

For safety, repeal all gun laws

Posted: May 18, 2000

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This past weekend, 100,000 or so women visited [Washington, D.C.](#), to push for new gun-control laws, as part of the "Million Mom March."

I understand their desire to make the world safer for their children. But, unfortunately, their proposals would make their children -- and themselves -- less safe.

There already are 20,000 federal gun laws and regulations on the books. If those laws haven't made America safe by now, why should we think 20,001 laws will suffice?

We shouldn't. Instead, we need to recognize that those 20,000 laws are a principal cause of the current violence in society. They have made our children and all innocent adults much less safe -- by disarming innocent citizens and encouraging armed criminals to take advantage of us.

So it's time to face reality and repeal these laws -- all of them.

By definition, law-breakers don't obey laws. Hardened criminals do whatever is necessary to evade identification and arrest. So they don't buy guns that can be traced; they buy them in the underworld or simply steal them.

Thus the gun-control laws don't apply to criminals or stop gun violence. They simply make it much harder for innocent people to [defend](#) themselves -- encouraging criminals to take advantage of us.

In other words, gun-control laws make the world safer for criminals and less safe for you.

Stripping away your safety

Let's take a brief look at how the various kinds of gun-control laws make you more vulnerable.

Waiting periods: A waiting period means that a woman being stalked will have to remain defenseless for a few extra days. Will her stalker refrain from assaulting her until the waiting period is over?

Safety locks: Although safety locks might prevent a child from accidentally firing a gun, they also can slow you down when you need a gun in a hurry to defend yourself. Imagine a woman attacked by a rapist in a parking lot. Will she be grateful for the time it takes to unlock her gun? And, of course, if her adversary is carrying a gun, it won't have a safety lock.

Registration of handguns: What would this achieve? Nothing positive. Evil-doers won't register their guns; only law-abiding citizens will. And once your gun is registered, you'll have to be afraid that some future president whose heart isn't pure will use that registration to confiscate your only means of defense against armed criminals.

Licensing of guns or gun-owners: Since criminals won't acquire them, gun licenses won't help find the perpetrator of a violent crime. They are simply a gratuitous invasion of your privacy and that of other innocent citizens.

Background checks for purchasers: No one wanted by law enforcement agencies is going to buy a gun in a way that requires a [background check](#). He'll get his gun from another criminal or steal it. So the only achievement of a background check is your inconvenience.

But don't background checks catch people with criminal records?

If they're wanted by the police, they're certainly not going to undergo background checks. If they are ex-convicts who have paid their debt to society, they have the right to defend themselves from predators -- just as you or I do. Or should their criminal records also prohibit them from buying food or clothing?

Require guns to be locked up: If the law requires guns to be kept out of reach of children, how will the law be enforced? Will the police invade [your house](#) periodically to verify that your guns are in safe places? If not, what's the point of the law? If yes, this is another gratuitous invasion of your privacy.

Ban some types of guns: At first glance it might seem reasonable to ban such things as assault weapons or mortars. After all, *you* don't need such a weapon.

But some people do.

During most riots, the police have been outnumbered and have intentionally stayed clear of gangs that were looting and vandalizing. Suppose your life savings are invested in a store the gangs are about to loot. And suppose you have little or no insurance because your store is in a poor and dangerous section of town. How will you defend the store against the looters? With a knife? With a handgun against a dozen attackers? Or with an assault weapon?

If you prevent innocent citizens from acquiring assault weapons, criminal gangs will still have them -- even if they have to smuggle them into America from thousands of miles away. So why pass laws that disarm only the innocent?

You might be able to imagine the perfect law that allows just the right people to own just the right types of guns, while prohibiting other people from owning inappropriate firearms. But remember, you're only imagining such a law; it will never be a reality. Once the issue is turned over to the politicians, it will be decided by whoever has the most political influence -- and that will never be you or I.

A sane crime policy

The only effective crime policy is to have no laws regulating the ownership of guns, but to prosecute anyone who intrudes on the person or property of another -- with or without a gun.

You really have only two choices. Either:

Politicians will decide what you can own -- and they will never stop their prohibitions at the point you believe best. Or people will decide for themselves what they can own.

Any apparent middle ground between the two actually grants the politicians the power to choose for you.

And all such choices will be made by whoever has the most political influence. So attempts to limit gun ownership will do more to promote the political interests of well-connected people than to reduce crime.

A safe society

Disarmed citizens encourage crime and violence.

Armed citizens encourage criminals to find a safer line of work.

The National Rifle Association and Republican politicians have recently urged that today's 20,000 gun-control laws be enforced -- no matter how bad those laws.

Libertarians easily see the folly in this. Libertarians know that those laws are, at best, useless, and, at worst, highly dangerous. Libertarians want all the counter-productive gun laws to be repealed immediately.

This year there will be 2,000 Libertarians running for federal, state, and local offices -- all the way from president of the United States to municipal offices. All of them [support](#) your right to defend yourself -- without [qualification](#).

They provide the one avenue by which you can register your unqualified disapproval for today's gun-control climate.

For safety's sake, we must repeal all the gun laws.