

Preparation for the topical seminar at the Lewes Library, 3 pm, February 8
Topic – The Second Amendment

Instructions

To prepare for the seminar, explore the materials and links below, and then write a response of at least 200 words. There are some discussion questions at the end that you may use as writing prompts, but feel free to respond as you wish.

Email your written response to lewesseminar@gmail.com no later than Monday, February 6. You are asked to read all the responses prior to the seminar meeting on February 8.

Materials and Links

After a summary of key facts about Americans and guns by the *Pew Research Center*, the materials for this month's seminar are organized into three categories: Constitutional Issues, Social Impact, and Next Steps. Although you are welcome to explore all these materials, you are free to choose to focus upon a single category or a single article. In making these choices, follow your own interests! (Where materials may not be readily available online, hard copies are attached. However, the materials are probably best read online because of embedded links and graphs.) Further, the literature on the Second Amendment is rich, and what is presented here is only a narrow sampling. If you find an article that you think is especially helpful, please feel free to share it during the seminar meeting.

Summary, [Key Facts about Americans and Guns](#), Katherine Schaeffer, *Pew Research Center*, September 13, 2021.

Constitutional Issues

An Overview of the Legal Context: "[Second Amendment](#)," *Legal Information Institute*, Cornell University. (If you would rather not plunge into reading the summaries of the Supreme Court decisions below, try this overview!)

Summaries of the Supreme Court's 2008 [Heller decision](#) and the 2022 [Bruen](#) decision prepared by *Oyez*, *Legal Information Institute*, Cornell University. These are the two most important Supreme Court decisions about the Second Amendment and gun control in recent years.

These summaries are then followed by two articles, from different perspectives, discussing the impact of these two decisions, especially the Bruen decision. The second article by Bob Barr is very long, but it provides a comprehensive account of the conservative viewpoint on the Second Amendment and the Bruen decision.

- "[One Nation Under Guns](#)," Ryan Busse, *Washington Post*, December 14, 2022.[Appendix 1]

- [“Second Amendment Falls Short: Needs-Based Defense No Longer Sufficient to Preserve Citizens’ Right to Self-Defense,”](#) Bob Barr, *The Heritage Foundation*, February 1, 2021. [Appendix 2]

Social Impact

[“Why Does the U.S. Have So Many Mass Shootings? Research is Clear: Guns,”](#) Max Fisher and Josh Keller, *New York Times*, November 7, 2017.

[“Our Schools Have Become Battlefields’: Teachers Consider Arming Themselves in the Classroom,”](#) New York Times Opinion, *New York Times*, November 27, 2022.

[“At Protests, Guns are Doing the Talking,”](#) Mike McIntire, *New York Times*, November 26, 2022.

Next Steps

[“Solutions to Save Lives from Gun Violence,”](#) Robert Gebelhoff, *Washington Post*, June 2, 2022.

[“A Supreme Court Justice’s Solution to Gun Violence: Repeal Second Amendment,”](#) Frederic J. Frommer, *Washington Post*, May 28, 2022. [Appendix 3]

Writing Prompts

As you consider what to write as a reaction to these materials, you may wish to consider one or more of the following writing prompts.

- What accounts for the rapid expansion of guns in the United States over the past 15 years or so?
- What are the constitutional foundations and limitations to the right to bear arms?
- How are the first and second amendments related? Can the right to bear arms undermine the first amendment?
- How should the right to own and carry guns be restricted or regulated?
- Is there a significant difference between having a gun in one's home for self-defense and carrying it in public?

Submitted by Michael D. Redmond
December 20, 2022