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### The Logical Fallacies in Political Discourse

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**The Logical Fallacies in Political Discourse**

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## Fallacy Guide

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## **Abstract**

I examined the use of logical fallacies in political discourse. Logical fallacies are fraudulent tricks people use in their argument to make it sound more credible while what they really do is to fool the audience. Out of more than 300 kinds of fallacies, I focused on 18 common ones by analyzing their use in debates about political issues.

For example, Benjamin Shapiro gave a speech for pro-life and said that he donated money to charities. An audience member asked him, "So, have you donated to Planned Parenthood?" Shapiro said, "No, because they kill babies; they kill 300,000 unborn children a year! I don't donate to a baby genocidal organization like Planned Parenthood." In his answer, he used the hasty generalization fallacy. It is true that Planned Parenthood provides abortion service, but it also provides other services such as birth control, long-acting reversible contraception, cervical cancer screening, etc. Shapiro used the hasty generalization fallacy to evoke the audience's empathy to the unborn and anger to Planned Parenthood.

Moreover, I have learned more this summer than what the definition of the logical fallacies are and how to discern them in an argument. During conducting my research, I noted that being aware of my mental state is very important if I want to accurately detect the fallacies. Furthermore, while watching two sides debating, being impartial is as significant as staying calm. I also need to put aside both personal political opinions and my strong feeling toward the ethos of the speakers. It could be pretty easy to find logical fallacies from the argument of someone I dislike and thus, overlook the fallacies used by the other speaker -- a good arbiter should not make such mistake.

I came to the conclusion that the political debates nowadays are simply misleading. They use personal attack, inflammatory language, and emotional demagoguery, which do not belong to a democratic country. And most importantly, citizens are not aware of this, and they need to be informed with these fallacies because a rational, respectful, and democratic environment needs to be reintroduced into the political world.

## Introduction

Over this summer, I spent two months researching on something I have never had a chance to look into before -- logical fallacies. Logical fallacies are tactics people usually include in their arguments while having a debate with others; however, when people use these fallacies, they are not necessarily related to the content of their speech but to the methods they use to argue. In other words, logical fallacies often reside in the strategies people use while arguing.

The thought of studying logical fallacies came to my mind after I had a conversation with my roommate about whether abortion is good or bad for a woman's body. As one can imagine, a conversation like this usually ends up with neither of us succeeding in persuading another. It did not end badly; however, what we said and how we expressed our viewpoints bothered me. I had the feeling that my argument was valid and reasonable, and yet I could not seem to convince her. Moreover, while arguing, both of us felt that one did not fully answer the other's questions. This experience made me wonder what goes on with people's arguments while they argue with each other and how to avoid falling in the trap set by the opponents. And that was why I decided to conduct my research on the logical fallacies. When logical fallacies are involved, though the arguments can sound reasonable and persuasive, they are not valid.

With this characteristic, logical fallacies are almost everywhere in our life. They are in the articles you read every morning, the speech you attend on campus, or the conversation you overheard at the coffee shop. The reason logical fallacies happen so often in our daily life is not only because it is hard to find them, but because there are so many different kinds of

logical fallacies. According to an academic book on logical fallacies, the number of different fallacies is as high as 300. One could only imagine how fallacious people's arguments could be with these 300 fallacies used, especially in circumstances where one needs to constantly deliver speeches to the audience and argue with his or her opponents, for instance, in political debate.

If we are talking about expressing their own opinions and convincing others, who does this job more dedicatedly than a politician? And indeed, nowadays, logical fallacies are seen often in political debate. Therefore, my research objects were examples of contemporary American political discourse in which I looked for logical fallacies. And because it is obviously impractical for me to study all 300 logical fallacies, I focused only a list of 18 common ones. And among them, the most popular ones that are most frequently used are the slippery slope fallacy, the straw man fallacy, the hasty generalization fallacy and the post hoc fallacy.

Basically, what I did is informing myself with some knowledge of these fallacies' concepts first. Then, I looked for videos of political discourse and debate as well as online articles. In order to make my research more condensed and more specific, I only chose several issues that are the most controversial in today's political environment. The issues I finally decided to work on are abortion, immigration, and gun control. I gave each of these three issues about two weeks to look up related background information and to analyze the fallacies I found in debate and articles.

To prepare myself with some knowledge about logical fallacies, I read Patricia Roberts-Miller's *Demagoguery and Democracy*. From this book, I learned how a healthy,



democratic debate should proceed and what role demagoguery plays in politics nowadays.

One of the most important things I learned from reading this book was the concepts of many fallacies such as the post hoc fallacy and the ad hominem fallacy. Prior to starting the research, I also did a bibliography assignment with the instructions of Professor Bizzell. This assignment required me to look for about 50 sources that talked about logical fallacies on any level. These sources could be videos, websites, and published books. By doing this assignment, I knew where to look when I needed sources would be understood what kind of sources are the most useful for my research.

After preparing myself with some knowledge, when I started the research formally, I decided to begin this project with the abortion issue first, for it was the reason why I wanted to do this research in the first place. With the help of Professor Bizzell, I divided my research on each issue into three sections, which are background information, common questions, and argument analysis, respectively. The first section will be facts I needed to know before starting my analysis so that I could discern the factual mistakes people make in their arguments. The second section focuses mainly on the common questions that were frequently involved in people's argument and discussion. And the third section -- the most important one -- is the analysis of these fallacies in the debate of politicians and political commentators.

One example of the use of fallacy is Benjamin Shapiro's answer to a question asked while he was giving a speech for pro-life and saying that he donated money to charities. An audience member asked him, "So, have you donated to Planned Parenthood?" Shapiro answered her question by saying, "No, because they kill babies; they kill 300,000 unborn children a year! I don't donate to a baby genocidal organization like Planned Parenthood." In

answering the question, he used the hasty generalization fallacy (could also be a half-truth fallacy). While it is true that it provides the service of abortion, it also provides other services such as birth control and long-acting reversible contraception, pregnancy testing, cervical cancer screening, etc. And Shapiro used the hasty generalization fallacy to make Planned Parenthood become a “genocidal organization” and thus, to evoke the audience’s anger toward it.

Undoubtedly, this research is more than interesting, especially when it became easy for me to tell if one made logical mistakes after I became familiar with the fallacies. Nonetheless, I also want to say that defining of these logical fallacies and discovering prestigious people making laughable mistakes are not all I learned. Before the readers get to the actual analysis of fallacies in my chapters on abortion, immigration, and gun control, I would like to interpret what I got out of this research other than what’s included in this essay already.

Being aware of your mental state is very important while looking for the flaws in others’ arguments. In order to find fallacies without biases, one needs to constantly remind oneself to be calm while processing each party’s argument. If any side of the two parties seems to have overwhelming emotions on the topic being discussed, one needs to be aware of this and try not to be influenced by it and stay calm in order to be a good arbiter. This is especially important in the cases where the argument itself is an emotional one and drags the audience into the disagreement and thus, affects your judgement on the validity of the argument and the accuracy of detecting fallacies. Sometimes it is not just the point at stake that is emotional but the two parties are emotional as well. In this circumstance, the argument

can be often more frustrating because when they get emotional enough, they tend to talk over each other throughout the debate. And the more emotional they get, the more careful you should be to control your own mental state.

The next thing one should be aware of as an arbiter is to be impartial from the very beginning all the way to the end of the debate. If you are a moderate, it will probably be easier to do so than if you strongly side with the liberals or the conservatives. What will happen when you are strongly side with one of the two parties is that you'll find it easier to detect the logical fallacies from the speaker of the opposite party and miss the ones in the side you support. If you are able to put your emotional state and personal political opinions aside while watching the debate, you will find that a better argument is not the only reason why you happen to agree one side more, because there is another crucial factor -- the ethos of the speaker.

The ethos of a person can be understood as the aura around him when he talks. Different people have different ethos, and when they speak, they deliver more messages than the argument only. For instance, in a debate, one may seem condescending while the other is more reasonable and calm; one may seem more aggressive while the other is more relaxed and mild with his language. If the audience does not like the ethos of the speaker, it might be easier for them to discern the logical fallacies in the speaker's arguments. After all, they are not attracted to their arguments anymore but are dominated by irrelevant feelings toward the speaker. Therefore, a good arbiter should be able to keep calm to observe closely the arguments of both sides.

Up to this point, we should realize that today's politics are not well-conducted, for there are so many factors to make them fallacious and misleading. Politicians are capable of pulling fallacies out of their pockets anytime and using them in their speeches. And citizens, who are not aware of these fallacies, become emotional because of the inflammatory arguments of the politicians and support new laws without understanding what is really going on. Politicians who make fallacious arguments are fully aware of their actions, and they do it on purpose, since this seems to be the fastest way to incite more voters to their side and thus, win more ballots for making laws themselves are in favor of. In these politicians' defense, it would be a waste of time to elucidate every voter what the laws are, how they can contribute to the well-being of the citizens, and why the opponents' laws are not as good, so why not use some rhetoric tactics and fallacies to get people angry and win their ballots in a snapshot?

Then, what is the point of political debates nowadays? What these political debates consist of are the personal attack on the opponents, avoidance of the real problem, or trigger of emotions. Basically, the political debate nowadays presents an inflammatory image on purpose instead of sincerely exchanging opinions with opponents. To be honest, I don't think there is a point. There is no point in these debates if what it concerns are only the votes instead of the rational consideration of the laws and policies being made.

Nonetheless, this is not how politics should work, at least not in a democracy. It should not be built upon a pile of lies. With the rule of democracy, one should understand that the successful laws and policies are established throughout democratic, healthy, and respectful discussions. In order to get closer to this ideal situation, people who participate in the discussions should first learn what a debate under democracy should look like and what

rules they should follow. Not only the politicians, however, but the ordinary citizens need to be informed with this knowledge as well, especially the concepts of different fallacies so that when the speakers of either party use them, they can discern their fallacious arguments as invalid. Democratic politics should be conducted with rational minds and mutual respect.

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## **Issue: Abortion**

### **Section I: background information about pregnancy and abortion**

Pregnancy is a 40-week period starting from the first day of a woman's last menstrual period, and it is separated into three trimesters. The first trimester spans from weeks 1 to 12; the second trimester is from weeks 13 to 26; and the third trimester is from weeks 27 to 40. The type of abortion procedure used in elective pregnancy termination is primarily determined by how far a woman is into pregnancy. During the first trimester, both medical and surgical abortion procedures are available with the medical procedure being only available up through nine weeks of gestation. During the second and the third trimesters, only surgical abortion is available. Before proceeding with any abortion procedures, a sonogram is recommended to determine if the pregnancy is viable, which means the pregnancy is uterine and non-ectopic pregnancy, and for accurate pregnancy dating.

There are two medical procedures that doctors can apply during the first trimester, including MTX (Methotrexate & Misoprostol) and Mifepristone and Misoprostol. MTX is a medical procedure used up to the first 7 weeks and was commonly used in the past. It is given orally or by injection during the first office visit. And antibiotics are given in order to prevent infection. Misoprostol tablets are given orally or inserted vaginally about three to seven days later, and this part of the procedure can be done at home. What MTX does is to trigger contractions and expel the fetus. The time this process needs may vary from a few hours to a few days. A physical exam is given a week later to ensure that the abortion procedure is complete and to check for complications.

Methotrexate is primarily used in the treatment of cancer and rheumatoid arthritis because it attacks the most rapidly growing cells in the body. In the case of abortion, it causes the fetus and placenta to separate from the lining of the uterus. Nowadays, using the drug for this purpose is not approved by the FDA (Food and Drug Administration). The side effects and risks of MTX include nausea, diarrhea, heavy bleeding, and fever. The procedure is unsuccessful approximately 5% of the time with the potential of requiring an additional surgical abortion procedure to complete the termination.

Mifepristone and Misoprostol (also called RU-486 or “the abortion pill”) are used to make medical procedure used up to the first 7 to 9 weeks of pregnancy. Before proceeding, a physical exam is first given in order to determine eligibility for this type of medical abortion procedure. One is not eligible if she has any of the following: ectopic pregnancy, ovarian mass, IUD, corticosteroid use, adrenal failure, anemia, bleeding disorders or use of blood thinners, asthma, liver or kidney problems, heart disease, or high blood pressure. Like MTX, antibiotics will be given to prevent infection.

Mifepristone is given orally during the first office visit. It blocks progesterone from the uterine lining, causing the lining to break down, preventing the ability to continue a pregnancy. Misoprostol tablets are taken orally or inserted vaginally about thirty-six to seventy-two hours after taking the mifepristone. The tablets will cause contractions and expel the fetus. This process may take a few hours or as long as a few days. A physical exam is given two weeks later to ensure the abortion was complete and to check for complications.

The side effects and risks of Mifepristone & Misoprostol include cramping, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, heavy bleeding, and infection. The procedure is unsuccessful



approximately 8-10% of the time with the potential of requiring an additional surgical abortion procedure to complete the termination. Both MTX and Mifepristone & Misoprostol are not advised for women who have anemia, bleeding disorders, liver or kidney disease, seizure disorder, acute inflammatory bowel disease or use an intrauterine device (IUD).

During the first trimester, a surgical abortion procedure is available—aspiration (also referred to as vacuum aspiration). This is a surgical abortion procedure used to terminate pregnancy up to sixteen weeks (from six to sixteen weeks). MVA (manual vacuum aspiration), a subdivision of it, can be used as early as three to twelve weeks since the pregnancy process starts.

The abortion provider will inform the patient about pain and possibly sedation. The patient will lie on her back with her feet in stirrups, and a speculum is inserted to open the vagina. A local anesthetic is administered to the cervix to numb it. Then a tenaculum (surgical instrument with long handles and a clamp at the end) is used to hold the cervix in place for the cervix to be dilated by absorbent rods that vary in size. The rods may also be put in a few days prior to the procedure. When the cervix is wide enough, a cannula, which is a long plastic tube connected to a suction device, is inserted into the uterus to suction out the fetus and placenta. The procedure usually lasts ten to fifteen minutes (usually under fifteen minutes), but recovery can require staying at the clinic for a few hours. The doctor will also give the patient antibiotics to help prevent infection.

Common side effects of vacuum aspiration include cramping, nausea, sweating, and feeling faint. Less frequent side effects include possible heavy or prolonged bleeding, blood clots, damage to the cervix, and perforation of the uterus. Infection due to remaining tissue or

infection caused by an STD or bacteria being introduced to the uterus can cause fever, pain, abdominal tenderness, and possibly scar tissue.

Dilation and curettage (D&C), also called sharp curettage, could be an option for both the first and the second trimesters. Furthermore, WHO only recommends D&C when manual vacuum aspiration is not available. D&C is a surgical procedure in which the cervix is dilated and a special instrument is used to scrape the uterine lining. This is a therapeutic gynecological procedure as well as the most often used method of first trimester miscarriage or abortion. The woman is typically put under monitored anesthesia care (MAC) before the procedure begins. The first step in a D&C is to dilate the cervix. A curette, a metal rod with a handle on one end and a sharp loop on the other, is then inserted into the uterus through the dilated cervix. The curette is used to gently scrape the lining of the uterus and remove the tissue in the uterus.

Dilation and evacuation (D&E) a surgical abortion procedure used to terminate a pregnancy after 16 weeks of gestation. In most cases, 24 hours prior to the actual procedure, the abortion provider will insert laminaria or a synthetic dilator inside the patient's cervix. When the procedure begins the next day, the abortion provider will use a tenaculum to keep the cervix and uterus in place and cone-shaped rods of increasing size are used to continue the dilation process. A numbing medication will be used on the cervix. A shot may be given before the procedure begins to ensure fetal death has occurred. A cannula (long tube) will then be inserted to begin removing tissue away from the lining. Then, using a curette (surgical instrument shaped like a scoop or spoon), the lining is scraped to remove any

residuals. If needed, forceps may be used to remove larger parts. The last step is usually a final suctioning to make sure the contents are completely removed.

The procedure normally takes between 15-30 minutes. The fetal remains are usually examined to ensure everything was removed and that the abortion was complete.

Abortion during the third trimester of the pregnancy is called late term abortion, and whether it is permitted depends on the laws of different states. The time frame referred to as “late term” means that the baby is considered “viable”—able to survive outside the womb (most medical communities establish 24 weeks gestation as the earliest time of viability). In states that permit late term abortion, dilation and extraction (D&X) is the most common and the most popular one used after 21 weeks of gestation.

Two days before the procedure, laminaria are inserted vaginally to dilate the cervix. The patient’s water should break on the third day and she should return to the clinic. The fetus is rotated and forceps are used to grasp and pull the legs, shoulders, and arms through the birth canal. A small incision is made at the base of the skull to allow a suction catheter inside. The catheter removes the cerebral material until the skull collapses. The fetus is then completely removed. The side effects of D&C, D&E and D&X are the same, including nausea, bleeding, and cramping which may last for two weeks following the procedure. Although rare, damage to the uterine lining or cervix, perforation of the uterus, infection, and blood clots are additional risks. However, for D&X, there is an increased chance of emotional problems from the reality of more advanced fetal development.

## **Section II: moral arguments about abortion**

Obviously, there are at least two different opinions about abortion, with one side advocating its legalization and the other proposing banning it. Each of the two sides has moral ground to support their arguments.

The proponents of abortion see the abortion right as vital for gender equality: abortion affects men and women disproportionately and is an important element of women's rights because women are more affected by the abortion debate than men, both individually (if they are considering an abortion) and as a gender. Furthermore, in the abortion debate, we should regard the woman as a person and not just as a container for the fetus. And therefore, we should give great consideration to her rights and needs as well as those of the unborn. The right to control one's own body is a key moral right. Women have this moral right to decide what to do with their bodies, and they are deprived of this right if they are not allowed to abort an unwanted fetus.

People who propose banning abortion, on the other hand, claim that a fetus is not "part" of a woman's body. They argue that a fetus is not the same sort of thing as a leg or a liver: it is not just a part of a woman's body, but is (to some extent) a separate "person" with its own right to life. Furthermore, people do not have the complete right to control their bodies. All people are subject to various restrictions on what they do with their bodies—and some of these restrictions (law against suicide or euthanasia) are just as invasive.

### **Section III: Controversial Issues**

- Is it ethically/morally wrong to kill any fetus that has the potential to life?

- What about the rights of the mother? If a woman is pregnant due to unfortunate incidents like rape then is it not her right to choose abortion?
  - What step should they take, if they're not prepared for the baby?
  - What in cases of teenage pregnancy? What if the mother is mentally, emotionally and economically unprepared to handle the nuisances of being a mother or parent?
- What should be the best decision in case the fetus is unhealthy? If it may not live till the time of birth, isn't it fair to abort it?
- Is it moral to abort the baby after 24 weeks of gestation (the late-term abortion)?
- Is gender selective abortion an option or is it immoral?
- If the mother has some complications during childbirth, should the doctor save the mother or the baby?
- What if the father doesn't want the baby but the mother wants it? What if the reverse happens? Who is to be given more priority when they both are equally responsible for creating the life?

#### **Section IV: Argument Analysis**

1<sup>st</sup>: “Ben Shapiro Destroys the Abortion debate (Compilation)” (17 November 2017)

This video is thirty minutes long and is a compilation of Benjamin Shapiro’s arguments against abortion. Among the six different pieces presented in this video, the one I picked starts from 3:35 to 7:50. Within the four minutes, Shapiro answers question asked by an audience member who is a proponent to a pro-choice group. She asks, “What would you advise to a young woman who’s not married, who gets raped but does not have access to an

abortion?” Shapiro replies, “First of all, I do appreciate that you’ve created the saddest possible scenario for a living human being. Is she also disabled? What’s really the whole hog is when she has breast cancer as well, as long as we are creating imaginary victims.”

The fallacy he uses here is motivism. If he intends to argue with this audience member in a democratic, healthy way as described by Roberts-Miller, he is supposed to answer the person’s question directly, which will be his suggestions to a woman who’s raped and does not have access to abortion. He nevertheless doubts the woman’s motivation of asking this question. He says that she deliberately creates the saddest possible scenario for a living human being that is irrelevant to their argument. By saying this, he hints that the audience member creates this scenario in order to draw sympathy from others; however, the woman’s intention or motivation is not relevant to whether or not her position is correct. Shapiro is not supposed to start his answer with this innuendo in the first place.

As their discussion proceeds, Shapiro says that the morality of killing a baby does not change as long as the baby is not actually threatening the life of the mother. But when the baby threatens the life of the mother, it would be moral to abort the baby. He illustrates this argument by providing an case where a mother needs chemotherapy for her breast cancer. The chemotherapy will undoubtedly abort the baby, but Shapiro states that the abortion of the baby is a byproduct of the chemotherapy. By this point, he commits the fallacy called “appealing to inconsistent premises.” Shapiro insisted above that a woman who is “raped and inaccessible to abortion” is the saddest scenario ever, but now he views scenarios such as “breast cancer and need chemotherapy” to be completely normal for the convenience of his own argument.

Shapiro then accuses the question lady for saying he is not compromising while she has not mentioned a word about it. “You say I’m not compromising. (But) I’m the only one in this conversation who’s expressed the willingness to take money out of my own pocket and put it in somebody else’s.”

First of all, he is using the straw man fallacy because he says that the lady is accusing him for not compromising while all she has been talking about is the rights of women. When he could not find arguments that are strong enough to knock down the “women rights” argument, he shifts the stasis to whether he is compromising. Furthermore, donating money to organizations or groups does not mean that he is actually compromising. Moreover, he did not stipulate that he actually gave out money but only expresses his willingness to give out his money.

The lady then asks, “So have you donated to Planned Parenthood?” Shapiro answers, “No, because they kill babies... they kill 300,000 unborn children a year! No, I don’t donate to a baby genocidal organization like Planned Parenthood.”

Shapiro uses the half-truth fallacy right here for saying that Planned Parenthood is a genocidal organization. Indeed, Planned Parenthood aborts about 300,000 babies per year, yet it does a lot of other things as well, not just limited to abortions. For instance, the services provided by Planned Parenthood (PPFA) include birth control and long acting reversible contraception; emergency contraception; clinical breast examinations; cervical cancer screening; pregnancy testing and pregnancy options counseling, etc. Therefore, Shapiro is using the half-truth fallacy to mislead the other audience members who might not know what Planned Parenthood really does.

2<sup>nd</sup>: “Ben Shapiro Responds to Abortion Claims,” (19 October 2017)

This is a YouTube clip published by EWTN, a global Catholic network. It invites Benjamin Shapiro to talk about the recurring theme of the questions he was asked when he gave speeches on college campuses. Towards the end of this video, Shapiro uses fallacies to answer one of the questions the hostess asks him. The question states, “Claim 1: abortion is only 3% of Planned Parenthood’s business, and they do a lot of good for women.” Shapiro replies: “Yes, supposedly the idea is that three percent of all services provided by Planned Parenthood are abortions; they include things like handing out condoms; things like regular screenings in those services. But the fact is that about 90% to 95% of the actual operations (of abortion) are performed by Planned Parenthood; and Planned Parenthood provides three hundred to four hundred thousand abortions a year. So it all depends on the metric you’re using but to suggest that Planned Parenthood is not in the abortion business is simply false.”

In his response, Shapiro uses both “straw man” fallacy and “false statistics” fallacy. After acknowledging only 3% of Planned Parenthood’s business is abortion, he shifts the stasis of argument by pointing out Planned Parenthood does over 90% of the abortions in the entire country, which obviously makes Planned Parenthood look bad. Whether Planned Parenthood is an abortion business should be based on what in general it does, how many the abortions services account for among all services it provides. Instead, Shapiro focuses on the percentage of abortion among the abortions in the entire country. He would fail to fool people if he focused on the fact that 97% of Planned Parenthood’s services are not abortion.



The hostess asks the second question, “(What if someone says that) it doesn’t matter what you believe about abortion, you don’t have the right to impose your pro-life views on another woman's body. How do you respond to that.” Shapiro compares this question with an example of a person beating up his/her dog. He says that he is not a great moral arbiter and seems does not have the right to judge. But he then replies, “The answer is that, when we see a violation of moral law, we make these moral judgements all the time. It is a violation of moral law to kill another human being, which is why we have murder laws.”

He answers the hostess’s question using a fallacy under the category “missing content.” Without explanation, Shapiro assumed that the fetus is a human being that if it’s moved or aborted will constitute violation of murder laws. He uses his own opinion as the major premise of his argument while others might not agree with this premise. Without this premise, his arguments will collapse. If the fetus does not count as a human being, then removing it from the mother’s body will not be a violation of laws because technically, that would not be the “murder” of a “human being.”

**3<sup>rd</sup>: “Patrick S. Tomlinson on Twitter: a question for the pro-life group,” (16 October 17)**

Patrick S. Tomlinson tweeted a question regarding to abortion, claiming that he has a question to knock down a pro-life group’s argument. The scenario he created goes like this, “You're in a fertility clinic. Why isn't important. The fire alarm goes off. You run for the exit. As you run down this hallway, you hear a child screaming from behind a door. You throw open the door and find a five-year-old child crying for help. They're in one corner of the room. In the other corner, you spot a frozen container labeled ‘1000 Viable Human Embryos.’

The smoke is rising. You start to choke. You know you can grab one or the other, but not both before you succumb to smoke inhalation and die, saving no one. Do you A) save the child or B) save the thousand embryos? There is no 'C.' 'C' means you all die." Tomlinson says that no pro-life people have ever answered this question directly or honestly with either choices, because we are all aware that the correct answer is A and that the pro-life people realizes this correct answer will destroy their arguments.

In this scenario Tomlinson created, there are more than one logical fallacies. First of all, he gives only two options: to save the five-year-old or the 1000 embryos, and he explicitly says that there is no choice C. This is a set up for the false dilemma fallacy (or false binary). This fallacy implies that there are only two solutions to the problem and forces people to make a decision between these two options—after all, this is a situation provided by this special setting of a fertility clinic. In real life, the options people have in such situation would not be limited to merely two—there might be others around who could help save both.

Secondly, in elucidating his argument, Tomlinson says that the pro-life supporters "will never answer honestly, because we all instinctively understand the right answer is 'A.' A human child is worth more than a thousand embryos. Or ten thousand. Or a million." In this part of his argument, he commits both the hasty generalization and the ad populum fallacies. In terms of the hasty generalization fallacy, he commits it by assuming that because he, as a member of a vast population, believes that the right answer is A, therefore, "we all" instinctively understand the right answer is A. Tomlinson concludes that something is true without adequate evidence to prove it. As for the ad populum fallacy, he uses it by assuming that because the majority ("we all") thinks that a human child is worth more than a thousand

embryos, then this is true. Nevertheless, just because many people believe something, this does not make it true.

Tomlinson also uses the circular reasoning fallacy when he says that “this question absolutely eviscerates their arguments, and their refusal to answer confirms that they know it to be true.” There is no connection between “their refusal to answer” and “they know it to be true.” Or maybe there is, but Tomlinson did not present the link in front of us. Furthermore, this is a circular reasoning fallacy because the conclusion is used before by Tomlinson to demonstrate why they do not answer the question. According to him early on, it is because they know answering the question would overthrow their argument so they refuse to answer. Now he insists that the fact that the pro-life people refuse to answer proves their acknowledgement of the so-called “truth.” Therefore, while there is no link between the refusal and acknowledgement, Tomlinson uses fallacies to establish his invalid reasoning and argument.

In his tweet, Tomlinson also uses the ad hominem fallacy when talking about the pro-life opinions, “No one believes life begins at conception. No one believes embryos are babies, or children. Those who claim to are trying to manipulate you so they can control women.” To be specific, this fallacy is also motivism. Tomlinson simply puts it this way: all people who believes life begins at conception are doing this not for the sake of their own belief but for manipulating the pro-choice group. Doubts on their motivation do not make Tomlinson’s argument stronger but make it more irrational because he is basically attacking the people who stand on the opposite side of him based on their identities alone.

There can be another fallacy that was used by Tomlinson—appeal to false authority. Patrick S. Tomlinson is an author who writes science fictions. People who liked and retweeted his tweeter probably thought of him as an authority and therefore wrongly believed his argument only because of their respect to him or his reputation (if there is any).

4<sup>th</sup>: Clinton and Trump’s debate over abortion,” (19 October 2016)

In this YouTube clip, Clinton and Trump are talking about their viewpoints on abortion during the presidential election debate. The question first goes to Clinton, asking how far she believes the right of abortion goes, since she voted against a ban on late term abortion before. Her response gives examples of pathetic pregnant women she has met who decided to abort their babies in late term pregnancy and struggled with tremendous pain and anguish while making such decisions. She puts it this way, “Or something that’s terrible has happened or just been discovered about the pregnancy. I don’t think the US government should be stepping in and making those most personal decisions. So you can regulate if you are doing so with the life and the health of the mother take into account.” From Clinton’s argument, it is clear that she thinks government could regulate abortion laws if the safety of the mother is guaranteed. And if it is not, then it is the mothers’ choice whether to keep the baby or not.

When it is Trump’s turn to talk about it, Trump presents his argument with the use of half-truth, hasty generalization, and ad misericordiam fallacies. He says, “I think it is horrible if you go with what Hillary is saying that, in the ninth month, you can take the baby and rip the baby out of the womb of the mother just prior to the birth to the baby... on the final

day...and that's not acceptable.” Trump uses half-truth fallacy here because by saying this he only takes half of what Clinton suggests. He deliberately ignored Clinton's premise, which is that this solution could be considered a solution when the life of the mother is threatened by pregnancy. If this condition is provided, then late-term abortion is more acceptable and does not seem so bad to the audience.

Trump uses hasty generalization by saying that all late term abortions are done “just prior to the birth to the baby” and “on the final day.” Nevertheless, it is known to all that this is not always the case.

Trump also uses ad misericordiam in his argument. He graphically presents the abortion procedure, using phrase such as “rip the baby.” This will help him get support of people who will be overwhelmed by emotion and empathy to the unborn.

#### 5<sup>th</sup>: “Ben Shapiro Destroys the Abortion Argument,” (6 October 2016)

Shapiro played a video of Olivia Wilde, an actress who happens to be a member of the House of Representatives. In this video, while being pregnant, Wilde speaks why she is pro-choice. She claims that she is thinking a lot about reproductive rights in this election cycle, and the reason why this topic is on her mind is because she was, at that time, pregnant with a baby. Shapiro vehemently criticizes what she says in this video.

In his comments, Shapiro says, “As you're about to have your child, you are thinking ‘Boy, wouldn't it be great that I could still kill this thing? It's really imperative that I'd be able to still kill this thing. Look how pregnant I am. There is a baby in here. This is my beautiful child and I was thinking maybe I should just kill it.’” Shapiro uses the cherry

picking fallacy and misinterprets Wilde's opinion deliberately. Yes, Wilde is talking about reproductive rights, which includes abortion, but the reproductive rights include many other choices, such as the access to birth control, the freedom from coerced sterilization and contraception, and the right to good-quality reproductive healthcare. Besides, Wilde merely says that she hopes people can choose when to have a baby. If someone decides now is not the time, they can simply choose not to be pregnant, which has nothing to do with getting an abortion. And from what Wilde says, it is more than clear that she certainly does not want an abortion of her own baby. Therefore, Shapiro uses the cherry picking fallacy by choosing to only present Wilde's argument partially.

In this same video, Shapiro uses both the circular reasoning fallacy and the false dilemma fallacy while discussing the relation between one's choice of abortion and one's attitude to babies. Basically, he is saying that if one supports abortion then one must hate babies. His exact words are, "I love the glowing way she (Wilde) presents us, 'Here I am; I can't be a bad woman because I'm pregnant; I can't hate babies because here I am—I'm pregnant.' If you don't hate babies or if you are not interested in killing them, then why are you in favor of people being allowed to kill them?" The logic here is that one must hate babies if one supports abortion. Since he also says early on in this video that people support abortion because they hate babies, he uses the circular reasoning fallacy by exchanging the premise and the conclusion to make the full argument while there is no other evidence that could support his arguments. His argument also put people into a false dilemma. From his perspective, one cannot be fond of the baby and choose to do abortion at the same time. If you choose to abort the baby, then there is no doubt that you hate him / her.

6<sup>th</sup>: “Lila Rose and Ilyse Hogue debate abortion on CNN Crossfire,” (23 January 2014)

This is a YouTube clip of a debate between Ilyse Hogue, the president of NARAL (National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws) Pro-choice America, and Lila Rose, president of Live Action Anti-Abortion Group. In this video, they discuss what is changing in the national debate and what are the voters’ attitudes. At one point of this debate, Sally, as the “representative” of the pro-choice group and also one of the show’s hosts, asks Rose to explain why she insists on restricting abortion law while doing this just pushes women in danger. She says, “For the women who still choose abortion, restricting their option just leads them to more dangerous choices.” Rose replies, “Why are they in that position to feel like abortion is their only option? Could it be because a boss didn’t want to promote them? Because a boyfriend is going to leave them? A university professor said we’re not going to be flexible with our class schedule? Let’s look at those reasons and address the reasons and not turn into killing, dismembering, poisoning our littlest Americans.”

Rose uses the straw man fallacy at this point. The question Sally asks is a valuable question that is based on facts and is realistic nowadays. She stresses that restricting their options (whether contraception or abortion) forces these pregnant women to choose abortion with dangerous methods such as self-abortion; however, Rose uses the straw man fallacy and shifts the stasis of the question. She suggests that what we should do is to improve the social circumstances to make the women feel no need to abort their babies. Nonetheless, while the social environment has not yet changed and could not change in a short time, we do need to

deal with the problem raised by Sally—should we still ban abortion if this pushes more women to dangerous situations such as self-abort and illegal abortion?

The other host, Newt, being on the side of the pro-lifers, raises the question about the decision of *Roe v. Wade* compared to what the court's decision would be if this happens nowadays. He says, "The rationale of *Roe v. Wade* is based on a particular moment in time about viability of the baby. The fact is that with new technologies and new scientific breakthroughs, about 80 to 90% of babies survives after 26 weeks. If *Roe v. Wade* were being decided today, it would set a much later date and say that clearly this is no longer a question about abortion anytime anywhere but it would say that there is a cut-off because after that date, the baby clearly is viable, and is a baby."

Newt certainly uses a missing link fallacy here. Without any knowledge of how *Roe v. Wade* would be ruled nowadays, he asserts that the Supreme Court would (definitely) "set a much late date and say that clearly this is no longer question about abortion anytime, anywhere, but it would say that..." In his argument, the premise—*Roe v. Wade* being put on trial today—and the conclusion—the ruling would undoubtedly be X, Y, and Z—do not have concrete, credible link. Therefore, it is a missing link fallacy. Moreover, though, he correctly states the ruling of *Roe v. Wade* in 1973, he imagines the ruling of the Court if this case were on trial now—this leads to the half-truth fallacy.

Rose uses the misuse of statistics fallacy later on in her argument. She says, "late-term abortion is horrific, but all abortion is horrific, even in the first trimester. Keep in mind, hearts start beating at three weeks." This information she provides is wrong. Hearts do not beat from three weeks, rather, the embryo starts to develop heart at the third week, and it



starts to beat after the fourth week. After saying this, Sally rephrases her argument saying that “you mean that the rapist should have more rights than the woman to decide what happens to that woman.” This is a use of the straw man fallacy, for Rose did not mention a word about the rapists’ rights and definitely did not say that the rapist should have more rights than the woman. By shifting the stasis, Sally could use this inflammatory statement to raise anger of the audience.

Sally then raises the controversial fact that the pro-life people do not agree with ways that can reduce the need of abortions in America, such as sex education and contraception. Rose responds, “No one is talking about the (birth control pills’) risk to women, even the World Health Organization called them a Group One carcinogen.” Rose uses the half-truth fallacy here. Scientific studies show that while the risks of breast and cervical cancers are increased in women who use oral contraceptives, the risks of endometrial, ovarian, and colorectal cancers are reduced. Rose chooses to only include the cases of increased risk of cancer in her argument but fails to address the risks of the types of cancer that birth control pills decrease.

7<sup>th</sup>: “Ilyse Hogue discusses the Reproductive Fact Act with Megyn Kelly” (21 October 2015)

This video elaborates arguments of the pro-life’s and pro-choice’s opinions on a controversial new law in California at the year of 2015. The measure forces pregnancy centers, even pro-life centers, to provide their clients with information about public programs that offer access to abortions. According to the new law, “Providers must have either a prominent sign posted in the waiting room, or actually give the information to clients in hard

copy or digital form.” On Kelly’s Show, Ilyse Hogue and Lila Rose then express their opinions on this new act of the California government.

Kelly asked Hogue how she would feel if pro-life posters and pamphlets are handed to families who want abortion. Hogue replies that this is already the case, “they provide information about options from adoption to prenatal care to legally accessible abortion....”

Rose then responds, “Planned Parenthood abortion facilities, their focus is abortion, over 90% of pregnant women walking into a Planned Parenthood are going to end up having an abortion. Their focus is abortion. It is a full-on assault on the freedom of speech and it’s forcing pro-lifers to be posting ads effectively in their facilities. Where is it going to stop? Is California going to force churches or pro-life families or Catholic schools to force to post abortion notices everywhere? This is an extremely sick law.”

First of all, Rose uses the wrong statistics and thus constitutes a fallacy. The number 90% should refer to the percentage of abortions Planned Parenthood does in all abortions done in the U.S. instead of that the percentage of women who aim at getting abortion when go to this organization. By saying that 90% of women who go to Planned Parenthood are aiming at abortion, Rose makes Planned Parenthood look like a “baby killer” agency.

Rose also uses the slippery slope fallacy in her argument. She suggests that because the California government orders prominent signs posted in the waiting room of clinics, they will be forcing abortion posts in churches, pro-life families, or Catholic schools soon.

Nonetheless, just because there are posters in clinics now does not mean that posters will soon be put up in churches, schools, or inside the pro-lifers’ houses. Rose makes this look

like Pandora's box and creates a series of calamity to raise anger and emotions out of her audience.

8<sup>th</sup>: "Controversial Debate over Abortion 24-week Limit and Gender Selection," (15 August 2017)

This is a YouTube video clip that specifically discusses abortion choice after 24 weeks of pregnancy and the gender selective abortion. It is a TV show in the United Kingdom held by *Loose Women*. "Should abortions be a form of birth control," "Is it time to get rid of the 24-week abortion limit," and "Should we abort the baby if it is not the gender you want" are the three main questions that are answered by the Chief Executive of British Pregnancy Advisory Service.

One of the hostesses says that she agrees with abortions as a backup solution if the mother has done everything to prevent pregnancy but still ends up being pregnant; but she continues, "My problem with it is you also think we should get rid of the 24-week limit." The Chief Executive answers, "The typical reasons of a late-term abortion are probably the leave of their husbands or the sickness and complications of the fetus—anyway, something has changed significant in her life. But the point is that it's legal for us to end that pregnancy at 24 weeks, it's illegal at 24 weeks and one day.

This answer uses the straw man fallacy. The hostess asks why she advocates to get rid of the 24-week limit, meaning why she thinks abortions after 24 weeks of pregnancy should be allowed. Nonetheless, the Chief Executive answers this question by saying that it is because the 24-week limit is permitted by the law. This question has nothing to do with law

but is asking about her own, personal opinion on the 24-week limit issue. What she did is putting legality as the point at stake and essentially ignores the question asking about her own opinion.

Later on, the Chief Executive is again asked about her point of view is on gender selective abortion, meaning if the baby is the “wrong” gender (not the one you’d prefer), whether you can abort the baby. She answers that “I think it should always come down to the woman who has to live with that decision for her life rather than just walk away from it like us (who just suggest her to do this and that).” The other hostess then says, “The allowance to no time limit and to gender selective abortion opens up a system that will be massively abused by certain people.” In her argument, the hostess uses the slippery slope here, which is also the scare tactics. The basic structure of the slippery slope fallacy is that if you do something of less importance, then it will inevitably lead to something with greater influence. In this case, the hostess is suggesting that if there is no limit on both the time and reason for abortion, it will inevitably lead to a massively abused system that would be improperly used by women; however, there is no evidence, statistics, or studies that sufficiently support her conclusion. This hasty and irresponsible conclusion can mislead the audience.

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## **Issue: Immigration**

### **Section I: Information**

**\*\*What does the U.S.-Mexico border look like now:**

Geographically, the United States-Mexico border is 1954 miles long, reaching from the Pacific Ocean in the west to the Gulf of Mexico in the east. On the U.S. side, according to the 2010 Census, the land surrounding the border is home to approximately 7.3 million people. Crossing California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, the border spans nearly every type of terrain, including cities, farmlands, deserts, mountains, valleys, reservoirs, and a National Park. The majority of the border—1254 miles or 63%--is marked by the Rio Grande River, which flows up to 500 feet wide and 60 feet deep at certain points. In general, the U.S.-Mexico border is open with very little infrastructure, roads, very few people living there, very sparsely populated.

It is not easy for the federal government to build any grand structure there on the border. Only one-third of the land on which the southern border is located is owned by the federal government or Native American Tribes—the rest is largely state property or farmland owned by states or individual ranchers. This allocation means that in order to build any structures there, the federal government must either receive permission from each individual landowner whose property will be affected or must exercise its powers of eminent domain to take possession of the land, which is an extremely unpopular and legally costly way.

The situation of the border is also complicated because it is subject to international treaty law. In 1970, the United States and Mexico signed a treaty that restricts construction along the Rio Grande and prohibits disrupting the river's natural flow. As a result, both

countries are restricted from building in the river or within its floodplain if doing so would increase flooding on its banks or affect the course of the river. This treaty obligation significantly affects where and how a structure can be constructed along much of the southern border and requires the government of Mexico to approve of structure built even on the U.S. side.

\*\*What does border security look like now:

Roughly, 38% of the border is fenced. The most highly-trafficked and regularly-crossed areas of the border are protected by physical barriers. The Border Patrol of the United States now has 21,000 agents, which is a greater number than at any time in the history. The priority mission of the Border Patrol is to prevent terrorists and terrorists' weapons, including weapons of mass destruction, from entering the United States and to detect and prevent illegal entry of aliens into the United States. The Border Patrol helps maintain borders that work-facilitating the flow of legal immigration and goods while preventing the illegal trafficking of people and contraband. There are official border crossing areas that are well controlled, but there are other areas where people are involved in contraband and other kinds of illegal trafficking. In recent years, new and specialized technology is being created within the Border Patrol that holds increasing potential to assist agents in fulfilling the mission of the Patrol. Protecting the southern border is a difficult task. There were 786 documented assaults on officers and agents in 2017, which is an increase from 454 in 2016 according to the government data; however, no one could say why there was a dramatic increase in assaults.



Currently, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) maintains several types of “tactical infrastructure” (fencing, other physical barriers, and support structures such as observation towers) along the border. First of all, there is primary pedestrian fencing that runs directly along the border and is intended to prevent crossings on foot. The secondary fencing runs behind primary fencing, usually separated by a patrol road that allows the Border Patrol to monitor the area between fences. Thirdly, tertiary pedestrian fencing runs behind the secondary fencing, intended to prevent attempts to cross the border on foot. Lastly, there is vehicle fencing that prohibits motorized vehicles from crossing. As of May 2016, Department of Homeland Security has installed 353 miles of primary pedestrian fencing, 36 miles of secondary fencing, 14 miles of tertiary pedestrian fencing, and 300 miles of vehicle fencing.

Nevertheless, much of the existing barrier along the southern border hardly qualifies as a fence or wall. In fact, many stretches consist of nothing more than a “vehicle barrier” that fails to slow down foot traffic. The remainder of the fence is a mixture of easily climbed, poorly installed corrugated panels and other ad hoc materials. Only short stretches is a heavy-duty barrier installed in a concrete footing or double-layered fencing separated by a patrol road. Trump administration has promised to improve the southern border security by constructing a single-layer wall in the most problematic areas where a sufficient barrier does not exist. The cost estimates for constructing this border barrier have ranged from 8 billion to 40 billion.

\*\*Why do immigrants come to the U.S.:

There are various pull and push factors that determine why a Mexican citizen would choose to come to the United States. Some pull factors that make the US appealing include access to better healthcare and quality education, large existing communities of Mexican immigrants, family reunification, and more job opportunities. These factors are correlated with the economic benefits of the successful, wealthy American society.

In fact, the US policies have contributed to some of the reasons Mexicans feel forced to leave their native country and opt to live in the US. Trade agreement such as NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) displaces more than five million agricultural workers from the land that they had lived for years. They do not have the source to maintain it. Therefore, some of them choose to leave their homes and come to the United States. They are “forced immigrants.” They did not want to leave their homeland but are left with no choice.

Meanwhile, many Mexicans come to the U.S. so that they can provide a better future for their children, even if they themselves would have rather stayed in Mexico. In these cases, the emphasis is on economic opportunities for the children of Mexican immigrants.

Another reason for immigrating to the United States to flee a home country where someone is subjected to persecution and imminent danger. In this case, the immigrant can seek asylum in the United States, and during the process is safe from being deported. There is a difference between fleeing a home country due to forced economic reasons like poverty and unemployment and fleeing because of fear for one’s life and security with no help from the government.

\*\*What is Chain Migration:

When an immigrant to the United States sponsors other family members for admission--such as parents, children and siblings--who can then sponsor other immigrants themselves, and so on. In 2015, the United States granted 1,051,031 immigrants lawful permanent resident status. Under the United States' current immigration system, most migrants receive a green card simply because they are the relative of an earlier migrant, not because of what they can contribute to American society. this creates a "chain" of immigrants who can then sponsor other immigrants in the same manner. These, in turn, may sponsor more immigrants, and so on.

Chain migration became the driving force behind immigration to the United States in 1965, with the passage of the current version of the Immigration and Nationality Act. The 1965 legislation changed the objective of U.S. immigration policy--rather than assimilate immigrants who can succeed in the United states, the immigration policy shifted its focus to an extremely broad concept of "family reunification," which placed the integrity of immigrant families above the economic, national security, and public safety interests.

\*\*The dangers of illegal immigration:

Recent gang activity throughout Mexico often pours over the primary borders, bringing with it the illegal transportation of guns and drugs. In addition, the general notion that no parameter for documentation exists for one entering the country, as a result of insufficient border-point security measures, clearly presents national security issues to the larger American population.

Dangers that stem from the current system of American immigration are comprised of human trafficking and exploitation, such as abduction, prostitution, and slavery. Because the border is weakly protected, criminals have been able to establish international trafficking routes where individuals are taken from Mexico, sometimes against their will, and forced into some wing of criminal activity. Migrants could turn to smugglers, who often charge thousands of dollars to get others across the border. In many cases, these smugglers are also tied to drug cartels. Migrant deaths climbed 17 percent in first seven months of 2017. Last year, 294 migrants died crossing the border. Compared with 329 in 2016, there was a slight decline in deaths. Nonetheless, this decline comes with the overall border activity. Since 1998, more than 7200 migrants died crossing the border from Mexico—more than the number of U.S. troops killed in Iraq and Afghanistan combined.

## **Section II: Controversial Issues**

- Is the southern border of the U.S. really dangerous?
- Should the U.S. build a wall along the southern border?
- Should children of illegal immigrants be granted legal citizenship?
- Which one is more important? Family reunification or zero tolerance policy?
- Should immigrants be deported if they commit a serious crime?
- Should there be a temporary ban on all immigration into the United States?
- Should the U.S. increase restrictions on its current border security policy?
- Is there discrimination against the immigrants?
- Should we legalize the unauthorized immigrants?

- How does the current issue affect legal immigrants that are already in the country?
- Are immigrants, regardless the legality of their identity, really dangerous?

### **Section III: Argument Analysis**

1st: “All Employment Growth Since 2000 Went to Immigrants,” by Steven A. Camarota &

Karen Zeigler

“All Employment Growth Since 2000 Went to Immigrants” is an article from a website named *Center for Immigration Studies*. This article mainly discusses that the declination of the Americans’ employment is the result of mass immigration. Basically, immigrants from 2000 to 2014 take away many job opportunities from the natives and therefore, severely damage the justice of the employment market.

Nevertheless, the arguments in this article cannot be fully established because it misuses statistics. Throughout the article, in many occasions, only the actual numbers are mentioned and compared instead of the percentage. This use of data is especially misleading while the numbers are huge and thus, “emotional” for the reader. For instance, the article articulates that from 2000 to 2014, the jobs held by the immigrants increased 5.7 million while they declined 127,000 for the natives. Both of them are big numbers and without necessary explanations, can be confusing. The exact language the article uses is: “the total number of working-age (16-65) immigrants (legal and illegal) holding a job increased 5.7 million from the first quarter of 2000 to the first quarter of 2014, while declining 127,000 for natives.” First of all, the author should provide the percentage of the increase and decrease over these 14 years. They might also need to prove that the education level of the Americans

did not decline during this period of time because the education level can also be a factor that results in the declination of employment. Then, the author needs to compare the percentage of growth and declination based on the overall increase and decrease, taking other factors into account as well.

2nd: “Mass Immigration Is Too Dangerous for America,” by FAIR. November 2016.

This is a very short article from FAIR (Federation for American Immigration Reform). This article makes the conclusion that all of the immigrants are dangerous and that the U.S. is targeted by terrorists and therefore, we should reduce immigration.

The article begins with the sentence, “Since 9/11, the United States has accepted 2-3 million migrants from countries where radical terror organizations operate.” Here, the author uses the half-truth fallacy. It is true that the U.S. has taken many immigrants in after 9/11; however, it also took in immigrants before 9/11. While the action of taking in immigrants before 9/11 is not accused, the tragedy of 9/11 made immigrants who came into this country afterwards look suspicious. The emphasis on 9/11 increases the anxiety of the reader and enhance their fear of immigrants. Besides, the author uses the half-truth fallacy again by saying that the countries are the land of “radical terror organizations.” Though it is true that there are some radical terror organizations in the countries where the migrants come from, they do not generate *only* radical terror organizations, and there are definitely good people from those countries on south of the U.S.

In the second paragraph, the author states, “The United States is a target for terrorists. This was demonstrated when hijacked planes destroyed the twin towers in New York City on

9/11/2001.” This statement might seem valid, for it is always thought that the United States is a target of the terrorists; however, if we look closer into the argument, we will find the invalidity. There is missing link between the two things “being attacked” and “target of terrorists.” Being attacked once, even though it is a major attack, is not sufficient to prove that the United States will become target of all terrorist attacks. This fallacy could be a slippery slope fallacy, which infers that one event will inevitably leads to more severe events. In this case, the statement is saying that after the tragedy of 9/11, there will be more and more calamities in U.S.

### 3rd: “Examples of Serious Crimes By Illegal Aliens,” by FAIR

This article informs its readers some tragic accidents happened to American families. These accidents happened because of the inappropriate, unlawful, and criminal activities done by illegal immigrants. Along with the written texts of these traumatic incidents, the article provides links YouTube videos which present these tragedies from the perspectives of the family members of the victims. In these videos, they talked about how they are hunted by what happened to their family members and how their encounter with illegal immigrants completely affected their life. After introducing these tragic events happened to individual Americans, it lists “archive of serious crimes committed by illegal aliens,” which is a collection of brutal, horrible crimes done by immigrants.

While it is reasonable for a Republican organization to create a web page like this, that does not mean there is no fallacy in their points of view. FAIR does use fallacies frequently, and this article is not exclusive because it uses half-truth fallacy. It lists out only

illegal immigrants who had done these crimes; however, there are illegal immigrants who come to this country hoping to find job opportunities. Moreover, there are also illegal immigrants who are forced to move because they cannot keep their life going with the land policy in their own country. In these cases, they act very carefully in order not to violate the law and indeed, they work hard in order to earn legal status in this country. This web page misleads its audience to ignore these well-behaved, hard-working immigrants and instead, focuses only on the illegal ones who are only a small portion of all immigrants. In doing this, it exaggerates the immigrants' bad influence on American society. Furthermore, not all crimes done in the United States are committed by immigrants. Some of them are committed by American citizens. By focusing on the crimes done by illegal immigrants and uploading videos of victims, the website draw sympathy out of its audience, who are likely to become extremely emotional on the immigration issue.

4th: "Border agent attack sparks new debate over proposed wall," 20 November 2017.

This is a YouTube video published by Fox News. It is a debate between the conservative commentator David Wohl and the co-founder of Third Way as well as former deputy assistant of president Clinton, Matt Bennett. The issue they have discrepancy on is the wall on the southern border that was promised by President Trump, which is inflicted by a news about an illegal immigrant likely used rocks to attack U.S. border agent. Both Wohl and Bennett express their ideas on the grounds of both Republicans and Democrats. Wohl supports the building of the wall and expresses his worries over national security whereas Bennett suggests the wall is an inefficient and foolish way to protect the southern border, and



he also says there are many other ways and technology that can be used as a substitution to the wall plan.

Within this video, another video of Trump that shows his intention of building the wall is played. In this video, Trump says, “We are going to have the wall. It’s part of what we are doing; we need it. That’s rough territory; that’s where the drugs are coming in; a lot of things are happening along the southern border. And we are going to straighten it out.” He uses both the half-truth and the false dilemma fallacies. The half-truth fallacy is used when he says that the southern border is where the drugs are coming in. It is true that some drugs in American come from countries on the other side of the U.S. southern border; however, Trump made it sound like that all drugs that are currently used illegally in the United States are from those countries, which undoubtedly makes the wall sound a lot more important than it might be. The false dilemma fallacy is used when Trump says that in order to straighten things that are happening over the border out, the Americans need to build the wall. By saying this, he puts the audience into false dilemma: either build the wall, or let all these “things” that are bad for our country happen endlessly. On the other hand, this can also be defined as slippery slope fallacy as well as the scare tactic. Basically, Trump is saying that if we do not build the wall, all drugs will come in (therefore, only if we build the wall we can stop the drugs from coming in).

After watching the Trump video, the hostess asks Wohl if he thinks building the border wall would have stopped this incident, which is the attack by illegal immigrants to the border agents. Wohl’s response uses the second fallacy in this video. He replies, “It looks like it would have, (because) these desolated areas along the border are typically where these

agents get ambushed.” Here, Wohl uses the missing link fallacy and, though I am not sure, this fallacy is probably a hasty generalization. Even though this is the area that border agent usually get ambushed at, there is no credible evidence that shows the wall would absolutely prevent the incident from happening. Wohl concludes something is true (the wall is useful) without providing adequate evidence.

Wohl then says, “(the border wall policy) has gotta be passed; how many more of these tragic murders need to take place before the democrats get on board. It needs to happen and it need to happen quickly.” In arguing his points of view, Wohl uses ad misericordiam fallacy, which attempts to garner support for a position out of emotions. Wohl describes these accidents as tragic and devastating. While it might be true that the severity of these accidents are as tragic and devastating as it sounds like, ad misericordiam is used in order to persuade people to join the conservatives’ opinion on this by arousing people’s emotion toward the victims.

When Bennett argues back, he says, “Most republicans from the border regions, the ones who represent New Mexico, Arizona--800 miles of Texas border represented by Will Hurd. Those republicans think the wall is a bad idea.” Here, he uses ad populum fallacy and emphasizes how many people, even some and maybe a lot of the republicans, are opposed to the idea of the wall; however, just because there are a large number or majority of people do not believe in the necessity of the wall, this does not mean the wall is not needed. Therefore, Bennett’s argument here is flawed because the majority opinion does not mean the right opinion. And it certainly does not mean that we all should follow that opinion.

Then, question goes to Wohl again. He still holds his position that it is necessary and urgent to build the wall. As for the opinions against it, he replies, “you can call it what you will. Israel has one that protects Israelites from terrorists coming into their country. They (the walls) actually exist all over the world. But when America decides to put it up, we seem to get the issues that ‘Trump’ this decision.” Like Bennett, Wohl uses the ad populum (bandwagon) fallacy. Indeed, many other countries all over the world either have the wall already or are in the process of building a wall. Nonetheless, the fact that many are doing it does not mean it applies to the situation of United States perfectly and is the correct decision for the U.S. to make at this point. Ad populum is used again toward the end of Wohl’s argument when he says that an abundant amount of Latino and Hispanic friends are in favor of the wall because they are critically concerned about their family safety. Similarly, this is not valid logic because what these Latino and Hispanic friends want is not necessary right and wise for current situation of the United States southern border issue. By the way, this argument of his probably uses another fallacy--ad hominem. When arguing this issue, what matters is not the identities of the supporters of the wall. It does not matter whether it is the white people, the Latino, the Hispanic, or even the Latino who are in favor of this or not. It is whether this policy is beneficial for the U.S. that matters.

5th: “Debate: Will the border wall ‘make America white again?’” 29 June 2018.

This is a video of a debate between Ladawn Jones, the former Georgia state representative, and Ted Harvey from the republican committee on multiple issues on DACA and the border wall. At the time this video was published, the democrats in Congress have

offered to provide billions of dollars for Trump's wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. In exchange, they want a provision that would grant protection from deportation and create a path to citizenship for young undocumented immigrants brought to the U.S. as children.

When the debate begins, the host first asks Jones, "A wall for DACA, why would the democrats take that?" Jones responds, "The perception that this wall creates for America is something that they've been trying to fight against we see as the president travels around the country that there are protests everywhere because of this *image* he is putting out." In her argument, Jones uses the appeal to tradition fallacy. From the perspective of the democrats, their action of fighting can easily be justified. And the reason is because the perception the wall presents is against American values that they've been proponents of for many years. Basically, Jones is trying to say that because the democrats have tried to protect the perception of America for many years, this action is absolutely right and flawless; however, this is not the case. Though, indeed, many people have been practicing some traditions for hundreds and maybe even thousands of years, those traditions are wrong and need to be improved. The length of an action being performed cannot be used to justify the action. Therefore, the democrats' "fighting that has been tried for a long time" does not mean the fighting is absolutely right.

Jones then continues, "Democrats are trying to protect the image of America. I would say that is a hard mission because to fight that image which Trump is already ruining around the country." She is saying that the reason democrats do not cooperate is because they want to save America's face in front of the world. Later on, when Harvey makes attack on her argument, he says that the democrats are pushing this DACA issue for purely political

reasons. Harvey uses motivism here (also can be categorized in ad hominem fallacy). He is saying that the democrats are not cooperating because they are losing election over and over again and are hoping to get more voters on their side to win election by doing this. Harvey doubts the motivation of the democrats on the DACA and wall issues. Nonetheless, the motivation behind the democrats does not necessarily prove they are wrong on this. Indeed, they might want to win more votes over to the democratic side, but there is also possibility that the democrats really hold the better position and have the better solution and suggestions on this problem while winning more voters.

A short clip about what was said by Nancy Pelosi, the minority leader in the house, is played in this video. In the clip, Pelosi said, “That (Trump administration’s) plan is a campaign to make America white again.” The host asks Jones’ comments on Pelosi’s statement. And Jones answers, “With a president who uses a type of rhetoric that he uses, democrats have a duty to speak up and say the truth.... I agree with Nancy.” In supporting Pelosi’s statement, Jones uses the ad hominem fallacy to initiate personal attack on Trump by targeting at his horrible language and rhetoric style. It is true that Trump sometimes uses inflammatory rhetoric which is not acceptable to some; however, this does not mean that all his policies and plans are bad for U.S. Moreover, the terrible rhetoric he uses is certainly not sufficient evidence of whether the decision he is making for America right now is going to fail.

When Harvey repays Pelosi and Jones’ statement of “making America white again,” he says that this is not what Trump’s administration is doing and that they never plan on doing it in the future, either. Harvey says, “What the president just said is that he is allowing

three million Mexicans to come to the United States and get amnesty to be here. Those are not white people...This is three million brown Mexicans that are being offered the opportunity to have amnesty to come here.” This requite made by Harvey is right on the point of whether Trump wants to make America white again--he does not, because the three million Mexicans that will be admitted are brown people. Nonetheless, in attacking this argument made by Harvey, Jones’ argument is flawed. She says, “not all immigrants, not all people who would benefits from this are Mexicans. They are from all over the world and that’s an important idea that we have to remember.” Here, Jones uses the straw man fallacy by shifting the stasis from whether Trump wants to make America white again to whether Trump “discriminates” different immigrants from all over the world. And based on what Harvey just says, the answer seems easy to the audience: Trump only gives three million Mexican immigrants amnesty. Whether he gave amnesty for a certain variety of immigrants is not directly presented in their debate and thus, the audience will be tricked into follow Jones’ argument and think what she says makes more sense (whereas in fact, she uses straw man fallacy to shift the stasis to avoid the fact that Harvey has struck down her argument that Trump wants to make America white again. By the way, I think this is why what Harvey says next does not make sense to me at all until I watched this video for multiple times. At that time, Harvey is still tangling on whether Trump’s policy is racist while Jones is arguing a completely different topic (whether Trump discriminates immigrants from other regions of the world).

6th: “Immigration: Tough, Fair, and Practical” by Lanae Erickson Hatalesky, Jim Kessler, and Sarah Trumble.

In this article, the authors suggest that the Americans need to adopt a three-pronged message in order to accomplish immigration reform--tough, fair, and practical. Tough means tough on border enforcement; fair means fair to U.S. taxpayers; and practical means restoring the rule of law and solving the problem for good. In advocating their proposal, the authors also list out the percentage of people who support the program as well as some recommendations for the policy making.

The fallacy part of this article is its first section called “why it works.” It lists out three reasons for why this tough, fair and practical reform will work, and the first reason is because it is what Americans want. The article says, “In our polling, 92% said that ‘fairness to taxpayers should be the goal of immigration policy--more than any other alternative.’” Obviously, 92% is more than majority out of all people. Furthermore, it also says, “(even though) Americans are generally compassionate toward illegal immigrants, which is 57%, but their compassion ends where their taxpayer interest begins.” Though not as much as 92%, 57% is more than a half. With these statistics, the authors are trying to say that Americans show strong favor when the topic infringes tax and that this favor is so strong that it outweighs their empathy toward the illegal immigrants. Therefore, it must be the case that most of the Americans want the reform, hence the reform can succeed and work. Nevertheless, this argument uses ad populum fallacy. Just because many American citizens want it and are in favor of it, this does not mean the reform is perfect and necessary. It could be the case that what all these people want is a bad thing that could have severe impact and outcome.

7th: “Trump speaks on immigration, separating parents and children at border,” 18 June

2018.

This video published by CBC news is president Donald Trump’s speech at the National Space Council meeting. His speech focuses on the immigration laws that, according to him, need to be changed and the standing of the democrats on this issue.

At the very beginning of this video, the first sentence Trump says consists hasty generalization as well as half-truth fallacies. He says, “I’ll say it very honestly, and I’ll say it very straight: immigration is the fault, and all of the problems that we’re having.” Basically, Trump is blaming the incoming immigrants and even immigrants who, whether legal or illegal, are already in the United States, for all problem the U.S. is having right now. He is saying that the immigrants are responsible for all obstacles America is facing and all troubles emerging. Nonetheless, this is only half true. While immigrants did bring certain problems such as drug selling and human trafficking, etc. into the United States, not all issues America has right now are caused by immigrants. Moreover, we cannot ignore the fact that there are many hard-working people among immigrants who would like to stay in this country through legal path and behave cautiously in order not to be deported. Therefore, Trump uses overgeneralization by counting all immigrants as misbehaved members who, according to him, bring the U.S. all the problems.

Trump says, “(All these problems caused by immigrants cannot be solved) because we cannot get them (the democrats) to sign legislation. We cannot get them even to



the negotiating table. And I say it very strongly that it's the Democrats' fault. They are obstructions; they are obstructionists; and they are obstructing... We want security for our country if the democrats would sit down instead of obstructing, we could have something done very quickly: good for the children, good for the country, good for the world." While making his speech to condemn the Democrats, Trump uses two fallacies. The first one is the post hoc fallacy. Trump is saying that the reason that the United States is not able to solve the immigrant issue is because democrats are not willing to cooperate and to sit down and talk about it. In other words, if democrats are willing to negotiate the solution, then this problem will be solved. Now, because they are not willing to do so, this problem cannot be solved so far. And if they continue to do so, this problem will never be solved. Nevertheless, this is not a valid, logical statement to make. There is no evidence showing that Democrats are the only reason of the ongoing immigration issue. And Trump cannot prove that as long as democrats are willing to negotiate with the republicans, the problems related to immigration will be solved. Therefore, there is a missing link between "the attitude of the democrats" and "the credible solution."

Trump then continues, "United States will not be an immigrant camp, and it will not be a refugee holding facility; it won't be. You look at what's happening in Europe; you look at what's happening in other places. We cannot allow that to happen to the United States." This sentence uses hasty generalization fallacy. Trump is saying that if we do not reform our immigration policy, the United States will soon become the countries in Europe who are experiencing downside influence by immigration such as terrorism; however, what is happening in Europe does not lead to the conclusion that the same will happen to the United

States. On the other hand, Trump demonizes immigrants by using slippery slope fallacy--if we do not reform our policies on immigration, then the United States will end up just like Europe.

The following sentence criticizes the Democrats again. Trump says that if only Democrats are willing to talk about it, “It could take place quickly. We could have an immigration bill, we could have a child separation. (Now) We are stuck with these horrible laws.” This sentence uses the slippery slope fallacy. There is no link between Democrats’ willingness and the absolute consequence of their possible negotiation. Trump cannot conclude that once democrats sits down, there will be immigration bill, child separation, and abolish of horrible laws. These cannot be guaranteed by the simple action of Democrats.

8th: “Megyn Kelly let Geraldo & Ann Coulter debate on illegal immigration,” 30 June 2015.

This video is a debate between Geraldo Rivera and Ann Coulter on *The Kelly File* through *Fox News*. The issue they debate on is Trump’s speech saying that how dangerous the immigrants are.

First of all, before looking at Rivera and Coulter’s arguments, we should take a look at what Trump said as a candidate of presidential election that outrage the anger of the democratic party and even members of the republicans. Trump says, “When Mexico send its people, they are not sending their best...they are sending people that have lots of problems, and they are bringing those problems with us. They are bringing drugs; they are bringing crime. They are rapists.” The reason why this speech is so controversial is because it could be interpreted as language of a rapist. And the reason why this argument is invalid and not taken

by many is because it has logic flaws and uses half-truth and hasty generalization fallacies. It uses half-truth fallacy because although it is true that there are immigrants who bring drugs and crime into the U.S., not all of them commit these crimes, and there are also Mexican and South American immigrants who are brilliant and hard-working and want to stay in the U.S. and contribute to this nation. At the same time, this is a hasty generalization fallacy because Trump hastily categorizes all immigrants as rapists and other criminals as well and ignores those who do good deeds in the country.

As their debate begins, Coulter speaks first and expresses her idea against letting felony into this country in addition to the ones that need government's assistance to live well, which is already bad enough for the country. When it is Rivera's turn to speak, instead of requiting Coulter's argument right away, he shifts his point to Coulter's recently published book, *Adios America*, "I think, first of all, her basic premise, the title of the book *Adios America* is an insulting insinuation that Latinos are somehow going to pervert and drag down and degrade the America we all know and love. This is an insult." The full title of Coulter's book is *Adios America: The Left's Plan to Turn Our Country into A Third World Hellhole*. While this book title seems a little extreme and outrageous, it does not mean the idea expressed in it is completely unreasonable. Also, what the title of the book is and how "racism" is might be does not have anything to do what Coulter just said (she was saying that the illegal immigrants should be rejected and the criminals are committing crimes at a higher rate than the native population). Therefore, this can be called a straw man fallacy. Rivera shifts the stasis instead of focusing on the issue being discussed.

The second fallacy used by Rivera in his argument is the preteritio fallacy, which means one makes a personal attack on the other by denying that an attack is being made. Continuing his argument above, he says, “This is an insult. This is an insult that is--I won’t use terms like racism because I don’t believe that Ann is a racist--what she is is a polemicist.” In this sentence, it seems that Rivera did not say that Coulter is a racist; however, what he says has the same effect with it. Though he quickly denies her being a racist after raising this and suggests to use the word polemicist instead, by bringing the word racist, he passes this word to the audience and makes them think about it. In fact, he *is* saying that Coulter is a racist.

9th: “Nancy Pelosi attacks people of faith for supporting border security,” 15 June 2018.

This video clip is published by William Hernandez on YouTube. In this video, Pelosi is saying that the Trump administration takes away the respect the immigrants deserve by separating babies from their parents. She hopes that the republicans will respect the dignity and worth of people and reject the unamerican activities.

In this video, Pelosi begins her speech by making a personal attack to president Trump. She says, “The legislation has been described by our colleagues and I touched upon is totally unworthy of America, and it is a bad bill to begin with. And so the president says he’s not going to sign it. It just goes to show you how low his standards are.” This is an ad hominem fallacy because it attacks president Trump as a low-standard person. He might be low-standard, but this has nothing to do with whether the decision he makes is beneficial to the United States. Also, Pelosi’s argument provides no evidence to such conclusion, and this fallacy is circular reasoning. If we follow Pelosi’s logic, we will arrive at the conclusion that

because Trump did not sign the bill, he is a person with low standard; and because he is a person with low-standard, he did not sign the bill. In this argument, there is no credible conclusion; and she uses evidence as conclusion and then conclusion as evidence. This exchange of premise and conclusion is the feature of circular reasoning fallacy.

Following her criticism to president Trump, an attack is made toward the attorney general who quotes the bible. She says, “(It just goes to show you how low his standards are) and the hypocrisy for the Attorney General (Jeff Sessions) to quote the bible. The hypocrisy of all people of faith in our country not to clamor for what the administration is doing.” Pelosi accuses Sessions’ as hypocrite for quoting the Bible because she assumes that if one is a Christian, he/she will not support the child separation policy. Yet, while being a Christian, Sessions supports the child separation policy. Therefore, Pelosi accuses him as a hypocrite. Nonetheless, Pelosi’s argument does not stand with valid logic. First of all, she uses the false dilemma fallacy by implying that people can only choose one between being Christian and supporting the child separation policy; however, being a Christian (quoting from Bible) and supporting the child separation policy does not conflict. Secondly, Pelosi also says that all people who are religious are hypocritical, which uses the hasty generalization fallacy. Even if the Attorney General’s hypocrisy were to be acknowledged from quoting the Bible, this does not mean that all people who are Christians are hypocritical.

10th: “Jorge Ramos slams president rump as the ‘deportation czar,” 13 February 2017.

This is a video of Sean Hannity’s show on *Fox News*. Hannity invites Jorge Ramos, a Mexican-American journalist and author to discuss Trump’s deportation policy. The issues

they touch upon in this video include crimes, drugs, and money problem brought by illegal immigrants.

Hannity begins this debate by throwing Ramos a series of questions. He says, “Are you at all concerned about the Americans that are killed by illegal immigrants? Are you at all concerned about the drugs that have been coming into this country? Are you at all concerned about the money the United States has to pay for illegal immigrants as of the education system, the health care system, and the criminal justice system? Do any of these issues impresses you at all or bothers you at all, or do you have any concern for your fellow American citizens.” It seems to me that this series of question, when serve in the beginning of an argument, is a logical fallacy under irrelevant personal qualities. Though I am not sure which one it is, it is most likely the preteritio fallacy. Hannity brings up all these questions in the beginning to remind his audience of the “fact” that Ramos does not concern about any of these issues at all--that he is just defending the criminals and the illegal immigrants.

Ramos, in the middle of the debate, lists out some statistics to present the increase of undocumented immigrants and compares it with the crime rate overall in the United States. His exact words are, “Since 1990, the undocumented population move from 3.5 to about 11 million. According to FBI, in that same period, violent crimes in this country decrease by 48%. Those are the facts. Even though you want to present the undocumented immigrants as criminals, that’s not the case.” Here, Ramos uses the post hoc fallacy in his argument. Though these statistics seem to support his argument, they do not increase the argument’s credibility at all because there is no evidence showing that the immigrants actually committed less crime during this time period. It might be true that the population of undocumented

immigrants increased from 3.5 to 11 million and that the crime rate did decrease by 48%; however, the crime rate could be brought down by the native population who started, at 1990, committing a lot less crime. If there was a sharp decrease of the crime committed by native population, the even if the crime committed by undocumented immigrants increases, the overall rate would still decrease in these years. One thing happening after another does not mean that the former causes the latter. In other words, the immigrant population increasing happening before crime rate decreasing does not prove that the immigrants committing less crime. This is a typical post hoc fallacy here used by Ramos.

Hannity asks Ramos, “Donald Trump wants to get rid of criminal aliens...Do you agree with me that every criminal illegal immigrant should be thrown out of this country? Everyone.” Ramos answers, “if they commit a crime, a real crime, then absolutely. The problem is how do you find a crime. A fake social security number? A fake driver’s license?” Then Hannity cuts his argument off and asks, “(You know what bothers me?) How many times have you been down to the border, where all the crime is? Have you ever been to a drug warehouse?” In this part of debate, I think Ramos’ argument is perfect--he does not use any fallacy in this part, and his logic can be followed through without any problem. On the other hand, Hannity uses straw man fallacy because it seems that he could not answer Ramos’ question “how do you find a crime (and by what standard do you define a crime).” What Hannity does is skipping this question and shifting the topic to whether Ramos has been to the border and the drug warehouse. The reason to use a straw man fallacy here is if Ramos says that he hasn’t been to borders as many times as Hannity or if he hasn’t been to drug warehouse, then Hannity could attack his argument by saying that he does not know anything

about how terrible the current situation is and that Ramos is defending these criminals in spite of the brutal facts in front of us. By shifting the stasis, it will be easier for Hannity to defend his argument. Nonetheless, how many times Ramos has been to the border or whether he has been to the warehouse really does not have anything to do with his position and points of view. It is meaningless to attack Ramos on this.

In the middle of this video, Hannity gives out a number of crime done by illegal immigrants. According to him, there are over 642,000 crime done by illegal immigrants in past seven years in Texas alone. Then he plays a video, in which the mothers who lost their children express their complaints to the situation nowadays. The first mother says, “My son was a integral part of a community, and his life has been cut short by a raping criminal; and the lost has been felt for years.” The second mother says, “My son was murdered April 27th 2002. When I found out this guy was here illegally, I was outraged. This should not be happening.” Jorge does the same thing--he’s got a picture in his hands that demonstrates a family who was separated by Trump’s policy. At this point, in order to argue back, Hannity says, “That’s not the norm.” Here, he uses inconsistent premises. When he pulls out some single cases of mothers who lost their children in the hands of illegal immigrants, those are not norms, either; however, when Ramos does this, it becomes unacceptable.

Hannity then continues, “You say that this is not the America I know. What is the America that you know of? That people break the law? That people don’t respect the American sovereignty? That some of the Americans lose their children just because you define compassion as open borders? And you are willing to risk the lives of the Americans to allow this insanity to continue? Don’t you think we need a wall, with a door?” Hannity uses



false dilemma fallacy. He is basically saying that, unless we build the wall, the crime committed by the illegal immigrants will continue. And if we don't build the wall, their activities will go on and endanger the lives of many other Americans. Nevertheless, building the wall is not the only solution to the immigration problem. And the continuation of the crime does not necessarily result from the absence of the wall. He puts the audience in a false dilemma: if you don't choose the wall, then you are letting our country be buried with crime done by immigrants, while there are plenty other choices that we can do to decrease the number of the illegal immigrants.

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## **Issue: Gun Control**

### **Section I: Background Information**

#### **1. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment:**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment to the United State Constitution protects the right of the people to keep and bear arms. It was adopted on December 15<sup>th</sup> of 1791 as part of the first ten amendments contained in the Bill of Rights.

James Madison originally proposed the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment shortly after the Constitution was officially ratified as a way to provide more power to state militias (today's national guard). At that time, it was deemed a compromise between federalists (those who support the Constitution as it was ratified) and the anti-federalists (those who support the states having more power). The amendment was originally created to give the Americans the opportunity to fight back against the British government who previously ruled them as well as in the case of a tyrannical federal government.

Since its ratification, Americans have developed two points of view of the real meaning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment. One side believes it means collective rights while the other believes in individual rights. People on the collective side think that the amendment gives each state the right to maintain and train formal militia units that can provide protection against an oppressive federal government and foreign invaders. They believe that the amendment allows only those in militia to carry guns legally. On the other hand, those with the opposite viewpoint believe the amendment gives every citizen the right to own guns to protect themselves in the face of danger. Because this viewpoint prevailed, citizens can now own guns without being in a militia, but there are restrictions. Furthermore, today, even

though the Democrats and the Republicans hold different points of view on the laws of gun control, there is no mainstream movement to repeal it. There may be fringe movement with that view, but it is so minor that it has little chance of success.

## 2. Key conditions for obtaining guns in the U.S.:

The *Gun Control Act of 1968* (GCA) requires that citizens and legal residents must be at least 18 years of age to purchase shotguns or rifles and ammunition. All other firearms, for example, handguns, can only be sold to people 21 and older. State or local officials may implement higher age restrictions but are not allowed to lower the federal minimum. Though state and local governments regulate whether residents may, for example, carry guns in public, laws regulating who may receive or possess guns are set out at the federal level. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)--a division of the Department of Justice--administers the GCA. The ATF also regulates the standards for issuing licenses to gun vendors.

There is also a background check required to purchase a firearm. This background check is required by the amendment to the 1968 Gun Control Act (the *Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act of 1993*). Potential firearm purchasers fill out a federal form known as the ATF 4473, which checks for prior convictions and other red flags. FFL holders then use the information provided on the form in the background check. State may decide whether the background check is carried out solely by the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) or a combination of the NICS and state agency information. Roughly 30 states rely solely on the NICS. It takes under 10 minutes by phone

or online for the check to give the FFL holder an immediate answer: approve, delay or deny.

A delay indicates the need for further research for three business days, after which point FFL holders can act at their own discretion if the research proves inconclusive.

There are some people who are restricted from purchasing or possessing firearms; they are fugitives, people deemed a danger to society, and patients involuntarily committed to mental institutions. People with prior felony convictions that include a prison sentence exceeding one year, or misdemeanors carrying sentences of more than two years, are also prohibited from purchasing firearms. Federal law also blocks the sale of guns to people who have been found guilty of unlawfully possessing or using controlled substances within the past year. This includes marijuana, which remains illegal under federal law.

Permits to purchase firearms are required only by some states. Only a dozen of the U.S.'s 50 states require purchase permits for handguns. Of those states, only three--California, Connecticut and Hawaii--require permits for the purchase of rifles and shotguns. In terms of carrying handguns, most states require permits to do so. Concealed carry and open carry vary by state. Some states allow residents to carry handguns without permits. By contrast, virtually no state requires a permit to carry rifles and shotguns. Massachusetts and New Jersey require people carrying rifles and shotguns to bring along a form of ID or a firearms identification.

Shotguns, rifles, machine guns, firearm mufflers and silencers are regulated by the *National Firearms Act of 1934*. The purchase of semi-automatic weapon is legal in most states, as are automatic weapons made before 1986. Like handgun owners, dealers interested in obtaining a Federal Firearms License (FFL) must be at least 21 years of age. They must have premises for conducting business and must alert local law enforcement officials at the



time of submitting their applications to the federal bureau that regulates firearms. Just like gun owners, they must fulfill the same criteria regarding their history of prior convictions and mental state. The license fee costs \$200 for an initial three-year period and \$90 for each subsequent three-year-long renewal.

### 3. What is a “gunshow loophole”:

The law on selling, receiving and possessing firearms is clear. Nonetheless, the law is unclear on what constitutes selling guns for profit. Any individual may sell firearms without a license if his or her motive isn't to make profit for livelihood through repeated and regular sales. In other words, not every individual providing the gun in a transfer requires an FFL, which in turn means that not every buyer is legally subject to a background check. This potentially enables guns to fall into the hand of users who might otherwise not be allowed to own a firearm. Moreover, the Brady Law does not apply to someone who is obtaining a firearm from an individual without an FFL.

According to the ATF, anyone can sell a gun without an FFL from their home, online, at a flea market, or at a gun show as long as he or she is not conducting the sale as part of regular business activity. One example would be someone who sells a firearm from his or her personal collection. Others who are exempt include those giving guns as gifts. Only individuals whose “principal motive” is to make a profit via sale must obtain an FFL. A survey by Harvard and Northeastern universities estimates that roughly one in five transactions occur without a background check. A gun may also be purchased on behalf of a third party as long as it is a gift and as long as the recipient does not violate federal

restrictions on gun ownership to the best of the gift giver's knowledge. The same applies to the general transfer of guns. Children younger than 18 may possess guns that were given to them by parents or guardians as gifts provided that they have written permission.

#### 4. How many people have guns today? How many guns are there in the United States?:

It is impossible to say for sure how many people have guns because there is no national registry of guns or gun owners. The Pew Research Center survey estimates that in 2017, 42 percent of U.S. adults lived in a household with a gun and 30 percent owned a gun themselves. The number of background checks performed through the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check system has climbed from around 8.5 million in 2000 to more than 23 million in 2015. While background checks are performed before many gun sales, these figures do not themselves represent sales because many guns are sold without background checks.

It is equally difficult to determine how many guns are in the United States. A 2012 congressional Research Service report put the number at nearly 300 million guns owned by American citizens, which gives America the highest rate of gun ownership with an average of 88-89 guns per 100 people. Approximately 20% of gun owners own 65% of the guns, and about 3% of American adults own a collective 133 million firearms—about half of America's total gun stock. These owners have collections that range from eight to 140 guns; and facts show that owning more than 40 guns is fairly common among them. Furthermore, gun sales have also exploded since 2012, driven by “panic buying” over fears of more gun control; therefore, there is no way of knowing exactly how many guns are in the U.S. today.

#### 5. What do Americans use guns for?

A poll provided by Gallup shows that most gun owners use their guns for each of the following three purposes: crime protection, target shooting, and hunting. Among people who own guns, 67% of them say that they need guns for protection against crime; 66% use gun to target shooting; and 58% say that they use guns for hunting.

#### 6. Death related to guns:

Furthermore, around 114,994 people are shot each year in the US, including murders, assaults, accidents, police intervention, suicide attempts and suicides. According to the statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 36,000 Americans were victims of firearm-related deaths in 2015; and that number in 2016 is more than 38,000. Gun suicides make up the majority of gun deaths with the number of more than 20,000 each year. This number is about 62% of the firearm deaths in the U.S. Gun homicide is the second large cause of gun death, and the number is about 13,000 in 2015. At the same year, more than 1,000 Americans were shot to death by the police. Also, gun-related deaths are now the third leading cause of death of American children.

#### 7. How many people support gun control?

Gallup polling indicates a growing desire for more gun control; 60 percent say gun laws should be stricter, 5 percent say they should be less strict and 33 percent say laws should remain as is. A more recent polling by Quinnipiac University survey found 66% of respondents saying they supported stricter gun laws and 31% saying they didn't.

## 8. Facts on Mass Shooting:

After the 2012 Sandy Hook school shooting, Congress defined “mass killings” as three or more homicides in a single incident. Researchers from Texas State University analyzed mass shootings in 11 countries, covering the period from 2000 to 2014. Aside from United States, they looked at Australia, Canada, China, England, Finland, France, Germany, Mexico, Norway and Switzerland. The United States has more mass shootings--and more people cumulatively killed or injured-- than the other 10 nations combined. While part of this is because the United States has a much bigger population than all but China, the difference can't be explained by skewed population numbers alone. Also, there is no strong link between mental instability of the shooter and mass shooting.

## **Section II: Controversial Issues**

1. Should there be more restrictions on the current process of purchasing a gun?
2. Should more gun control laws be enacted?
3. Does restricting guns make America safer?
4. What kinds of guns should be available for sale to the public?
5. Who should be allowed to buy guns?
6. Where can the guns be carried?
7. When is it legal to shoot one?

## **Section III: Analyze the Arguments**

1st: “CNN Anchor to NRA Spokeswoman: How Dare You,” Alisyn Camerota & Dana

Loesch, *CNN*.

This video clip presents a debate between CNN’s Alisyn Camerota and NRA’s Dana Loesch. Their debate is initiated by a statement made by Loesch early on that says, “Many in legacy media love mass shooting. You guys love it. I’m not saying you guys love the tragedy but I am saying that you love the ratings. Crying white mothers are ratings gold.” Other than their debate on this statement that Loesch made, their discussion also touches upon what politicians should do in order to prevent more shootings from happening.

The first fallacy of this video resides in Loesch’s statement itself. By referring Camerota’s media as legacy media, she implies that her media are too old. This is the ad hominem fallacy. Even though the television media that Camerota uses have been around for a long time, this does not mean that they are too old to report on the truth. Being old is just one of the characteristics of television media and has nothing to do with their usefulness.

As their debate starts, despite the fact that Loesch’s video of making that statement is played in the beginning, Camerota reads her statement out in the following way, “You say ‘Many in the media love mass shootings. You guys love it, you love the ratings. Crying white mothers are ratings gold.’ Why would you say that? We love mass shootings?” Camerota uses the cherry picking fallacy. Although Loesch says that many people in the legacy media love mass shooting, she does emphasize that she does not mean they love the tragedy. And Camerota spends the most time in the rest of the video asking Loesch to take responsibility for her statement, though she does not mean that many people in legacy media love mass shooting itself.

On the other hand, by making that statement, Loesch uses a logical fallacy, too. She says, “Many of the media do because they like the ratings aspect of it. And it’s true because it’s wall-to-wall coverage. They put the murderer’s face up on loop, on television all across the America more than they discuss the victims and the survivors.” Basically, Loesch accuses the media of “loving mass shootings” because these reports boost viewership. By accusing legacy media’s motivation of boosting viewership, Loesch uses the motivism fallacy. It might be true (in fact, it is true) that the legacy media love to use mass shootings in order to boost their viewership; however, that does not mean that reporting mass shooting news is wrong or that those tragedies brought by mass shootings do not exist and do not bring harm to people’s life. Therefore, accusing legacy media’s motivation does not make Loesch’s argument any stronger because the fact is the fact: mass shootings bring tragedies to lots of families and even though the motivation of legacy media is questionable, it does not change the fact that harm brought by guns in some circumstances is detrimental and devastating.

Camerota argues that it is just malicious of Loesch to say that they love mass shooting, “I don’t know anybody in media who likes mass shooting, you are wrong on every single level. We prayed that there is never another one. You just made a malicious statement, and I have to respond.” When facing Camerota’s accusation, Loesch responds, “You are saying that it’s malicious, but yet on your network, you’ve allowed the accusations against me and millions of law-abiding Americans and to be indicted as ‘child murderers,’ if you want to have a discussion on the maliciousness.” The fallacy used here by Loesch is tu quoque. She is arguing back by saying that even though she might be malicious for saying the media loves mass shootings, Camerota is malicious as well for calling her and other pro-gun people child

murderers. Nonetheless, this is an invalid and ineffective argument because even though Camerota has maliciously accused them as child murderers before, this does not justify Loesch being malicious. The personal failing of the opponent does not affect whether your position is right or wrong. Tu quoque is used again right after this disagreement over maliciousness. Camerota asks, “You know you are using heated argument (right now); you are using inflammatory rhetoric, how’s that part of the solution?” And Loesch replies, “Inflammatory rhetoric? Again, you’ve allowed millions of law-abiding Americans here to be indicted as child murderers, and that’s inflammatory.” Even though we assume that Camerota does indict the pro-gun group as child murderers and that it is indeed, inflammatory to do so, it does not justify Loesch’s use of inflammatory language here. Whether or not Camerota has committed the same error she is charging Loesch with is irrelevant to whether her position about Loesch’s action is correct.

2nd: “Gun Violence and NGVAC’s Economic Strategy to Change It,” *National Gun Victims Action Council*.

This website page compares the gun control situation in the United Kingdom with the situation in the United States. This page is divided into two parts in which the first part elucidates the problem and the second proposes the solution to the current problem. And the fallacy being discussed below resides in the first part.

This web page introduces the problem the United States is facing: the U.S. has many more gun homicides in the U.S. compared to U.K. In order to support its standing, the website provides the following statistics. While England’s culture is similar to the U.S.’s

(they hunt, collect guns, value marksmanship; they have gangs, drugs, and poverty), England reports 45 gun homicides per year. Meanwhile, United States' population is 5 times England's (300 million vs. 60 million), the U.S. has 10,000 gun homicides, which is more than 200 times this number in England. The fallacy here is the misuse of statistics. What is done in U.K. is the virtual ban of all guns. Members of the public may own sporting rifles and shotguns, subject to licensing, but handguns were effectively banned after the Dunblane school massacre in 1996 with the exception of Northern Ireland. In the United States, however, handguns are not banned at all. Therefore, when the policies are markedly different, we cannot just focus on the so-called culture because culture does not play a fundamental, crucial role in this argument. When policies are different, comparing numbers alone is meaningless.

3rd: "Best 7 minutes on Gun Control I have ever seen," Bill Whittle, *Carrie Tierney*.

This is a video published by Carrie Tierney on YouTube and is a speech made by the Virtual President of the United States, Bill Whittle. He presents the reasons of preserving the Second Amendment rights for the Americans by using analogies and examples.

"In October of 2007, Amanda Collins was walking to her car after her night class at University of Nevada. Amanda had a concealed permit for her 9 millimeter glock that she carried for self-defense. Unfortunately for Amanda, UNR is--like most college campuses--a gun free zone, so, like a law-abiding citizen she is, she does not have her gun with her in this gun-free zone. And she was attacked by James Biela. Biela raped her at the UNR campus, 300 yards away from the campus police. He then walked away, and a few months later, this



human predator went on to murder a 19-year-old Brianna Denison.” So far, Whittle is giving an example of how dangerous it can be and what harm it can do to people if they don’t have the right to bear arms facing dangerous situations. After the tragedy of Dennison, Collins said, “I know, had I been the first victim, Brianna Denison would still be alive, had I been able to defend myself that night.” Whittle goes on and says, “Therefore, I am directing the virtual Attorney General to aggressively challenge any gun control laws that violate Amanda Collins’ right not to be raped and Brianna Denison’s right not to be murdered.”

Whittle is using the straw man fallacy here. It is true that Collins was raped without being able to fight back in a gun-free zone. And it is also true that had she fought back and hurt the rapist, Dennison would probably still be alive. Nevertheless, the fact that the gun-free zone plays into the harm done to them does not constitute depriving their right to carry arms in certain area as a violation of their right to not being raped and murdered. Those who are advocating gun control are not advocating to take away a person’s right not to be raped or murdered. There is no link between certain level of gun control and malevolent violation of their rights on purpose. Therefore, Whittle is shifting the stasis/the point of this argument, and the logic he uses makes the control advocates’ position sound much worse than it is.

Whittle then expresses his objection to the repeal of the Second Amendment. He says, “When it’s all set down, the Second Amendment of the Constitution is not there to protect us from criminals, and the people calling for gun control know this. That’s why they want gun control instead of crime control; that’s why they want laws that at stroke of a pen, turning law-abiding citizens into criminals.” Whittle uses two fallacies here. The first one is the cherry picking fallacy. According to Whittle, when it is all set down, the Second Amendment

of the Constitution will not be there anymore. He means that people who want gun control aim at repealing the Second Amendment. Nonetheless, the Second Amendment is not under attack except by a tiny minority. Whittle uses the cherry picking fallacy to imply that a move to repeal the Second Amendment is mainstream, powerful movement.

As for what he said in his statements above, he uses the slippery slope fallacy. Whittle insists that if the Second Amendment of the Constitution is repealed, it will automatically become illegal to own a gun, so the many people who have guns will be committing illegal acts by having them. Therefore, he is basically saying that something of a lesser importance will inflict something with greater influence, and the influence it brings is likely to become a series of calamity; however, there is no evidence that shows the citizens who own guns will start committing crimes after the repeal of Second Amendment. This assumption lacks support and thus, it is invalid.

Whittle continues to illustrate what will happen if the liberals try to repeal the Second Amendment. He gives the following assumption, “So go ahead, go to the American people and tell them that, according to you, ultimate power is no longer to be vested in the people who can’t be trusted with that power; tell that only the government can have the power now. You go out there and try to convince the people of 38 states that you are going to get that amendment passed to agree with your opinion of them verses their opinion of you. I dare you.” Whittle uses both a missing link fallacy as well as the false dilemma fallacy by connecting repeal of the Second Amendment and the government’s distrust. Basically, he is saying that the liberals’ attempt to repeal the Second Amendment equals to their distrust in American people. Nonetheless, there is no link between these two. The decision of repealing the Second

Amendment might result from other considerations, which are not necessarily the concern about and distrust of American citizens. At the same time, he uses the false dilemma fallacy as well by saying that if the government really repeal the Second Amendment with a 28th amendment, it is announcing that we distrust the Americans; and if we trust our citizens, we would not repeal the Second Amendment. Therefore, in this short statement, he uses both a missing link fallacy and a false dilemma fallacy.

Toward the end of this video, Whittle gives couple of examples of countries who disarm their citizens and result in severe consequences. “Twelve million unarmed men, women, and children were unable to resist being murdered by their national socialist government in Germany; perhaps 15 million unarmed men, women, and children were murdered by their own Union of Soviet socialist republics; 50 million Chinese (were) murdered by their government under Mao, who also disarms his people. And in Cuba, and in Vietnam, and in the killing fields of Cambodia.” The fallacies Whittle uses here are a half-truth fallacy. It is truth that all these countries (Germany, Soviet Union, China, Cuba, Vietnam and Cambodia) had experienced carnage and did not have arms to protect themselves. Nevertheless, this is a post hoc ergo propter hoc fallacy: the fact that people are killed without having guns to defend themselves does not mean that it is due to the lack of gun that they were killed by the government. Furthermore, there is no evidence to show that had they had guns and firearms, they would they be spared from the catastrophe. One thing happening after another does not mean that the former causes the latter to happen. Here, carnage happening with people not owning gun does not mean disarming causes the carnage to happen.

Whittle also speaks with the half-truth (or a hasty generalization) fallacy. It is absolutely correct that the countries he lists out have had these histories after disarming its citizens; however, there are countries who disarmed their citizens from the beginning but did not suffer the same tragedies. For example, countries like Japan and Turkey and many others as well have long histories of restrictive gun control laws, but they did not suffer these catastrophes. Therefore, it is clear that restricting or banning guns does not inevitably lead to the horrific massacres that happened exclusively to several countries.

At the end of his speech, Whittle uses the American Indian Genocide in history to strengthen his argument, “My fellow Americans, the previous inhabitants of this chamber watched 100 million people being murdered after being disarmed by their own government.” The same as his statements above, there is missing link between Indian Americans being killed and being disarmed. Being killed without possessing arms does not mean they were killed because of not owning firearms. Furthermore, there was no evidence that can show that if bearing arms, the Indian Americans could definitely have defended themselves from being slaughtered.

4th: “How would ben Carson have handled Jorge Ramos,” Ben Carson, *CNN*.

This video is published by CNN on YouTube with Ben Carson talking about gun control and other topics as well. After a mass shooting happened in Virginia at the year of 2015, Ben Carson, as one of the most potential Republican candidates, expressed his stances on gun control issues at the very beginning of this video.

The host asks Carson, “Does this tragedy make you question at all the role of guns in our society?” Carson answers, “it makes me to question what’s happening to us as a people. People are the problem, not so much the guns. People use knives, people use bats, people use hammers to bludgeon people to death. And I don’t hear people talking about taking those things away.” Carson uses a half-truth fallacy here by comparing guns with knives, bats, and hammers. Although it is true that people use knives, hammers, and bats to bludgeon people to death, homicides committed by these instruments are only 13% of the total number of homicides. On the other hand, homicides caused by handguns and other firearms consist of 68%. This shows that guns impose more threat to people than other weapons. Therefore, simply pointing out that knives, bats, and hammers are also capable of harming people is not enough to prove the invalidity of the liberals’ gun-restriction proposition.

5th: “Sheriff Clarke: We have enough gun control in this country,” David Clarke, *Fox Business*.

This is one of the Fox Business videos that invites David Clarke, the Milwaukee county sheriff, to talk about his opinion on gun control and the Second Amendment. Other than the points of view of Clarke’s, a clip of Ben Carson’s speech on gun control is also played at the beginning of the video. Then following that, in order to support Ben Carson’s pro-gun attitude, he made a series of claims to attack the liberals who are anti-guns.

At the beginning of this video, a clip of Ben Carson is shown to set the tone of this discussion. In this short clip, Carson says, “I’m a very reasonable person, with all of these gun control plans, if you can show me how that’s going to stop these things, I’m willing to

listen to it. Guns don't kill people, and the Second Amendment is extremely important." In his speech, Carson uses the straw man fallacy. The liberals' stance on the gun control issue is to restrict guns or to ban guns among the citizens, and whether they have a concrete plan or not does not affect whether their proposition is right or wrong. There is the possibility that it is truly better for the United States to ban guns among the citizens but at the same time, it is simply a very hard problem to solve, and there is no concrete solution yet. Not knowing how to effectively restrict guns does not mean the whole idea of restricting gun is wrong. Therefore, by shifting the stasis from its rightness to practicality, Carson uses the straw man fallacy here.

The host starts the discussion by asking the following question to Clarke, "There's word late today that the Democrats in congress will also be pushing some sort of amendment for gun control. What's your assessment for this last chance for the president to erase the Second Amendment?" Clarke answers, "... The real intent of the left, the anti-gun crowd is not for reducing violence and reducing mass shootings. It's a slippery slope toward gun confiscation. They don't want gun control, they want gun confiscation.' This judgement made by Clarke consists of a slippery slope fallacy as well as a straw man fallacy. It could also be said that he uses the slippery slope fallacy in order to use straw man fallacy. First of all, he claims that by advocating gun control, the liberals are actually advocating gun confiscation. While the word control does not equal to confiscation, Clarke puts it this way in order to show how extreme and pushy the liberals are on the issue of gun control--something that has less impact (gun control), according to Clarke, will lead to something that has greater impact (gun confiscation). By making the Americans think that the Democrats are

confiscating all guns, this statement is likely to lead the Americans to withdraw their support to the Democrats. In using this slippery slope fallacy, Clarke also used a straw man fallacy by changing the Democrats' real intention of controlling guns to confiscating guns because the latter is obviously more easy to argue against.

Clarke then continues, "They want gun confiscation, and they know that they have to do it in a stair-step fashion, so they come through with this idea called universal background check, which is nothing more than a smoke screen. Nothing that has gone out in the United States in terms of mass shootings has had anything to do with background checks. Adam Lanza, who shot up Sandy Hook school, he didn't have to have a background check. He killed his mom and stole her guns. The guy at the Colorado theater, he passed the background check... This has nothing to do with universal. The last time we heard the word 'universal' out of the left's mouth, it was the 'universal healthcare'--a word that got us. It got us higher premiums and even fewer people covered." Clarke use a half-truth fallacy as well as a hasty generalization fallacy. Clarke claims that the universal background check brought up by the Democrats is useless and has nothing to do with gun control, and in order to prove his point, he provides a couple of examples to support his statement. In giving these examples, he uses the half-truth fallacy because he only lists mass shooting criminals who pass background checks. Other than these criminals, there are definitely others who, if given background checks, would not have done mass shootings. Therefore, Clarke uses a half-truth fallacy by deliberately ignoring this fact and coming up with an extreme conclusion that the universal background check is useless and as he called, a smoke screen. Moreover, he uses a hasty generalization fallacy in this statement by comparing the universal background check with

the universal healthcare. Basically, Clarke is saying that because the left's universal healthcare did not work so well (it brought higher premiums and less coverage), this so-called universal background check of the left would not work as well. This is an overgeneralization. Clarke reached the conclusion that the universal background check would not work by relying on the "failure" of the universal healthcare. Regardless whether the universal healthcare *is* really a failure or not, and even if it *is*, one cannot conclude that the "universal background check," which also has the word "universal," will undoubtedly become a failure as well. Therefore, Clarke's statement is far from being valid.

6th: "Texas democrat calls for repeal of Second Amendment," Marty Schexnayder, *Fox Business*.

This is a video published by Fox Business on YouTube. Some Texas people who support the repeal of the Second Amendment say that owning a gun is a privilege, not a right. Fox Business channel then invites Marty Schexnayder, a Democrat from Texas to talk about this long-going controversy on gun control.

The hostess asks Schexnayder about his opinion on whether the children now are safer or less safe than they were 15 years ago, and his response is that there isn't any doubt that the children are less safe. The hostess continues, "Statistically, however, there has been a precipitate drop, not only in gun violence but in violent crime. So how does that square with the idea that, if children are surviving with the higher rate, how are they less safe?"

Schexnayder responds, "I guess you'd have to sit down and talk to the parents of those children in Parkland, in Newtown, or the people that are related to the people that were killed



in Vegas and try to convince them that somehow we are all safer than we used to be. And if you look at a bigger picture, which is where the United States sits in the world in terms of gun death--we are at the top. And guess what--that directly correlates with the fact that we have more guns than the rest of the world.” Schexnayder uses two logical fallacies here--the ad misericordiam fallacy and the straw man fallacy.

First of all, he did not answer directly how the children are less safe than 15 years ago with concrete evidence such as reliable statistics or research results. Instead, he says that the devastating results of several mass shooting have severe impact on the families of the children and the victims. There is no doubt they are suffering insurmountable pain of their loss; however, those emotions are not relevant to the answer of the hostess’ question.

Secondly, he shifts the stasis to the correlation between high number of gun deaths and high number of guns in the United States compared to other countries in the world. This is a straw man fallacy because the hostess’ focus is on the changing situation within the U.S. during last 15 years. Schexnayder overlooks this premise and focuses on a broader scope--where U.S. is at among the nations of the world. And by further establishing the correlation between the number of guns and the gun deaths, Schexnayder creates a circumstance which he has a “valid,” “better,” and “more reasonable” argument.

In order to refute Schexnayder’s argument, the hostess argues back with a fallacy as well. She say, “So let’s talk about direct correlations. In Texas, you have more guns than anyone else in the country, therefore, you have no living people in Texas because more guns means more homicides. You’ve got so much guns there that everyone is obviously dead.”

The hostess uses the reduction ad absurdum fallacy, which is trying to make opponent’s

position look bad by pushing it way past the point where the opponent would push it. This fallacy is kind of a straw man fallacy as well. Schexnayder is not saying that more guns cause more deaths and because Texas has so many guns, everyone in Texas is dead, but the hostess focuses on this point to make Schexnayder's argument look ridiculous.

Moreover, even though at the beginning of this sentence, she says that "let's talk about correlation," she is not talking about correlation at all--in fact, she misunderstands correlation and causation. Her argument is that the guns must cause the death so when Texas has so many guns, according to her, they must have all died. Correlation is not causation, and even if we are talking about causation here, she does not have any evidence published by authority to show that the guns cause death directly.

Later in the video, the hostess says that self-defense is a natural right and that it is a natural right to own a gun, and she also says, "How do you maintain your life, sometimes it's through self-defense." In making these statements, though she did not directly speak the relation between self-defense and owning a gun, she is connecting these two things together to a level that the former is equal to the latter. In other words, she uses a false dilemma fallacy by saying that one could only defend themselves by owning a gun, and self-defense cannot be achieved through any other implements. And therefore, because self-defense is a natural right, owning a gun is a natural right, too.

In order to continue their discussion, Schexnayder accepts the logic that guns are indispensable to self-defense. He then says, "So that gets to my second answer. Like I said, if we make gun ownership a privilege, and not a right, all that means is that people who want guns have to go through a few simple steps to get them." At this point, before he could finish

his argument, the hostess interrupts him and says, “And criminals will probably do that. You are absolutely right. I think criminals are going to be the first ones who sign up for training; they are going to register their weapons; they are probably going to hand in the ones you arbitrarily deem to be unfit because your brand of authoritarian moralization proves that you know better than other people how best to defend themselves and their families.” By saying these, the hostess is using the straw man fallacy by shifting the focus of this conversation from the “few simple steps” toward what criminals would do in terms of these newly established steps. She wildly gusses and imagines what the criminals would do and how they could succeed in committing crimes under these new laws make Schexnayder’s proposal look unreliable and impractical. She also uses the ad hominem fallacy when she says “... the ones you arbitrarily deem to be unfit because your brand of authoritarian moralization proves that you know better than other people.” Both “arbitrarily” and “authoritarian moralization” are personal attack toward the Democrats that has nothing to do with their stances.

Toward the end of this debate, Schexnayder says, “When you are applying home defense or self-defense in this argument, you are ignoring children at school who are not there to defend themselves; or people at a concert, like in Las Vegas, they are not there to defend themselves. These are people doing normal everyday activities that are getting slaughtered because we cannot agree on how to restrict gun ownership.” I agree with the first part of his argument that self-defense cannot be applied to children at schools. Nonetheless, the second part of the argument is fallacious because it uses a post hoc fallacy. Some mass shootings that appalled the public did happen during the non-stopping debate between the Democrats and the Republicans which seems will never reach a result; however, happening

after it does not mean it is the cause of the mass shooting. The people are “getting slaughtered” because there are criminals out there who tend to break the stability of the society, not because the political debate has not reached a conclusion. Moreover, there is no evidence that shows reaching a conclusion will bring absolute security to the society.

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