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# Why I am Against Guns

Anonymous

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# Why I am Against Guns

## **Abstract**

I am a suicide attempt survivor. And I am for increased gun control reform. And the reason why this is my position is because I know, if my parents had owned a gun, [there is an 85% chance you wouldn't be here reading my story.](#) [*excerpt*]

## **Keywords**

depression, Gettysburg College, gun control, gun violence, mental health, Suicide

## **Disciplines**

Civic and Community Engagement

## **Comments**

Surge is a student blog at Gettysburg College where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at [surgegettysburg.wordpress.com](https://surgegettysburg.wordpress.com). Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that –isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

# SURGE

[ VERB ] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

## WHY I AM AGAINST GUNS

April 18, 2018

**Content Warning: gun violence, suicide, depression**

I am a suicide attempt survivor. And I am for increased gun control reform. And the reason why this is my position is because I know, if my parents had owned a gun, there is an 85% chance you wouldn't be here reading my story.

In the United States, on average, over 90 people die every day from gun violence. That's about one person every 15 minutes. In the time that you watched that episode of *Stranger Things*, about three people died from gun violence. While we are all aware of this topic, as reemphasized in the wake of the devastating shooting in Florida on Feb 14th and the movements to stage peaceful protests to enact change in current gun laws, we need to know that gun control is not only needed to stop these mass shootings, but also to lower suicide rates. Over half of deaths from guns are suicides. Death by gun accounts for over 50% of completed suicides – more than double any other method.

It is also important to emphasize that suicide is an impulsive action. 75% of attempts were made within an hour of making the decision. If there are no accessible means of suicide available, people will be far less likely to make the rash decision to kill themselves. After the period of acute crisis passes, the suicidal behavior usually passes as well within a few hours. So it is important to consider making lethal methods of suicide far less accessible, which very well could reduce rates of suicide.

Eliminating the excess presence of guns could give us time to research more effective methods of treatment of mental health disorders and hopefully reduce suicide rates. After all, even though the US doesn't have the highest suicide rates in the world should we be willing to settle for being not the worst? Shouldn't we strive to prove this in leading the world in something other than highest incarceration rates, most money spent on pharmaceutical drugs, and largest student debt?

Many people across the country have lost friends, family, brothers, sisters, and parents to this devastating act. Shouldn't we do more, to prevent these tragedies from striking again and again? And we need to be aware that this is not an issue that's going away. Suicide rates have increased in the US within the last 15

years. This is something we need to stop putting it off and start to address. Haven't enough lives been lost? Do we need to lose more before we enact change? Are 33,000 deaths by guns every year insufficient to amend an amendment that was created over 200 years ago?

Some people may question why this issue of gun violence is relevant to me, since I did not even use a gun in my attempt, but guns and suicide have had and continue to have a profound impact on me. One day in the program I was placed in after my hospitalization for trying to commit suicide, I was doing my homework for high school. I was reading a book – I don't even remember the title of it. I've blocked it out of my mind; it's too painful to think about. I got to the last page and the protagonist, with no forewarning, killed herself with a gun. I remember my chest feeling tight, my mind going blank, my heart racing. I was reduced to a panicked mess.

A couple years later when my friend told me he bought a gun, showing me the manual and telling me it was in the next room, I felt a tightness in my gut and a wave of nausea come over me. A gun that I couldn't even see had so much power over me.

Even a few days ago, I was watching a show, and one of the characters gave away a signed baseball, and then as soon as his friend left with his new possession, there was a flash and a gunshot echoed through the hall. He had killed himself. I just stared at the screen. I have been in recovery for four years and I was still reduced to tears as I witnessed something that seemed a little too familiar for my liking.

While media is not the direct cause of my suicide attempt, the casualness of our relationships to guns in the United States is troubling and sometimes triggering. Guns, and suicide by guns, appear constantly in the media. Neither suicide, nor guns, nor any combination of the two should be treated so flippantly. When I see guns portrayed so thoughtlessly, used purely for dramatic effect, it reminds me of a time in my life when I was so distraught that I saw suicide as my only solution, my only way out. So many others were doing it, so casually in the media, what was stopping me from following in their footsteps?

I have never held a gun, but that has not stopped me from imagining it in the depths of my depressive episodes. Feeling the cold metal against my skin, a heavy yet somehow comforting weight in my hand and the awkwardness in my jaw as I point the barrel at the back of my throat, my breath shortening, my eyes shutting tight as my finger gently squeezes the trigger. Not giving a thought to the consequences of this action, which would impact and devastate my friends, family, and loved ones.

I have never held a gun, but that has not stopped me from being terrified of them.

*Anonymous*

**\*\*This Friday, April 20, join the movement to end gun violence. Gettysburg College students will be walking out to Pennsylvania Hall at 10am to stand in solidarity with those who have been lost to gun violence.**