This thesis emerges from curiosity about Vermont's surprisingly permissive gun laws and from concern that our gun control debate pays inadequate attention to the safety of children. The inquiry proceeds in three pieces. First, I examine what factors predict variations in state gun policy with the expectation that safety is not a driving factor in determining gun laws. Second, I conduct content analysis of media discussions of gun control, examining the appearance of various frames in the debate, again expecting little discussion of the issues of safety. Third, I will use the information I have gathered to form a qualitative assessment of gun control policies based on my sample. The research for this thesis will consist of a media content analysis and a multiple regression analysis. The multiple regression analysis will test whether safety plays a role in shaping gun policy in the U.S. states. Gun laws will be compared based on the murder rate, suicide rate, and accident rate (plus control variables such as policy liberalism) for the purpose of assessing the impact of suicide rates on gun laws. I expect there to be no relationship. The media content analysis will be a study of news transcripts and newspapers over a one-month period in Wyoming, Florida, Mississippi, Illinois, Maine, and Vermont. These states differ in geography, partisan ideology, policy liberalism, and size. I will use this media study to gather a sample that will test whether the gun issue is framed as a function of homicide and crime rates. I will examine stories relating to gun control with the phrases "gun control," "gun policy," and "gun registration." The goal of this research will be to examine the framing of the gun control issue but will avoid event-driven news coverage in order to eliminate an increase in gun control stories in direct response to a gun-related/violent event. In Lexis Nexis and Westlaw, I will read the first 5 articles in each search for each state. I will build a table with the results that will compare the different frames. Conclusions have not yet been made but the abstract will be updated as necessary.