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The Symbol of Ignorance

Political emblems and logos can symbolize various things to various people.

People see the same image but they do not look at it the same. To some, the representation may be positive, while to others it denotes a negative connotation. The



National Rifle Association's emblem conveys ignorant ideologies.

The National Rifle Association (NRA) founded in 1871 developed an icon that entails an eagle grasping rifles in its feet while standing atop a shield painted like the American flag. To some, this icon displays

pride and the rights granted to us by the United States Constitution. Some individuals are staunch believers that say gun control should have no restrictions and that anyone over the legal age should have the option of owning a firearm without questions asked. The NRA is comprised of these people who are under the assumption that they can justify their actions by shielding (like that the eagle is perched upon) behind the 2nd Amendment of the US Constitution which states that "a well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." Despite this legal shield, gun control laws need to be enacted. "The right to bear arms" should be loosely interpreted. It was created in 1791 to protect

the American colonists in times of crisis with either the Native Americans or the British soldiers. Instead, the members of the NRA take this right to the extreme and argue that any form of arsenal is appropriate to own. A few problems arise with this belief. No one can argue validly that owning a machine gun or an AK-47 is necessary. If a husband and his wife feel safer with a gun in the home in the case of burglary or other unsuspected catastrophes, by all means they should be able to have a hidden gun in their residence. If someone is an avid hunter, by all means they should be able to own a rifle. The key word in the last two sentences is "a." A small, hand-held gun would be appropriate for the family who lives in fear and feels safer and more protected. It is pure ignorance to argue that owning deadly guns is a "right" in the United States. Those deadly guns were made for one reason and one reason only: to murder, to kill, to destroy. What other purpose do AK-47's, Uzi's, and Tech-9's serve other than to put huge holes in people? Recently, September 13th to be exact, President Bush unshackled Former President Clinton's ban on assault weapons (Title XI of the Federal Control Act of 1994) (NRA-ILA). It is pure ignorance because it is as if this policy condones cop killing and city violence. Needless to say, the ban did not go out with a bang. But will this boorish self-indulgent political action create more bang in the literal sense? I am sure the NRA has fired off a round of laudatory gunfire. Ignorance ultimately leads to failure and in this case, violence. The NRA symbol illustrates a prime example of hypocrisy. If lifting the ban on assault weapons was an attempt to preserve our American freedoms, then why would the same president try to take away privileges of people of different sexual orientation? The advocates of the "right to bear arms" are the same Conservative groups of people who

feel gay marriage should be banned. What happened to "rights" of American citizens? The NRA's emblem symbolizes ignorance in the sense that their members take an old Amendment out of context and fail to make valid points on why anyone should be able to own guns made to kill, not to protect.

The National Rifle Association's logo symbolizes ignorant ideologies because its members disregard startling statistics and shrug off the tears of families who have lost love ones to gun-violence. A family-owned gun found within the perimeter of the household kills more children than any other method. "The firearms used in 72% of unintentional firearm deaths and injuries, and in firearm suicide attempts and completions, for people ages 0-19 were stored in the residence of the victim, their relative, or their friend" (*Kids and Gun Violence*). While handguns account for only one-third of all firearms owned in the United States, they account for more than two-thirds of all firearm-related deaths each year. According to *General Facts about Gun Violence*, a gun kept in the home is 22 times more likely to be used in a homicide, suicide or unintentional shooting than to be used in self-defense. Undoubtedly, too many Americans are being killed by an avertable adversary. The NRA conveys outrageous ignorance for disregarding these astounding statistics. In addition, it disregards the emotions of grieving friends and family. Take for instance the April 20, 1999 shootings at Columbine High School where 12 students and a teacher were brutally murdered by fellow classmates Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris (Spencer). Klebold and Harris, the monsters responsible for the Littleton massacre, attained the murder weapons with little hindrance. This rage of teenage insanity could have been prevented. If guns were not

available to them, would all those innocent people be deceased? There may be a Constitutional right to own a firearm, but does that negate murder? The proliferation of guns obviously plays a role in teenage homicide, suicide, and murder. But still, the NRA insisted on rejoicing itself and its foolish philosophies in a city not far from where the killings took place. The symbol of the NRA symbol is its leader, Charlton Heston. This is a prime example of what Communication scholars call the halo effect, the spill over of identity. The halo effect can be defined by this analogy: A basketball star being a spokesman for a nutritious cereal brand. Heston is one year short of 80 and shows symptoms of Alzheimer's. He should have just stayed an actor and not go on to represent an association of moronic gun-loving hypocrites. After the Colorado tragedy, the Heston and the NRA had the audacity to still hold their conference. Heston is noted as saying, "I'm sorry for the newspaper ads saying the same thing. "Don't come here." This is our country. As Americans we are free to travel wherever we wish in our broad land" (Moore). Self-centered, insensitive ignorance. Just like the symbol that represents their organization.

Symbols, icons, emblems, logos: whichever term one would like to use, it is a universal fact that they represent something, even if people do not agree on what it signifies. The National Rifle Association's symbol indisputably characterizes itself as an *association* built on ignorant ideologies. The NRA denies statistics that counter them and claim that the results were tampered with and are therefore falsified. They fight for one area of "rights" while denying others in a difference genre theirs. Thirty-fourth president, Dwight D. Eisenhower once said, "Every gun that is made, every warship launched,

every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed." (*General Facts About Gun Violence*). We are a culture of murder. We are a nation controlled by the gun. Now the gun is not the only element in a murder. But if it was taken out of the equation, imagine the amount of lives that could be saved. In order to alter this conclusion, issuing tighter gun control laws and reexamining what it means to sustain American rights and freedoms will destroy the NRA's symbol.

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