

Cole Bradley

Critical Response #4

Do the laws have to protect you from yourself?

What is the basis for the argument that if laws for carrying firearms were lax, that it would result in more dangerous situations for average citizens than could help them? Many pro-gun control advocates feel that loosening these laws would be an irresponsible decision and pose an unnecessary threat to the public at large. Journalist Tim Murphy leans towards this side and points out that Utah has particularly light requirements like no obligation to qualify with a firearm, a processing fee of 50\$, and taking a class for firearm safety after which you must wait 60 days for your application to be processed. He says that these kind of bare requirements result in more accidents by people who are not proficient in firearms and are not required by law to truly learn beyond the safety course, he even took the class himself “I struggle to load more than a few [fake rounds of ammunition] before they're ejected halfway across the room.”. He claims that these laws must be tightened for public safety’s sake as well as protecting the person who seeks to protect themselves with this purchase, but such argument can be flipped around where tight laws can hurt people as well (Murphy). People who do not have the time to wait for the 2 month applications period or aren’t able to spare the time for a training class are now subjected to legal limitations that endanger them.

This was the case of Carol Bowne, who Charles Cooke from The National Review says was “murdered in cold blood on her own property by a violent criminal who would not be

restrained by good intentions.”. In her home state of New Jersey you must apply for a permit to own a handgun, not carry as in the described process in Utah but merely own, which she did after filing a restraining order, setting up cameras, and purchasing an alarm in fear of her ex-boyfriend who she was sure wanted to hurt her. She was unfortunately correct, and in the two month period it was not accident that killed her but the fact she had to wait for approval, stabbed and killed by him in her own driveway. Cooke believes that if you’re in a sticky situation as Ms. Bowne was, whether or not you’re ultimately going to be able to defend yourself is up to your willingness to break the law. With the 60 day application process in Utah the same wait as New Jersey’s, clearly Cooke and Murphy would heavily disagree when bare to Murphy is the same as Cooke’s strict. Preventing accidents would be a fair concern, but to Cooke this woman and others like her cannot be taken as collateral damage that are protected from themselves for the greater good (Cooke). Perhaps if she could have just gone through a simple background check that takes only 3-7 days to prove her legitimacy as many states require, she would have had her protection in much fewer than the 60 days and very well could have been able to save herself when no one else could.

Cooke, Charles C.W. "The Deadly Consequences of Draconian Gun Laws." *National Review Online*. National Review, 5 June 2015. Web. 01 Oct. 2015.

Murphy, Tim. "Fastest Gun Permit in the West." *Mother Jones* Sept. 2013: 5-7. *Ebsco*. Web. 1 Oct. 2015.