in the committee by you, then there is no way of knowing how it will affect this topic. Since the open agenda isn't announced ahead of time it means that there won't be a portion in the study guide that will explain concepts or situations that might help you, however, since Topic A could potentially influence Topic B then a lot of the research you do for the first topic will help you in this second one. Additionally, you will be given time to do any research you need in the session in which the topic will be announced.

We recommend that you actively participate in Topic A because it can influence the course of the committee in regards to itself and to the Open Agenda. With that being said, if there are any questions on how this will work please let us know and we will do our best to help you even further.