

Understanding Lobbying

Read about how lobbying works in Washington, D.C.

- The goal of any lobbyist is to be able to convince politicians to vote the way the lobbyist wants. Lobbyists usually work for large companies and advocate for votes towards laws and regulations that will help their companies. For example, Google is one of the companies that employs the most lobbyists working in Washington, D.C. Google needs lobbyists because they often disagree with the government over issues of user privacy. Google wants their users to know that any email sent on a Google account is kept secret. However, many government agencies want access to suspected criminals' email accounts to get information on any crimes they may be planning. Google's lobbyists spend time trying to convince voting members of Congress to keep Google mail accounts private.
- Lobbyists need to be ready to talk to a Congressperson at any given moment. It is very important that a lobbyist has a persuasive speech ready at all times. What if you happened to run into the Congressperson you needed to talk to at Starbucks while you were both getting coffee? A lobbyist needs to be ready to quickly try to convince the Congressperson to agree with their point of view.
- Often, lobbyists set up formal meetings with the Congressperson they are trying to convince. A lobbyist needs to have presentations ready to use to convince other people of their point of view.
- Lobbyists always need to be up-to-date on the latest research regarding their topic. As new news articles or scientific studies come out that are related to their issue, lobbyists need to know what they say. Lobbyists spend time making sure they are educated on their issue, so if a Congressperson has questions, the lobbyist is able to answer them.
- Lobbyists know that Congresspeople are the voice in the government for the constituents. Constituents are the people that voted the congressperson into office. A Congressperson knows that if they want to be reelected, they need to vote the way their constituents want. Sometimes, lobbyists spend time creating advertisements to convince everyday people to agree with the lobbyist's argument. If a congressperson's constituents want the congressperson to vote for a policy, the congressperson is more likely to do so.

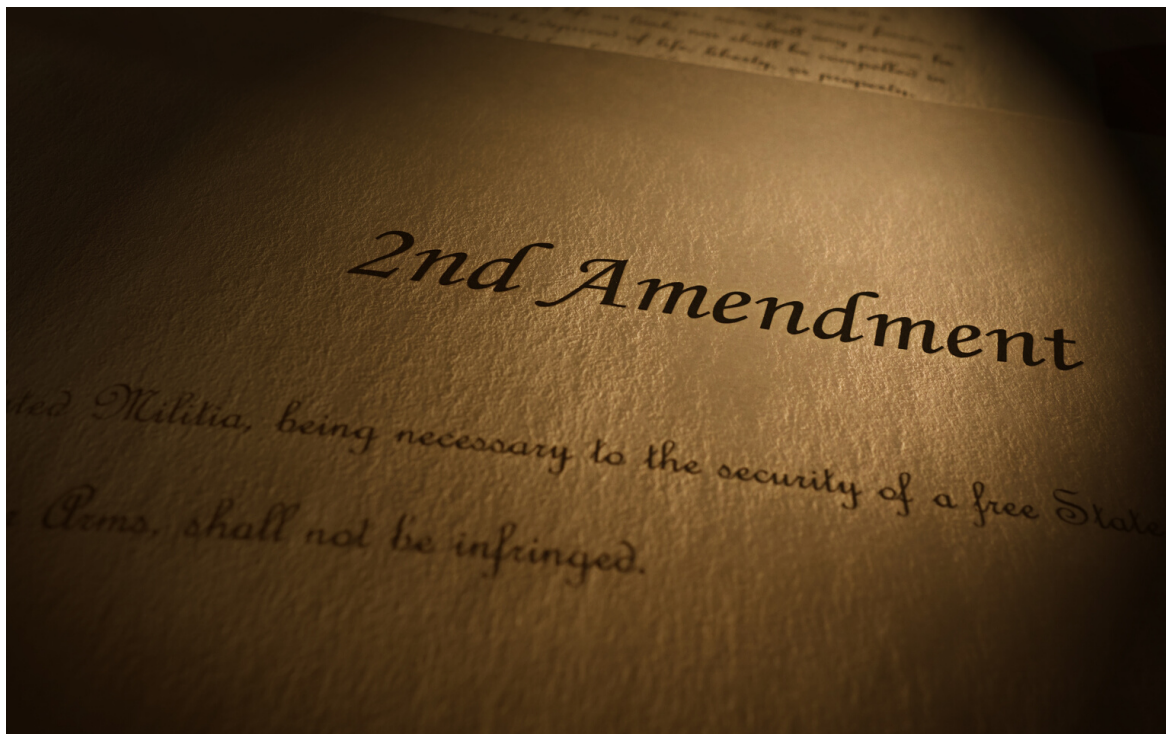


Text From Second Amendment

The Second Amendment was written in 1791. It says, “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.” The Second Amendment has been controversial because people interpret it differently.

Some people follow what is called “strict construction,” which was established by Thomas Jefferson. Strict constructionists believe that the Constitution must be followed word-for-word. Therefore, they argue that “the right of the people to keep and bear Arms” should be interpreted literally, that is, with no conditions placed upon it. Therefore, lobbyists for strict constructions of the constitution try to get politicians to vote against any regulation of guns. The National Rifle Association is a lobby group that fights against all gun regulations.

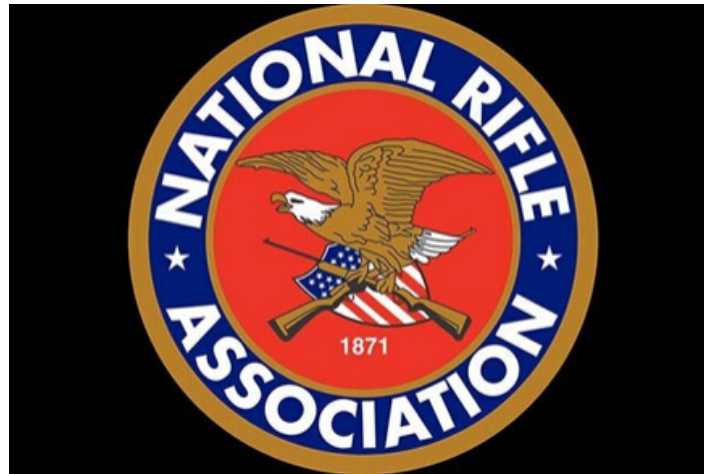
However, Alexander Hamilton disagreed with Jefferson. He believed in “loose construction.” Loose constructionists believe that the Constitution was created as a living document that could be changed and interpreted differently, as situations change. For example, loose constructionists argue that the men who created the Constitution and the U.S. government in the 1780s and 1790s could have no way of knowing how the term “arms” would change as new weapons were created. They argue that those men could not have known about the future creation of automatic and semi-automatic guns, so it is appropriate to put regulations in place. Loose constructionists also argue that “the right of the people to keep and bear Arms” only refers to the militia (armed forces) and not to everyday people. The Coalition to Stop Violence is a pro-regulation lobby group.



Examples of Gun Lobbying Groups

National Rifle Association (NRA)

The NRA is a lobbyist group in the United States. Their goal is to protect citizens' rights to buy and carry guns. It's the NRA's belief that every American should be able to own a gun to protect themselves.



Coalition to Stop Gun Violence (CSGV)

The CSGV is another lobbyist group in the United States. Unlike the NRA, the CSGV supports stricter gun laws. In the CSGV's belief, stricter gun laws would help prevent dangerous people from purchasing guns. An example of a stricter gun law is making the sale, purchase, or ownership of assault rifles illegal.



Steps To Lobby a Politician

Step 1: Get Your Stance

- Your teacher will assign your group a stance on gun control. Circle the stance you were given below:
 - We need stricter laws governing gun control
 - We do not need stricter laws governing gun control

Step 2: Review and Choose Sources

- Read through the sources you were provided on your stance.
- As you are reading, make notes about the facts you might like to use in your argument below:

Lesson: Analyzing the Second Amendment

Step 3: Construct an Argument

- Share the facts you have chosen with your group.
- As a group, begin creating your argument below.
- Your group will have a total of 4 minutes to present:
 - 3 minutes to present an initial argument and then 1 minute to dispute the other group's claims.
- Make sure your argument has the following parts:
 - An attention grabber
 - You want to make sure the Congresspeople are interested in what you have to say.
 - Our attention grabber will be:

 - At least 5 convincing facts
 - Make sure you are choosing facts that will convince the Congress members to vote your way!

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 - A closing statement
 - Choose something to say that will stick in the memory of the congress people. You want them to remember your argument over the other side's argument!
 - Our closing statement is:

Step 4: Prepare to Disprove the other side

- Come up with 3 facts you think the other side will use to try and prove their side. Then, come up with something you can say for each one that makes their argument unimportant.
 - Things we think the other side will say:
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Lesson: Analyzing the Second Amendment

- Things we will say to refute or disprove their arguments:

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Step 5: Present!

- Do your best to convince the Congress members to vote your way!

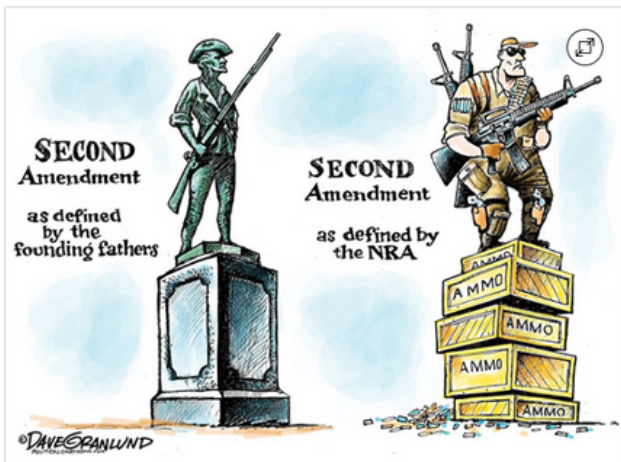
Sources on Gun Use



<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/27/opinion/john-paul-stevens-repeal-second-amendment.html>

Claim: The Second Amendment is no longer important and should be repealed.

The photograph shows the difference between guns used when the Second Amendment was passed and guns that are available today. There is a great deal of difference between a musket and an automatic rifle, just like there is a big difference between attitudes towards the federal government during the 1700s and today. When the Second Amendment was created, there was real concern that a national army might pose a threat to the security of individual states. That was a real concern during the 1700s because states still feared that a strong federal government might interfere with the rights of the states. That is not the case today. The Second Amendment has outlived its purpose and should be abolished permanently.



<https://junior.scholastic.com/issues/2017-18/112017/guns-in-america.html#1200L>

Claim: Gun control is needed more than ever because there are too many guns available.

Supporters of gun control say that when the Founding Fathers wrote the Second Amendment, they could not have imagined how powerful the guns of today would be. There was also not the controversy surrounding guns that there is today. The guns the Founding Fathers were talking about would not be able to commit the large-scale gun crimes we see in the news today.



<https://junior.scholastic.com/issues/2017-18/112017/guns-in-america.html#1200L>

Claim: If other consumer goods are regulated, then guns should be too.

If people are going to use guns, then guns should have the kind of consumer restrictions placed on them like other items, such as toys, clothing, and cars. In each of those cases, items must meet a certain safety requirement and use certain materials that are safe in order to sell the product. In the United States, guns are the only consumer products that are not subject to federal health and safety laws.

Sources on Gun Use



<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2013/11/11/244521897/movies-rated-pg-13-feature-the-most-gun-violence>

Claim: Popular culture, such as movies and television, expose Americans to gun violence.

American popular culture is filled with guns and gun violence. One study shows that PG-13 movies often feature more gun violence than even R-rated films. Many studies suggest that watching gun violence can make a person feel more aggressive and angry. Some people are asking that gun violence in movies not be seen as something “cool” or heroic or the only solution to a problem.



<http://grumblesfromanoldgrouch.com/the-myth-mythos-myths-of-the-nra-gunsels-pt-2/>

Claim: The Supreme Court Decision in District of Columbia v. Heller was not only wrong, it went against the Second Amendment.

This political cartoon is critical of a Supreme Court decision around the Second Amendment. In 2008, a case testing the Second Amendment was heard by the Supreme Court. In the case District of Columbia v. Heller, Richard Heller challenged a strict local city law that banned almost all hand guns. The law was based on the wording of the Second Amendment, which stated that people could keep guns only if they were part of an organized militia. A militia is an organized, but nonprofessional army. The Supreme Court agreed with Heller and said the city’s ban was unconstitutional and that an individual had the right to keep weapons at home for self-defense and did not have to be connected to militia service. The Supreme Court’s decision effectively re-interpreted the Second Amendment in favor of gun owners.



<https://junior.scholastic.com/issues/2017-18/112017/guns-in-america.html#1200L>

Claim: Gun control does not solve the problem of gun violence.

This political cartoon suggests that taking away legally-owned guns means people cannot defend themselves or protect their families or property. And by taking away the right to own guns, does not mean that criminals will not find a way to use guns to commit crimes.

Sources on Gun Use



<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2013/11/11/244521897/movies-rated-pg-13-feature-the-most-gun-violence>

Claim: Most gun owners are responsible gun owners.

Those that support the Second Amendment argue that there is a bias against gun owners. They are upset about stereotypes that portray them as unstable or overly violent. They argue that many people who own guns are responsible and practice safety in using their firearms.



http://static-41.sinclairstoryline.com/resources/media/435d0ee3-52fd-42f1-ab5c-e1461c8deef2-large16x9_womensdefense.PNG?1552276323026

Claim: Self-Defense is a basic right in today's society.

Many gun owners believe that owning a gun is about protecting one's self. And even though statistics show that a small number of Americans have used their guns for self-defense, the argument remains a strong one for gun owners. This has also led to the growth of the gun industry as people buy guns for self protection. Gun clubs and shooting ranges help teach gun owners about gun safety. Americans who do not want gun control laws fear that they will be unable to protect themselves.



https://www.nuvo.net/voices/guestvoices/the-funny-thing-about-guns-and-american-history/article_4292adb3-420e-5099-818c-25ee7d66f7b2.html

Claim: Guns are a part of American history.

Since the first colony at Jamestown, guns have played an important role in American history. Many gun owners point to the fact that without guns, it would have been difficult to establish colonies, win the American Revolution, or settle the American West. Owning guns is part of American culture.

Sources on Gun Use



http://content.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1886076_1857754,00.htm

Claim: Americans are exposed to guns at a young age through play.

This is a photograph of souvenir guns for sale at a Wild West attraction. Many American children are exposed to guns from a very early age. Water pistols, cap guns, toy replicas of guns are available in any toy aisle or store.



<https://bpr.berkeley.edu/2016/05/05/cracking-down-on-gun-control-in-california/>

Claim: The issue of gun control is not an easy one to find a solution.

The emphasis in this political cartoon is that people have very strong opinions on gun control. It shows that the issue over gun control and the Second Amendment creates strong divides between people. Neither side can come to any agreement on how best to legislate and interpret gun laws.