



Gun Control: A Documentary and Reference Guide (Documentary and Reference Guides)

By Robert J. Spitzer

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Gun control is one of the most enduringly controversial issues in modern American politics. For the first time this book compiles a comprehensive array of documents that explain and illuminate the historical and contemporary context of the modern gun debate. Bringing together over 50 documents from the colonial era to the present, including early colonial laws, founding documents, letters, political debates, federal and state laws, federal and state court cases, and various political documents, this book is an indispensable reference work for those seeking to understand the origins and modern consequences of American gun policy, including the Second Amendment's right to keep and bear arms. Accompanying commentary and analysis is included to help the reader fully understand the meaning of these documents. Numerous bibliographic sources provide additional resources for interested readers. Ideal for undergraduate and high school students, this collection of primary documents surrounding one of America's oldest controversial issues is a must-have for library shelves.

Contrary to popular impression, gun laws are as old as the country, and reflect the intersection of citizens' personal gun habits and the country's early need to defend itself by citizen militias who were required to arm themselves. The nation's gun policies evolved as its needs and resources changed. Old-style militias gave way to a modern professional American military, and the settling of the American frontier ushered in modern gun laws. In the past century, political assassinations and gun-related mass violence spurred both new gun control efforts and a burgeoning modern gun rights movement. Students will be able to read and analyze primary documents surrounding these events, including the Federalist Papers, early hunting laws, Supreme Court rulings, federal and state regulations, and recent political platform statements. Ideal for undergraduate and high school students, this collection of primary documents surrounding one of America's oldest controversial issues is a must-have for library shelves.

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Editorial Review

Review

". . . an excellent compilation of primary documents and other information on one of the most contentious and divisive topics that many first-year students research for entry-level English and speech classes. . . . The easily comprehensible format, the many bibliographic sources provided, and the list of gun control Web sites will enhance students' research. . . . This book, on a vital and interesting topic, would be an excellent addition to large public libraries and to high school and college libraries. . . . Highly recommended." -

Choice

"The topic of gun control has been covered in several publications: Glenn Utter's *The Encyclopedia of Gun Control and Gun Rights* (Oryx Pr., 2001) and Gregg Lee Carter's *Guns in American Society: An Encyclopedia of History, Politics, Culture, and the Law* (ABC-CLIO, 2002) are two fairly recent examples. Spitzer (political science, SUNY Cortland), who has published other works on the issue, including *The Right To Bear Arms: Rights and Liberties Under The Law* (ABC-CLIO, 2001) and *The Politics of Gun Control* (Chatham House, 1995), has compiled 54 documents arranged into eight broad categories. Each document is followed by an analysis of the significance and meaning of the document regarding gun control. The volume covers constitutional and other government documents, court decisions, acts passed by legislatures, as well as other writings such as the Federalist Papers. **BOTTOM LINE** There is very little overlap between this work and Greenwood's *Gun Control Debate: A Documentary History* (1997), edited by Marjolin Bijlefeld, which consists of speeches and editorials as opposed to the preponderance of legal documents in Spitzer's volume. The two volumes are more complementary than duplicative. The added analysis in Spitzer's work also separates it from the earlier effort. Ideal for undergraduates." - **Library Journal**

"Spitzer (political science, State U. of New York-Cortland) has assembled documents that illustrate the history, evolution, scope and consequences of the issue of gun control. Original documents are important for anyone studying or taking part in the debate, he says, because so much information is distorted?deliberately or not?during emotional exchanges and pronouncements. He also explains the context and impact of each document. The primary arrangement is chronological, with sections on founding documents, the Second Amendment and early laws, early US and state court rulings, 20th-century US Supreme and lower-court rulings, modern gun laws, and the states and two major parties." - **Reference & Research Book News**

"This useful compilation is recommended for public, secondary school, college, and university libraries." - **Catholic Library World**

"With many suggestions for further research, this guide will be useful in high school, public and college libraries." - **Lawrence Looks at Books**

About the Author

Robert J. Spitzer is Distinguished Service Professor of Political Science at the State University of New York, College at Cortland.

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