Introduction:

Starting with the lesser known video game Death Race in 1976, where it was said to have inspired more pedestrian deaths by car, all the way to 2019 in El Paso Texas where a man murdered 22 people, video games have been the scapegoat for violence in America. As the violence and shootings occurred throughout the years various groups in America have come to place blame on video games as the reason a person will carry out a heinous act of violence.

The preliminary answer for the research is that it is most likely coming from a multitude of groups each with their own set of ideals. The first group that seems to be making these remarks are Republicans. They have connections with the NRA, and it seems that they have an underlying agenda of trying to take national attention away from gun control and put the blame on violence in video games. Democrats are also likely to be guilty of playing the blame game, however the attacks will not be as vigorous as that of Republicans. A first hunch as to why there may be more cases of Republicans blaming video games is that their base is more fully behind full protections of the second amendment. Anytime a shooting occurs gun control is always brought up and using video games to turn the attention away from that will help the party. The Democrats, on the other hand, have a group of constituents who have stronger views on the regulation of firearms. Another group that may be making these claims are parents. Unfortunately, many parents have been directly affected by some of these terrible acts in America, and losing a child might cause a parent to look for something to place blame on. Using various articles and lawsuits this paper will uncover directly who are the groups that are making these accusations against video games. This paper will first give a literature review of some sources used in the paper then It will go over a brief timeline of the effects of video games on society, then going on to discuss politicians, followed by the NRA and ESA including their lobbying efforts , parents, and activist Jack Thompson. Finally ending with the analysis of findings and conclusion.

Literature Review:

While researching articles for this paper, I discovered that the more recent events dealing with this topic literature sources are articles found on major news outlet sources: CNN, New York Times. The Guardians. When searching the earlier time periods about video games and violence, a lot of the sources ranges from books to scholar articles to research papers. Articles within the last two years to discuss a lot about the political point of on gun violence and the influence of video games.

In the article written by Kevin Draper from the New York Times opens by detailing President Trump's remarks to the media after the deadly shootings that left 31 people dead which gives an insight of which side of the debate the president side with. Trump talks about the glorification of violence in society and goes on to say "this includes the gruesome and grisly video games that are now commonplace". While video games have been blamed since 1999 the author brings up how other countries such as Japan and South Korea spend more per capita on video games then America and have less violence. The fact that the author includes this research point from other countries gives the reader a broader view of the debate in itself and how it is concentrated on America itself. After the shooting in Stoneman Douglas high school Trumps administration led a commission into violence in schools downplaying guns and even has a chapter dedicated to video games yet offers no recommendations on them. In conclusion, research conducted studied 6,814 news accounts about mass shootings found that that video games were brought up eight times more when the shooter was white rather than black. The fact that the author brings up previous use research by known experts of the field to make an argument for or against video games and links it to the 2011 case with the Brown V. EMA. It makes the source more reliable by using other credible work to write this article itself (Draper, 2019).

In the article from CNN wire journalist Jill Disis starts off with Trumps remarks about video games after the Florida Parkland shooting saying again how they have negative effects and children's thoughts that can lead to violence. The article then turns to showing the origins of blaming video games first in the 70s when a game that let you run over people for points caused a controversy and then to 90s when the game "Mortal Kombat" made even democratic senators call for action. The article points out how the 1999 Columbine shootings brought video games into the limelight as the scape goat for violence. The article goes on to point out that democratic members both Hilary Clinton and former President Obama came out against video games either trying to limit them or trying to investigate them further. Another groups is pointed out later in the article named Moms Demand Action who came out and asked the gaming industry to stop working with weapons manufactures and later the same group blames gun control for the recent shootings. This article shows different perspectives of videogames and violence which inspired the idea to write my research on the different groups blaming video games to be the cause of violent behavior (Disis, 2019). The article briefly gave a glimpse of the motives behind each argument made from the various groups. It gave me a better understanding why certain groups react negatively or positively towards the subject matter. The part of the article has information that was hard to find about the parents groups. Mom Demand Action seem to be more in favor for gun control rather than blaming video games to my surprise. Coming across this paper put things in perspective that not everyone is anti-video games.

In the article from written by Christopher J. Ferguson publish by American Psychiatric is written differently from CNN and New York Times article use in my research. This article takes an academic approach to the topic by using previous law cases psychological experience and scientific findings. In summary, the article opens with the law case of Brown v. Entertainment

Merchants Association or previously known as Schwarzenegger v. EMA. In short, the court cases was about the government fining companies $1000 that sold or rented out violent video games to minors. The author includes in the beginning of his research by writing the outcome of the case and the judges' opinion to the psychological/ scientific research. He writes about how the research presented at Supreme Court justice and draw to the conclusion that the psychological research have many flaws and have no clear cut proof that violent video games causes violent action. Christopher J. Ferguson analyzed psychological and scientist findings with violent video games and the person's behavior which gives insight to see that with many experiments conducted on this subject matter, there is no scientific or psychological proof showing a direct correlation with violent behavior caused by video games. In addition to analyzing the research, the Supreme Court justice made the decision that video games is protection of freedom of speech and regulation of the sales is unconstitutional. It is interesting how in this article it shows that there is a huge assumption with the influence of video games with behavior and how the justice system see this as an issue in ruling against it (Ferguson, 2013).

In the article from New York Times journalist Adam Liptak, writes about the discussion had in the U.S. Supreme Court about banning the sale of video games to minors. Studies on both sides claiming video games do and don't cause violence are debated but, they end up finding it hard to allow the government to regulate depictions of violence. Judge Scalia brings up other violent forms of media such a Grimm's fairy tales describing how they are violent as well asking if they should be banned as well. Another judge held the opposite opinion stating that the government should be allowed to help parents protect their children against such violent video games. The California law that would fine a store $1,000 for the sale of a mature game to a minor was ultimately stuck down. This article helps me and my research as it shows the attempt to have

violent video games banned in a state but also the conversation had between Supreme Court judges and if the law was constitutional. Aside from that the article also give different viewpoints from judges and how they feel towards violent video games. It is interesting how even in our justice system, we find this debate splitting judges about the government being involved with video games depicting violence. One point made in the beginning of the article about extending first amendment rights to new medium was interesting (Liptak, 2010). I believe as newer medium come to surface, the depiction of the law will be challenges like the 2005/2011 case in California about the banning of games. Within the 2000s alone, there are many cases where we see time and time again that the justice system would use the first amendment right to dismiss cases against video games which is interesting. They based these rulings based of the studies presented during these trials and many time there is a huge gap to make the assumption it is a direct correlation to violence in itself.

In the article found in the education week journal written by Mark Walsh talks about how in 1997 the US Supreme Court declined to hear the appeal from parents who wanted media companies including video games to shoulder the blame for the school shooting in West Paducah Kentucky. The parents argument was that the violent video games caused the shooter to act. The parents however would lose not only in the federal district court of Paducah but also to the US Court of Appeals for the 6th circuit in Cincinnati. Interestingly enough the lawmakers found it impossible that the media companies including video games could know that their product could turn a child into a killer. I found this article shows that lawsuit of 1997 came from a personal place and show the victims of violence like mass shooter family will blame video games for these violent action. It also was helpful as it not only shows that parents were against video games but also that the supreme deemed it impossible for companies to know which is a true statement. It applies to all types of mediums, how will we know if exposure to certain behaviors means the public will

mimic such behaviors. Exposure to certain medium and other outside factors is what cause people to behavior a certain way (Walsh, 2003). I'm interested to see how the courts viewed games in newer cases as this shooting was before the 1999 Columbine shooting that woke up a nation to gun violence but also turned the eye to video games.

In the article journal in the video business written by Wendy Wilson opens stating how federal and state lawmakers are now reanalyzing the effect of violent media including video games might have on the youth. This reanalysis comes after the Columbine high school shooting in Colorado which was the deadliest shooting in America at the time. Both New York and Pennsylvania started to introduce bills that would on a state level restrict minors from playing Violent video games. The article closes detailing how both democrats and republicans alike were calling on President Bill Clinton to sit down and along with them take a closer look at violent media and see how they created a "culture of carnage". This article was very useful to my paper as it shows not only Republicans taking a stand against video games but Democrats as well. It is interesting to go back and compare how the Columbine shootings effecting America and its search for a scapegoat when in 1997 the Kentucky parents lost their appeal when they tried to blame school shootings on video games (Wilson, 1999). It just show that the more death causality that occurs in one event will bring more attention to the public compare to the same exact type of event (mass shootings) with less causality will get. The nation truly changes post columbine and the debate always come back to this event and how we can prevent many more like this.

History of the effects of video games in society:

As video games becoming more popular and expands into different genre increase the public's concern into the new digital age. The very first video game that cause public outrage was the game entitled Death Race. Death Race was released in 1976. It allows players to take control

of cars and run gremlins over for points. As the popularity of Death Race increased, the National Safety Council was not pleased. In the quarterly magazine, family safety council opinion about the games was" insidious, morbid, gross, and sick, sick, sick." The council was not pleased how people are getting killed by cars each year and how Death Race is playing a part by teaching people how to do so (Blumenthal,1976). Years later as early as 1993, politicians Senator Joe Lieberman and Herb Kohl raised concerns to Washington about how new video games at the time such as Mortal Kombat does not have any warning signs or show age limitation for a mature game. The purpose behind the bill is to have a council of people implement a warning system to parents and the rest of the public about certain games that may not be suited for a younger audience. The result of this legal actions is that an advocacy group was form to assist Entertainment industry game content ratings. Video Games did not become a public issue until 1997 massive shooting in west Kentucky. Three students were murder, and five others were injured by 14 year old Michael Carneal. Jack Thompson file a lawsuit on behalf of the families affected by the massive shooting in Kentucky. During the investigation Michael Carneal, authorities found out about Carneal interest in violent video games and movies. Investigators believe his movie and game preference influenced Carneal to commit the violent act of murder/attempt of murder. The result of this lawsuit of blaming media for violent acts was dismissed due to the lack of legal claims. The perpetrators on the other hand declaring himself mentally ill as he pled guilty with a life sentence in prison. This lawsuit marks the first of many legal actions to come against the entertainment industry involving violent video game(National Coalition Against Censorship 2019).

In 1999, tragedy strikes the nation once again with another massive shooting in Columbine Colorado causing public outrage. On April 20, 1999, Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris killed 13 people and wounded 20 others in Columbine High school before committing suicide. Within two

years post this tragedy, legal actions took place and the debate of gun laws emerge in an attempt to prevent another tragedy. In 2001, in the state of Indiana, a plaintiff challenged the Indianapolis General Ordinance No. 72-2000 in restriction of coin operated video games to prevent children's exposure to violence and sexual content of video games. The outcome of this case was that it prevent children's exposure to porn but denies these coin operated games to be removed for display and usage. One of the bigger legal actions that occur in 2001 was against 25 entertainment companies due to the tragedy of Columbine. Parents of the fallen victims pursue a lawsuit against the 25 entertainment companies for $5 billion. During the investigation, investigators found out that one of the gunmen's' rifle was named after a character from a popular known violent video games of the time Doom. They blame the products of these companies that influence the two gunmen Columbine to commit the mass murders and injuries. The main purpose was there someone accountable for the Columbine shooting. The lawsuit was dismissed against entertainment companies because Judge Lewis Babcock believe it falls under the category of freedom of expression (creation of video games) (National Coalition Against Censorship 2019)..

Within the decade, many more legal actions were pursued as the debate of whether video games cause violent action to be true in minors and if so, how to prevent the violent events. In the case Interactive DigitalSoftwareAssoc. Vs. St. Louis County in 2003, the entertainment software association challenge the law in St. Louis County with minors having access to violent video games without parental consent. Judge Stephen Limbaugh believe violent materials can be regulated and it's not protected under the first amendment. In a later Jurisdiction, three judge panelist reverse Judge Limbaugh ruling with regulating violent materials such as video games. Judge Morris S. Arnold wrote in his opinion that "video games could not be denied First Amendment protection simply because they are interactive, and that depictions of violence cannot legally be considered

obscene for either minors or adults." Essentially St. Louis County lost this case as many other in the past and future cases to come will use the argument of the first amendment to dismiss cases against the entertainment business with exposure to violent material. Later that year, Two Tennessee families pursue a lawsuit of $246 million against Rockstar games, Take Two Interactive, Sony Computer Entertainment America and Walmart due to the fact that one of the family members were killed and others injured by 14 year old , Joshua Buckner and 16 year old William Buckner, who fire rifles in smoky mountain. During the trial of the boys learn to shoot a gun from their favorite game Grand Theft Auto and was trying to recreate the game in real life. The boys were found guilty of murder and attempt of murder but the responsibility of the entertainment companies' part in this shooting was dismissed(National Coalition Against Censorship 2019).

This pattern of holding entertainment companies responsible for violence that occurs from playing video games or other exposure to violent material has been dismissed by the court time and time again like in 2005 with VSDA and ESA v. Schwarzenegger,Entertainment Software Association VS. Blagojevich, and the 2011 case of Brown VS. Entertainment Merchants Association. With the case VSDA and ESA v. Schwarzenegger,Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed a law of selling and renting violent video games to minors and will fine the business who do not abide by this law with $1000.When this law was brought up to court, Judge Ronald Whyte found this law goes against the first amendment rights and dismissed this case. In 2011, Brown VS. Entertainment Merchants Association was a contingent plaintiff on the earlier case VSDA and ESA v. Schwarzenegger. The result of this cases that restricting children's access to violent video games is unconstitutional. The judge dismissed this case on with the argument siding with first amendment rights. In the case of Entertainment Software Association VS. Blagojevich, the

intention behind this case was to in force a law to label video games appropriately for the different age groups that play. They law essentially would attempt to prevent minors exposure to violent video game content in Illinois. Again, the court dismiss this injunction according to the first amendment rights Argument(National Coalition Against Censorship 2019)..

In 2012, yet another massive shooting occur in Newton, Connecticut where 20 students and 6 educators were killed by a 20 year old boy named Adam Lanza. Lawsuits pursue post this tragic event reach court in 2013, where the gun company was sued for their product target audience was young males who seen the Remington Arm company's gun products in violent video games. This case still proceeds today as the debate of gun violence still continues in the United States today since other violent occurs emerge with the last decade like Parkland in 2018, El Paso and Dayton in 2019. Politicians and lawmakers continue to have this discussion if violent video games have any attributes to all these tragic events that occur from 1997 to present.

Politicians views on video games and violence:

As America moved to a Republican President in 2016 Donald Trump would take a hard stance against video games. Following the 2018 Florida Parkland High School President Trump held a meeting with various representatives of the videogames industry to discuss the possible role that video games played in the shooting. Trump himself stated that he hears about how violent video games are today and how they are shaping the minds of the youth which could put them in danger of carrying out a violent act. Fellow Republican Tennessee Representative Marsha Blackburn would agree with Trump and pass on to him that her constituents that are parents were concerned about the rating system that was used on video games and movies. Agreeing with this assessment as a parent President Trump would assign the Department of Education and Secret

Service team to produce a report on school safety. The report would return however its findings and recommendations would not align with what President Trump was arguing. In a 180 page report with a section dedicated to video games the commission would find that the video games rating system known as the ESRB was thorough and generally used by parents when making the decision to buy their children a certain video game. Even having this information at his disposal by his own teams and two more shootings occurred following Parkland being the Dayton Ohio and El Paso Texas shooting President Trump would still double down and stand firm in his position against video games. Speaking on the shootings Trump would call for the end of the glorification of violence going on in America including gruesome and grisly violent video games that have become commonplace in society. Trump again would not be alone in his comments as fellow Republicans came out to speak on the shootings one being Texas LT. Governor Dan Patrick would talk about how evil has always been around in America but video games are nothing more than an industry that is teaching people to kill while Minority House leader Kevin Mcarthy would also pin the blame on video games saying that it was first very scared for the future youth of America with all the violent video games being produced and that it was hard to look at the images of the El Paso shooting and not see it as something that would come exactly from a video game (Draper, 2019).

Reviewing the research the main takeaway was the switch from Democrats from the early 2000's and 1990's to 2012 and beyond. While Democrats obviously aren't in any way endorsing video games in the national discourse as Bernie Sanders even admits he's not a fan of them he and the majority of the party is no longer putting them as the blame or the sole blame for mass killings or acts of violence. It seems since the Sandy Hook shooting in 2012 the Democrats have pivoted more towards the idea of gun control and other issues like white supremacy in terms of the El Paso Texas shooting. The voting base being a majority of the base for gun control and more and more

scientific research done on video games could be some answers as to why the switch had occurred. Republicans on the other hand have stayed the course of putting most of the blame on video games for mass shootings. One idea as to why this might be is the parties' link to the NRA and the Republican base more in favor for less gun restrictions and the strength of the second amendment. As every shooting happens gun control is also one of the first issues discussed so the idea that the NRA and Republicans are using video games as a scapegoat to keep the pressure off of gun control is not too farfetched. However with this notion is shows that between the two parties going forward video games will continue to be used as a tool in the debate for or against gun control. In terms of parents using the research gathered from the paper many who have put blame on video games for causing violence have they themselves be affected but a terrible act of violence. Be it the 1997 Kentucky shooting or the Columbine shooting where the families pushed lawsuits against video game companies it is understandable as they were directly involved and when politicians and the media are blaming violent video games it would be hard not to feel the same (Bogost, 2019).

National Rifle Association views on video games and violence:

In recent times one of the biggest advocates for blaming violence on school shootings is the NRA (National Rifle Association). The NRA would start out as a non-partisan organization however it would start to align itself with the Republican Party as the years went on. The NRA is no stranger to politics lobbying for gun rights and even stopping legislation by the government to study the public health effects. While there had been shootings prior to 2012 the Sandy Hook shootings were major moment where the NRA decided to join the blame game against video games. As the debate following the attack swelled around gun control and then sitting Democratic President Barack Obama looking into legislation around gun regulation the media would release

information that the shooter had played violent video games. Using this information a week after the shooting took place the NRA's executive vice president Wayne La Pierre spoke to the media stating that restricting guns and harsher gun control would not fix the mass shooting problem in America. La Pierre would argue that in America to protect things important like banks, sports stadiums, and even our President is protected by armed guards and our children's schools should be no different. La Pierre would end his statements by blaming video games and saying "There exists in this country a callous, corrupting shadow industry that sells and sows violence against its own people". He would bring up the usual suspects such as "Mortal Kombat" and "Grand Theft Auto" as the offending video games claiming that the media and the entertainment industry shared a role in the deadly shooting (Good, 2018).

La Pierre and the NRA would continue to attack President Obama for his efforts to regulate guns and video games as he would call them nothing more than "filthy pornography". Despite these attacks on video games the NRA would release its own game shortly after the attack entitled "NRA: Practice Range". The app would allow players to shoot various weapons teaching about gun safety and when to use the correct ammunition. The game featured no killing however with no age restriction the app could be downloaded and played by any child.

While Sandy Hook was a big statement for the NRA they weren't done blaming video games there as six years later in the Santa Fe high school in Texas a student would kill ten people and spark another debate around video games and gun control. This just two days after the attack NRA President Oliver North spoke saying that children shouldn't be afraid to go to school and that in this day in age the youth of America live in a "culture of violence". Like La Pierre he argues for armed guard positioned at school to protect the children while putting the blame on video games stating that a teen only has to power up a video to be soaked in the so called "culture of violence".

Oliver North would run into a problem as unlike before where the NRA released non-violent video games in 2012 Oliver North was an advisor on one of the more popular violent video games which has been blamed in the past for causing shootings "Call of Duty Black OPS 2". North would describe working on the game as a great opportunity and would even be in the video games itself as a fictionalized version of himself. While this paper will not jump to conclusions and try to understand the motives behind the NRA's position the NRA's position and history with blaming and video games in general seem to be using them as a tool to undermine the national debate around stricter gun control while that the ole boogeyman of violent video games is to blame for the continual mass shootings in America (Bradshaw 2013).

Lobbying of the ESA and NRA:

While the NRA is influencer behind the scenes in the debate against gun violence video games have done lobbying of their own behind the organization called the Entertainment Software Association (ESA). While the NRA would be thought of as the big donor in 2013 the ESA was reported to have spent $4.83 million in federal lobbying compared to the NRA's $2.98 million. The big question then stems from how bills are always hitting the senate floor that are in favor of banning and investigating video games while gun regulation takes more time. While at the time Vice President Biden California Senator Dianne Feinstein both had bills centered around gun control it would be senator Jay Rockefeller's bill about violent video games and their impact on children that would see the floor. A reason for this is while the ESA was lobbying more money in general the NRA had spent $4.52 million in contributions in the election cycle to the ESA's poultry $510,000. Another reason is where the ESA allocates is lobbying funds as stated the NRA spends vast amounts of money on the elections but, they also spend their money on outside resources which would TV spots, mass mailings, and rob calls while the ESA in the same category would

respond that they had spent a grand total of $0 on such expenditures. While the ESA has many goals their biggest one that pertains to violence and the NRA is their First Amendment Rights and also protecting video games against content regulation. It is why the 2011 case was such a landmark for the ESA and video games in general because while they had won court cases before giving their game First Amendment rights allowed them more freedoms than they previously had before. The ESA's chief lobbyist would talk about before the video games industry was seen as responsible for the evils of society while now they are more involved in the world and effective in setting policy. Another thing to note is that while in the 90s video games while popular were still a smaller thing today however they are today brining in billions of dollars each year with a figure of $23. 5 billion sales in 2015. Despite all this the NRA still has a better foothold in politics and that may be because they have a better strategy where they aim not always to win but to prove a point. They have backed candidates who supported the 2nd Amendment who were guaranteed to lose just to make the point that the NRA was there. NRA lobbyist also brought up that winning isn't about stopping bills it's about preventing them to getting legislation and putting the NRA out of business. Also after the Sandyhook shooting the NRA decided that it would now try and shift the debate to video games saying that if they were going to come after the 2nd Amendment then they would bring up the 1st Amendment and how video games train children to shoot heads. Another thing about the ESA that is hard to pinpoint is their allegiance. While the NRA is overwhelmingly behind the Republican Party putting all is lobbying behind them with the exception of one Democrat in Minnesota the ESA has more equal spending with their lobbying not going in large amount to each party. In the 2018 election cycle the ESA would donate 16,000 to each party and in 2020 $5,000 to the Democratic Party and $4,000 to the Republican Party.

Looking at these numbers while the ESA has poured vast amounts of money into its federal lobbying it doesn't really favor each political party as the NRA does (Gould, 2018).

Parents and the community's views on video games and violence:

During the 1980s as the arcade phenomenon would rage on one parent would take notice in her community and accidently become the spokesperson for video game regulation. Ronnie Lamm mother and member of the Parent-Teacher Association would first become involved when she saw that children by the day were coming into school with less and less money to be able to afford lunch. In 1982 she would state that they had taken away the kids ability to play cowboys and Indians with guns and bows and replaced it all in a small cartridge that has just the same violent themes. Lamm would state that the arcade parlors were a place where only the worst of the youth would congregate. These arcades would not only instill gambling into the youth but also it would instill in them aggressive behavior as she says unacceptable language is heard at the arcade parlors. Lamm would take action discussing and trading notes with other parents as they persuaded their town of Brookhaven to deny permits for arcade parlors attempting to open up in the area. Lamm would circulate petitions in her area, talk with state officials about legislation to control video games, and making speeches before officials and community groups. In a quote from Lamm about her efforts against video games she said "We are finding it surprisingly easy actually. Some of those that want to open these places are the absolute dregs, and they are battling motherhood and apple pie". Lamm's piece would inspire other parents such as one by the name of G.F. Cravenson who finds it laughable that parents would be against video games simply because they didn't grow up with them. Cravenson describes every video game as nothing more than war games where the objective is to eliminate the threat that is against the player. He asserts that all these games do is instill in children aggressive behavior and describes that rage that comes across a child when they

lose and their quarter lost. Cravenson ends by vowing that he will not allow his children to play such video games so they do not themselves become robotized as many of the youth had become (Holmstrom, 1999).

One of the lesser known school shootings to happen in America would occur in 1997 at a Kentucky high school in West Paducah. On December 1st 1997 a 14 year old student would walk into his high school and kill three while injuring five more. The parents still grieving they would coincidentally file a lawsuit on April 13, 1999 just seven days before the Columbine Shooting. The parents filed a 130 million dollar lawsuit against the entertainment industry which included video games making the claim that the violent media the teen had consumed inspired him to act The parents lawyer at the time Jack Thompson who launched his own crusades against video games would say that the intention of the lawsuit was to hurt the video game industry. While the parents continued to argue that the computer games the shooter played inspired him they would suffer legal setbacks where one mother would say “They just want to be like an ostrich and pretend it will all go away." Eventually the parents would lose their case not only in the federal district court in Paducah Kentucky but also the U.S. Court of Appeal for the 6th Circuit in Cincinnati. When the judges made their statement as to well they voted against the parents they deemed that it would be too far a leap for the media companies including video games to know that their product could inspire a child to kill others.

After the tragedy at Columbine shook America parents not only directly affected by the shooting acted against video games. A Brooklyn resident by the name of Edward Fertik began calling his local theaters to ask them to restrict violent video games from those that were under the age of 18. Similar to Death Race in 1976 Fertik would witness young girl playing an arcade game where you drive around a shopping mall attempting to run people over disturbing him. While the

theater manager reluctantly obliged with Fertiks request, Fertik thought that he was in a position to help other worried parents so that is what he would do and if the theater would not abide by his request he personally vowed to go down and protest (Blumenthal, 1976) would post a blog on its official website saying its concern with the youth at the school and claims that in the last decade teens and children have had increased anxiety and depression. Following Sandyhook they would have police come in to train and inform the staff about school shootings. In the briefing the police would bring a report that would point to engagement of violent video games as a characteristic of a shooter. Using this the school created what is called the Cushman school pledge #OneMoreParent. The pledge was created in attempts to make a safer environment for the community and while it has five parts the first one would be restricting the time a child plays games and not allowing them to play violent video games at all. On March 2nd 2018 the school as students to bring in their violent video games and toss them into bins that the school had provided around the campus. Students would end up dumping a number of video games two being a couple of the more scrutinized Call of Duty and Grand Theft Auto (Cushman School, 2018).

Activist Jack Thompsons views on video games and violence:

As mentioned earlier in the paper Florida lawyer Jack Thompson was a huge player in the cases made against video games. He would continue to try and have video games banned and the Paducah case was just the start. In the early 2000s Thompson would talk about numerous incidents where a child had gone to their school intending to harm others. In one case an 11 year old boy went to his school dressed in camo and a red bandanna and tried to take his school over with a knife. Thompson saw a link using the red bandanna saying it was linked to the video game Metal Gear Solid 2. He asserts that games like these are in fact made for the military for training purposes that seemingly make their way into the civilian market. He goes onto assert that the US Department

of Defense is using the tax dollars of the people to fund the video game industry to make this violent killing simulators. He notes that we had guns before but, killing wasn't this rampant and his answer is that children are using these games pushed out by the video game industry to train themselves to kill each other. In 2002 Thompson would try to enter another case but in an unusual way. In Medina County Ohio a teen would end up stabbing a beating a girl to death with a bedpost. The killer was said to be entranced by the video game Grand Theft Auto III and used it as motivation to kill. Thompson told the family of the victim that he wanted to join the case as the representative of the killer using the argument that he was obsessed with the video game GTA III and it was to blame for causing the teen to commit murder. The County Prosecutor mentioned the conflicting interests of representing the killer however the killer would eventually decline Thompson's offer and reject the insanity plea claiming that the game had no role in the murder (Thompson, 2006).

Going into 2005 Thompson would continue his quest against longtime foe Rockstar Games and Take-Two interactive with the upcoming release of their new video game entitled Bully. Thompson like in the Media County case would have another unusual request as he sent letters to Take-Two demanding that he be given a copy of the game early to determine how violent it was. His request would ultimately be denied and he would go on to file a lawsuit against the company in the Miami Dade Circuit Court citing Florida's nuisance law. If he was allowed early access to the video game and deemed it to violent he would file an injunction on the games release. The game would eventually be given T rating by the ESRB and he too would argue this point claiming it should be moved up to an M rating as the game is nothing more than a Columbine simulator even though the game would include no firearms and no killing (2008).

Conclusion:

Analyzing the research the one thing that would of helped would have been taking a survey of people of various ages as to get a good representation of the different age groups (gen x, baby boomers and millennials). The differing viewpoints would have added to the paper as an initial thought would be millennials putting less blame on video games as compared to baby boomers. Another area where this would be helpful is as we head towards the future and more millennials take over in the US government. As of right now a majority of the government are baby boomers who they themselves never group of with video games and having been making legislation on them and they have been the ones pushing talking points in the media for years now. To say however that millennials would completely flip the narrative on video games would be naïve but at the very least they would seem to be less willing to put immediate blame on them for violence. Alexandria Ocasio Cortez one of the few millennials in the US House while not giving them an endorsement has responded to a Republican saying violent video games aren't to blame and she herself plays them and has even used them in attempts to get more people involved in politics. Is ideas like this that maybe show how the US will view games going into the future and not as the immediate scapegoat. Looking at evidence each group had various reasons as to why they were blaming video games. While the paper understands that this is a small sample size and not evidence for every parent out there but it seems that parents are putting blame on video games when they themselves have to directly affected by a horrible act of violence. This is easy to understand as when such a terrible thing happens one will look to find something to blame and look for answer as to just why this person carried out such a horrible act on the parents loved one. Video games are there forth easy target as the news plays clip after clip of video games telling the parents that video games were at the scene of the crime each time. Parents on multiple occasions would also

file lawsuit and each time they would fail in court with the judges citing that the video game companies could not be held liable. In terms of the NRA with the lobbying they do and evidence against them it can be inferred that they are using video games as a way to get the national attention off of gun control. Using video games for the NRA is easy because they are and old boogeyman that everyone can understand as the bad guy. Using lobbying the NRA has been able to keep legislation of gun control from even reaching the senate floor. In term of politicians the Democrats and Republicans have taken slightly different paths. The Republicans have for the most part kept the same hardline stance up to present day with using video games as a scapegoat for violence in America with the only difference being as America moved forward of SandyHook their connections with the NRA became more evident and determining their true motives is do difficult. From the evidence it is known that the NRA has given money to Republican senators and the current President and with that the Republican Party has more motivation to downplay the role of guns in a shooting while at the same time putting more focus on violent video games. The Democrats on the other hand have taken a different approach to today. As with the Republicans the Democrats have been no ally to video games blaming them just as well for violence and even being the ones to introduce legislation against them one of the biggest coming in 1993 when Joe Lieberman and Herb Kohl introduced a bill that would eventually create the video game rating system known as the ESRB. Passing Sandyhook and going into 2019 the Democrats however have seen a slight shift as they no longer attack video games straight away. While they in no way endorse them and its not agreed upon across the board more have come up put the blaming on gun control and other issues before coming to video games. Even Hilary Clinton a once enemy of video games who introduced her own legislation against them has come out and said that video games had no role in one of the various shootings.

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