

# Gun Rights

Gun politics is a controversial area of American politics that is primarily defined by the actions of two groups: gun control and gun rights activists. These groups disagree on the interpretation of laws and court cases related to firearms as well as the effects of gun control on crime and public safety.

The second amendment to the U. S. Constitution guarantees “the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.” The



Constitution codifies this right of the people, and this amendment unlike the others in the Constitution sets a limit on the government, not the people.

Some do not believe the second amendment applies to the rights of individual citizens but only to the organized armed forces of the United States. James Madison, the primary author of the Bill of Rights, in Federalist Paper 46, addressed

the concern that a standing federal army might conduct a coup to take over the nation. He argued that this was implausible because, based on the country's population at the time; a federal standing army couldn't field more than 25,000-30,000 men. He then wrote: "To these would be opposed a militia amounting to near half a million of citizens with arms in their hands, officered by men chosen from among themselves, fighting for their common liberties, and united and conducted by governments possessing their affections and confidence."

Besides the advantage of being armed, which the Americans possess over people of almost every other nation, the existence of subordinate governments, to which the people are attached, and by which the militia officers are appointed, forms a barrier against the enterprises of ambition, more insurmountable than any which a simple government of any form can admit. Notwithstanding the military establishments in the several kingdoms of Europe, which are carried as far as the public resources will bear, the governments are afraid to trust the people with arms.

In addition, the Supreme Court of the United States has ruled that the second amendment secures the right of the people to keep and bear arms in both the home and in public.

So, let's start with a few facts:

- All commercial arms dealers, even those at gun shows must run background checks. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, at most 2 percent of guns used by criminals are purchased at gun shows, and most of those were purchased legally by people who passed background checks.
- In the states (prior to the Supreme Court ruling in June 2022) that have “shall issue” laws allowing private citizens to carry concealed weapons have on average, a lower violent crime rate, a lower murder rate and a lower robbery rate than states that forbid concealed weapons. In fact, the nine states with the lowest violent crime rates are all right-to-carry states. Remarkably, guns are used for self-defense more than 500,000 times a year.
- In Brazil, over a three year period of reducing gun regulations and allowing more citizens the right to carry, violent crime reduced by 34%.
- Numerous studies have been conducted on the effects of waiting periods, both before and after the federal Brady bill was passed in 1993. Those studies consistently show that there is no correlation between waiting periods and murder or robbery rates. Florida State University professor Gary Kleck analyzed data from every U.S. city with a population over 100,000 and found that waiting periods had no statistically significant effect. Even University of Maryland anti-gun researcher David McDowell found that “waiting periods have no influence on either gun homicides or gun suicides.”
- Gun ownership in America increased 28% from 1994 to 2023 and it is estimated that there are 393 million civilian-owned firearms in the U.S by at least 82,880,000 people who owned at least one firearm in 2023. Women's firearm ownership increased by 177.8% in the past years. Gun ownership increased more among Hispanics than any other demographic between 2017-2023 (33%) and one out of every twenty adults in the U.S. purchased a firearm for the first time during the pandemic.



The loss of even one life due to the misuse of a gun is a tragedy but for every lost life many have been saved because they did own a gun. I am a firm believer that the founders of our great Nation never envisioned a large enough police force or armed services that could always protect us. Just look at the tens of thousands of murders, rapes, burglaries, and armed robberies that happen all over this country every year. The police couldn't stop them (at no fault of their own). They are doing the best that they can with the resources that are given them. Law enforcement cannot be everywhere all the time to

prevent violence of any nature, let alone gun violence. And many times, even when a potentially violent act may be committed, law enforcement's hands are tied, and they are unable to legally do anything until the violent act has been committed. Therefore, all citizens are their own first responders and should be armed in order to protect themselves as well as, if necessary, protect our country. The People's first line of defense is self-defense. I believe it's not only a right for citizens to bear arms but also their civic duty to do so. This is especially true in this day and time. A gun is the great equalizer for self-defense. But the government/police will provide for your safety. Well with over 100+ armed agents and police, a former president wasn't protected from being shot. If they can't protect him, what chance would I have unarmed?

Banning guns or making it even more difficult for the law-abiding citizen to own a gun is not the answer. The root cause of the violence is not the gun but the individual. We need to look at what is causing the



individuals to commit violence. Criminals or the potential criminal will find a way to possess a gun if they so desire. If they intend to do harm, no laws will stop them. Just look at the so called "Gun Free" zones. How many times have we heard of a terrible tragedy happening in a gun free zone? The law didn't stop it from the person or

persons wanting to do harm.

I believe in background checks for the legal purchase of a firearm. This, as my dad would say, "Keeps the honest man honest." But waiting periods are not effective, so they should be abolished.

I do believe that all citizens who own a firearm SHOULD, but not mandatory, take a safety course and actually fire a weapon. Education is one of our greatest allies. These safety courses could be taught periodically by our reservists in the military or the National Guard who are highly trained in the use of weapons or by individuals who have been qualified as an instructor from a reputable institution.

Now for the types of guns that could be legally purchased. Too much rhetoric has been made about military or assault style weapons. Most of this is by people that have no clue about weapons in the first place. These styles are mainly for looks. For me, if I was faced with having to defend myself or others, I want the most fire power with which I am comfortable. The only true type weapons that should be banned for the general public are the true military weapons that cannot be carried easily by an individual; mortars, tanks, and F-16s to name a few. In addition, if we had to produce a number for

the maximum clip size for a semi-automatic weapon, it would be whatever the weapon could manage, and the individual is comfortable with.

Finally, we need to revisit the penalties for those convicted of a crime involving the use of a weapon whether it is a firearm or knife. Sentences should be mandatory with no discretion or waivers by the courts. These penalties need to be extremely harsh.

"To preserve liberty, it is essential that the whole body of people always possess arms and be taught alike, especially when young, how to use them."

- Richard Henry Lee, Signer, Declaration of Independence

#### Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States

"A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

#### Firearms Safety First!

- Always point the muzzle of your gun in a safe direction
- Always treat every gun as if it were loaded.
- Always keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to shoot.
- Always be certain of your target and what's beyond it.

**America! What a great place to live.**

*Thanks, Semper Fi, and Stay Safe !*

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