

## Congress

### Bill 1: Affirmative

Picture this: you're playing a video game, and you make a mistake a big one. Maybe you accidentally hit the wrong button and set off a whole chain of explosions! Game over, right? But wait! The game suddenly gives you an extra life, a "redo" button, a chance to fix things. Now, imagine life had a redo button, too. That's where presidential pardons come in—like a second life for those who have served their time but want to turn things around. And guess what? This bill is that redo button, ready to make redemption real. This bill doesn't erase mistakes, but it offers a fresh start, like pressing reset on a messed-up level. We're taking the idea of a second chance from the screen to real life, narrowing our focus to the power of presidential pardons as a tool for real change. You should listen to this because pardons aren't just political—they're personal. They're a way to offer people a reset when the game of life has been unfairly tough.

The first reason to support this bill is its role in providing meaningful opportunities for redemption. Presidential pardons offer a crucial pathway for rehabilitation and reintegration of reformed individuals into society. This bill recognizes that while justice must be served, there must also be a way back for those who demonstrate genuine reform and remorse. Presidential pardons serve as a last resort for those denied other forms of clemency.

Presidential pardons have historically allowed individuals to reclaim their rights and rebuild their lives, positively impacting their communities (no personal anecdotes here, just factual precedent). Granting pardons on a federal, state, and civic level can help break cycles of poverty and reduce recidivism. Pardons, especially when used carefully, can send a message of hope, demonstrating that our justice system has room for compassion without compromising on accountability. Some may argue that this bill gives too much power to the President. However, the pardon power has always been balanced by the checks within our democratic system. In fact, denying this bill would remove a critical check on the criminal justice system's rigidity, undermining fairness and compassion.

The second reason to support this bill lies in its potential to address injustices within the criminal justice system. Presidential pardons help rectify instances where the justice system may have imposed unduly harsh penalties. This bill empowers the President to address cases where the punishment may not fit the crime, especially when legal appeals have failed to provide relief. Cases like wrongful convictions and over-sentencing are often corrected through presidential pardons, which serve as a final avenue for addressing systemic inequities. Correcting these injustices through pardons can restore public trust in the justice system. By ratifying the power of pardons, we ensure that our system is not just a machine for punishment but also a means of recognizing humanity and second chances. Opponents may argue that this power could be misused. However, the structured oversight and transparency of the Department of Justice's recommendations help ensure pardons are granted responsibly.

This bill is more than a formality, it's a beacon of hope for fairness, mercy, and justice. By ratifying the President's power to grant pardons, we're not excusing crime; we're empowering redemption. And if we believe in a justice system that balances accountability with compassion, supporting this bill is the only choice. Thank you.

## Bill 4: Negate

Alright, imagine you're at a birthday party. There's cake, balloons, and everyone's having a blast. But then someone walks in with a massive cake all to themselves—no sharing, no cuts for anyone else. Now, you'd be thinking, "Hey, isn't this supposed to be a party for everyone?" That's a bit like this bill. If we repeal the GPO and WEP, we're essentially handing a big slice of Social Security benefits to a select few who already have an extra pension on the side. Not exactly fair for the rest of us, right? This bill isn't about evening the playing field; it's about tilting it. By repealing these provisions, we risk giving an unfair advantage to certain groups while draining resources meant for all. Let's focus on why this bill, though it may sound good, would actually create new inequalities within the Social Security system. You should care about this bill because Social Security is a shared resource, and we need policies that keep it fair and sustainable—not ones that give a bonus to people who already have extra benefits.

The first reason to oppose this bill is that repealing GPO and WEP would place an unnecessary strain on Social Security funds. Repealing the GPO and WEP would unfairly increase Social Security payouts to individuals who already receive pensions, diverting funds from those who rely solely on Social Security. The GPO and WEP exist to prevent "double-dipping"—receiving both a full Social Security benefit and a separate pension. Removing these provisions would allow some people to collect extra benefits while others are limited to Social Security alone. Studies have shown that eliminating GPO and WEP could cost the Social Security system billions, making it harder to sustain benefits for everyone who needs them. Social Security funds could deplete faster, jeopardizing the stability of benefits for all. By maintaining GPO and WEP, we're ensuring that benefits are distributed more equitably, giving priority to those who rely solely on Social Security. Some argue that GPO and WEP are unfair to people with pensions. However, these provisions are designed to ensure fairness across all workers. Repealing them would only create new imbalances, benefitting a small group at the cost of many.

The second reason to oppose this bill is that it could set a precedent for future reductions in Social Security sustainability. Eliminating these provisions might open the door to further policies that prioritize special interests over the general public. Once we start creating exceptions to the Social Security structure, it becomes easier to introduce more exceptions, eroding the system's universality and sustainability. Repealing GPO and WEP could set a costly precedent, encouraging future policies that further strain Social Security without offering widespread benefits. Repealing these provisions could destabilize Social Security by encouraging policy changes that favor specific groups. Protecting GPO and WEP helps maintain the integrity of Social Security, ensuring it remains a fair and reliable source of support for all retirees. Some might argue that this bill only affects a small portion of retirees, but even small changes can have large ripple effects on Social Security's future. At its heart, this bill may seem to promote fairness, but repealing GPO and WEP would only create new inequities and threaten the financial health of Social Security. If we want Social Security to remain a safety net for all, we must oppose this bill. Let's protect the system for everyone, not just a few. Thank you.

## Bill 5: Affirmative

Imagine your kitchen is filled with extra-hot chili peppers. At first, it seems exciting—spicy, and bold. But soon, those peppers start to get into everything, even where they don't belong, turning every dish into a fire hazard. Now, what if there was a program that could come by, scoop up all the over-the-top spicy peppers, and leave you with a safe, balanced kitchen again? That's what this bill does for our communities, it takes the "extra-hot" weapons out of circulation, so we can enjoy a safer, less explosive environment. This bill isn't here to ban the ingredients altogether; it's here to take out the most dangerous ones, leaving us with just the right amount of spice for safety. I'm here today to show why a mandatory buyback program is the right recipe for reducing gun violence in our communities. Because just like too much spice can ruin a meal, too many high-risk weapons on the streets can turn our communities into dangerous places.

Today, I'm here to argue for a sensible solution to gun violence, a buyback program that lets us actively work toward reducing the risks in our neighborhoods. This matters because reducing access to assault weapons can directly decrease the frequency and severity of gun violence, making our communities safer for everyone.

The first reason to support this bill is that a buyback program can significantly lower the number of dangerous firearms on the streets. A mandatory buyback program targeting assault weapons will help reduce gun violence in a meaningful way. Assault weapons and high-capacity magazines enable rapid, mass violence in ways that handguns and other firearms typically do not. Removing these specific items can directly reduce the potential for mass shootings. Studies show that countries with buyback programs, such as Australia, have seen declines in gun violence. When assault weapons are removed from circulation, it limits opportunities for large-scale violence. Fewer assault weapons mean fewer instances where these guns can be misused in dangerous ways. Some may argue that criminals won't comply with this program. While true, the buyback program doesn't aim to completely eliminate crime overnight; it's about reducing access and creating fewer opportunities for tragedy, which benefits everyone in the long run.

The second reason to support this bill is that it's designed to be financially sustainable. This bill funds the buyback program without burdening the average taxpayer. The program's funding comes from an excise tax on firearms and ammunition sales, as well as reallocated federal defense funds, ensuring that those who use or manufacture firearms contribute directly to public safety efforts. By implementing a targeted excise tax and reappropriating defense funds, this program is designed to fund itself rather than requiring new or increased taxes for everyday Americans. A self-sustaining program ensures longevity without needing further financial intervention from the public. This bill balances public safety goals with responsible fiscal planning, making it a reasonable solution to a serious issue. Critics may argue that reallocating defense funds weakens national security. However, by focusing on domestic safety, this bill strengthens national security at home by addressing gun violence, which is a pressing issue within our borders.

In conclusion, this bill is a practical and fair approach to reducing gun violence in our communities. By implementing a mandatory buyback program, we're prioritizing safety, supporting responsible gun ownership, and investing in a future where our streets, schools, and public spaces are safer. It's time to press that "reset" button and make a positive change. Thank you.

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