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## **2018 National High School Essay Contest \$1,000 Winner**

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### *Where Is the Controversy?*

For too many years America has looked past creating new gun control and safety measures. This is because, somehow, the term "gun control" has become synonymous with taking away guns from all gun owners, when this is simply not the case. Why is it that with all the information available, people are still uninformed about the success that other countries have had with gun control measures that don't involve taking away all guns? Gun control should not be this controversial. It's not a matter of political opinion, it's a matter of morality that we all must have in order to protect the citizens of this great nation.

Countries like Australia and Canada have had enormous success with gun control and safety measures while still allowing gun ownership, so why have we not followed in their footsteps? Even measures such as better background checks and standardized testing before buying a gun somehow crosses the line with many gun owners. What are they worried will happen? Do they think that they won't pass the tests? Gun owners should be the ones wanting better gun safety measures because they are the ones in the forest or on the shooting range with gun owners who could be potentially dangerous.

Our failure to adopt stringent gun control laws like those in Australia and Canada has led to the endangerment and destruction of people's lives, including the lives of children. From January to April 22, 2018, the United States had 67 mass shootings, 20 of which took place at a school. Schools are supposed to be where we feel safe but, instead, many kids have gotten nervous about going to school. It's gotten to the point where kids have to walk out of class to fight for safety in our schools. Even in predominantly red, "gun loving" counties, such as the one I live in, kids walked out on March 14 to fight for our lives and to demand better gun safety because, as I said before, this isn't a matter of politics, it's about morality.

So, in response to the words of Senator Thomas Dodd, I fully agree. He

spoke those words 50 years ago and we are still not to the level of gun safety of other developed countries. In fact, since then, the number of people killed or injured in mass shootings per year has generally increased. We're supposed to be moving forward, not backward. The gun safety measures in Australia and Canada have worked so why are people resisting change when it is for the safety of everybody? When many people think of gun control they think of the liberals taking away all of the guns, but that is not what is necessary to protect our citizens. All we want is to keep guns out of the hand of people who have no need or business holding that much potential for destruction and whether you are Republican, Democrat, or somewhere in-between, you should too.