

Out-of-control spending, not guns, is nation's most pressing problem

By JOHN L. BOYLE II

VIEWPOINT

The Ann Arbor News editorial on gun control (March 20) once again looks for shallow (easy) answers to complex problems. Irrespective of the constitutionality of prohibiting certain guns and irrespective of the reasonableness of a waiting period before buying a gun, this is not why this country faces the potential loss of a whole generation of black children — actually, this should read “poor” children.

The real reason we face the loss of such a large percentage of our children is because our nation is bankrupt and, since our children can't vote, we have chosen to disenfranchise them. As with all disenfranchisements, it is the weak and impecunious (in this case — the children) who get disenfranchised the most.

Congress and the American Association of Retired People have led the charge toward bankrupting our youth. The children of America have the highest rate of poverty of any age group. While many of today's children cannot get a decent education, minimal health care, or even a reasonable guarantee of food, and while real wages (after taxes) for working Americans (the parents) continues a 20-year decline, consider the following:

■ America's retirees enjoy the highest standard of living of any age group. By contrast, America's children have the lowest standard of living and a 23 percent poverty rate.

■ America's retirees enjoy universal health-care through Medicare — America's children have no such guarantee and many go without even minimal health-care.

■ Income for America's retirees increased at twice the rate of inflation during the 1980s while working-class America lost ground to inflation.

■ While spending on government programs for the elderly rose 52 percent during the 1980s, spending on government programs for children dropped 4 percent.

■ The cost to support the president and Congress — all of who work in regal splendor — increased by triple the rate of inflation in the 1980s.

■ All the “tinkering” with taxes has resulted in the poor bearing the highest rate of taxation.

■ The federal deficit of \$6 trillion (\$3 trillion the government admits to plus \$3 trillion more due to

underfunding for Social Security and civil service pensions) must be paid by our already-bankrupt children.

■ Congress' (including our Sen. Don Riegle) coziness with the scum of the Savings and Loan world will cost future taxpayers — that is, our children — \$500 billion. This would be more than enough to assure an entire generation of poor children food, shelter, medical care and access to a good education.

When today's children are in their 30s and 40s and the Baby-Boomers are retired, there will be about 1.5 workers for each retiree. With the present level of debt and with the insatiable demands of Congress and the AARP unabated, our children will face taxes of 78 percent of their income and our children's children will be at the low end of Third-World living standards.

Now, back to guns. Given the above scenario, doesn't it make sense for responsible parents to hoard assault weapons so that we can bequeath those weapons to our children who will be forced to fight America's Second Revolution to free themselves from unrelenting taxation without representation — that tax being 78 percent of their income necessitated by laws passed by the three previous generations (while our children were too young to vote) to pay for the unconscionable spending of those previous generations?

On the other hand, maybe we could unrealistically hope and pray that Congress will recognize that there is no way to help our children (especially the poor) if Congress can't generate some liquidity by not succumbing to the limitless demands of America's most powerful lobby — the AARP — and by ceasing its otherwise outrageous spending habits.

As long as a child in America can find more compassion, more liquidity, more education, more hope, and more help from the local gang than from the bankrupt society he lives in, another gun law won't mean a tinker's damn.

John L. Boyle II is an Ann Arbor businessman who heads a management consulting firm and is a real estate investor.