

# Teen Scene column

## Teen Scene: An Editorial on Gun Control

By Taro Takigawa, JM graduate

On Monday April 16, 2007, University of Virginia Tech student, Korean Cho Seung-Hui, killed 33 people, including himself, in the worst school massacre in the history of the United States. Because of Virginia's overly lax gun control laws, Cho was able to purchase two semiautomatic guns near the Virginia Tech campus. Unfortunately, it takes a tragedy like this to demonstrate our need for stricter gun control laws in all 50 states.

Unrestricted gun laws in Virginia allow citizens to purchase unlicensed handguns with no collapsible stock or an unthreaded barrel once a month. This law should be abolished and a stricter, revised gun control policy should be implemented.

In 2005, 14,860 homicides occurred in America. Out of those 14,860, 10,104 were killed by firearms. Gun-related homicides are tragic and to prevent them, many states should attempt to pass California gun-control laws like Kasler vs. Lockyer and Harrott vs. County of Kings to make purchasing firearms more difficult. Policies and laws such as these would effectively limit gun violence around the country.

To reduce illegal gun selling, former President Bill Clinton signed the Brady Bill into law in 1997. It requires that any person or persons buying a firearm receive a background check and prevents criminals and minors from legally purchasing firearms. However, in spite of constant amendments and changes to the Bill which have limited its effectiveness, the Brady Bill is a step toward reducing gun violence.

To stop gun violence in the United States, we should have an effective program that commits additional police to crime-populated areas. Operation Ceasefire is a mission to stop teenage crime and gun violence in Boston. Today, Operation Ceasefire is incredibly effective, preventing much crime in the Boston area. According to a Harvard University Kennedy School of Government study on Operation Ceasefire, "...For the second full year of operation, through May 31, 1998, there was a 71% decrease in homicides by persons ages 24 and under and a 70-percent reduction in gun assaults (for all ages)." Therefore, programs similar to Operation Ceasefire should be implemented where crime is a huge issue, like Los Angeles, California.

To prevent future tragedies, people should fight for harsher gun control laws that ban the selling of firearms to underage children and irresponsible adults. By taking actions and enforcing laws in the United States, we can stop the majority of senseless gun homicides like the massacre at Virginia Tech.



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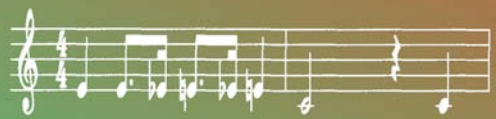


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