USA Government As A Source Of Greater Changes In American Communities

Over the course of this semester I have read about many different topics that grabbed my attention. I consider myself a defender of human rights, seeing that a lot of the topics that interested me the most were the ones that dealt with the American people and their rights as human beings. American history has evolved tremendously over the past decades but I will focus on the changes that deal with civil rights, Gun policy, and the executive branch powers.

The civil rights movement was a breakthrough from prejudice and inequality under the law for the black community. Going back to when the Union beat the Confederacy in the civil war and 3 constitutional amendments were ratified; it was a life-changing victory for all African American people. The “Civil War Amendments” abolished slavery, granted blacks citizenship and equal protection under the law, and gave citizens including blacks the right to vote (Davis, “American Civil Rights”). Even though African Americans were granted these rights, white southerners and many organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan continued to find ways to segregate and mistreat black citizens with Jim Crow laws, black codes, literacy tests and even poll taxes. To ensure black citizenship, congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to enforce the 15th amendment to end any methods that was occluding the minorities’ right to vote (U.S. Congress, “The 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments,”). We must also not forget about one of the most popular and powerful civil rights organizations, the National Association for Advancement of Colored People. The NAACP consisted of many powerful leaders such as W.E.B DuBois, Ida B. Wells, and Mary White Ovington. The NAACP and attorney Thurgood Marshall fought in the Brown V. Board of Education case of 1954 which overturned the Supreme Court’s decision in Plessy V. Ferguson which pertained to segregated public education and its “separate but equal” act (Krutz, pg.176, 2019). The case was successfully won with evidence of state budget records that proved that white and black schools were not equal which by law ended segregation in public schools. “There will probably always be ignorance, hatred, and racism. But our society is better today because of the courageous acts of individuals in the civil rights movement” (Ollhoff, Jim. Civil Rights Movement pg.28). Although black civil rights has been justified under the law, black citizens are still far away from having earned the true respect and justice that they deserve in today’s society.

The second amendment gives Americans the “right to bear arms”. This amendment has held a lot of controversy over the past few years due to the numerous amount of incidents that have occurred with guns. The rights to owning a gun have become a political issue because of the increase in school shootings, police brutality and even public mass shootings (Krutz, pg.129, 2019). CBS News has reported that there has been 366 mass shooting this year in the U.S. that were reported from the Gun Violence Archive and that there has been more mass shootings than days in the year of 2019 (Cbsnews.com, 2019). President Trump has also spoken out about these mortalities and has called for a national red flag law. This law would allow law enforcement to petition courts to confiscate guns which I believe could be helpful in decreasing the number of shootings. In 2008 there was the District of Columbia v. Heller case where the Supreme Court decided that it was unconstitutional to have a law that restricts the ownership of a handgun for the protection of your home. In this case I completely agree with the decision of the Supreme Court because I believe that citizens should have the right to protect their home

but it becomes a problem when people take advantage of their rights to harm themselves and others. An editorial director named James Burnett and gun control activists believe that banning assault weapons due to them having a high amount of ammunition could help lower the number of fatalities that occur during these mass shootings. Overall gun laws needs to be seen beyond the second amendment and should be strictly enforced all over America. We need to help make this country a safer place for the generations to come.

The executive branch is a major part of our government and I believe it could make great changes to some of the political problems we face in America today. The executive branch gains its authority from Article II of the Constitution, which states that the power of the executive branch is in the hands of the president of the United States. The executive branch consists of the President, Vice president, white house staff, Executive office of the President, and the Cabinet. The president is granted with many different types of powers of government due to the fact that framers believed the president should be able to take swift and decisive actions in the time of crisis (Davis, “Powers of the President”). The president has obtained powers that are not authorized in the constitution but have been accepted as legit presidential powers. These powers are called discretionary or inherent powers that both the president and congress have acquired over time. An example of this would be the presidents’ ability to command troops against foreign nations even though Congress holds the true power to declare war. Another example of discretionary powers is executive privilege, which is the withholding of confidential information from Congress and the American people (Shull, 2006, pg. 5). This is something that caught me by surprise and I assume it keeps a lot of us citizens wondering what our present and former presidents could be keeping from us. The presidents’ main role in the executive branch, is to enforce law for domestic and foreign affairs. A few other jobs that a president does is nominate federal judges, federal officials, and makes appointments to fill military/diplomatic posts (Krutz, pg. 450, 2019). The Constitution gives the president expressed powers, which grants him the ability to veto laws. Most of the task that are done in the executive branch are put in the hands of the agencies and committees of the federal government. The executive office of the president deals with managing federal spending and a cabinet is a group of advisors that aid to the president's needs when necessary. All of these people contribute to keeping the executive branch in order and since the president is the most seen in the U.S. government, we could resolve a lot of situations that have been going on in our country.

Abortion has been a political issue for over forty years; going back and forth on whether it should be legal or not. Abortion was first passed as a constitutional right in the Supreme Court case Roe v. Wade case of 1973. Planned Parenthood reported that illegal abortions cause one-sixth of all pregnancy-related deaths in 1965 and that number is only from the cases that were reported (Planned Parenthood: Roe v. Wade). I believe in pro-choice simply because no one besides yourself should be able to decide what is done to your body. Brett Kavanaugh was nominated into the Supreme Court by President Trump and has been fighting hard to overturn the Roe v. Wade case. Kavanaugh supports anything that will put an end to safe abortions which will affect millions of women in America. The same right that is given to someone that gets a tattoo or plastic surgery should be the same right that lets women decide whether she wants to get an abortion. As I explained earlier, the president is the most visible person in the U.S. and gaining his support for abortions could make a huge impact for women in America. Whether we like the idea of abortions or not, they will be done regardless of the government's opinion. Abortion is a woman’s right and should be supported by the constitution endlessly.

America has passed and enforced many laws that have helped people all around the world and

we should appreciate the growth in this country. Although it is not perfect I know that we are trying to make it a better place one day at a time. American history has united people of different races and ethnicity and is important to remember the people that helped us get to this point. I expressed the key changes that were made for African American people, the importance of gun control, and the impact of the executive branch. We must continue to protect the rights of our people with the help of our most powerful leaders of government so that we can make even greater changes in our communities.