

Mar. 14, 2013

Dear Chairpersons Hartley and Dargan, and the members of the Public Safety and Security committee,

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to SB1076, SB505, SB506, HB6251 and other bills like these that will severely limit citizens' rights regarding firearms. I oppose firearm bans, registration, expanding the definition of an "assault weapon" to only one "military" feature, limiting magazines to ten rounds or less, requiring a permit to buy rifles, rationing purchases, new restrictions on the sale of ammunition, and prohibiting body armor. I also object to the use of emergency certification of any bills proposing firearm regulations because that will bypass committee deliberation and public hearings, which is a violation of the democratic process.

People who use firearms in the commission of crimes against others should be given stiff penalties without plea bargains. Eliminate early release programs for criminals. More police should be hired. More Customs agents and better border control are needed because many illegal guns are smuggled into the country just like drugs.

The government and media have primarily focused on firearm bans as the solution. That would not have stopped an insane person like Adam Lanza, and would not make us a safer community. Lanza murdered his mother and stole her car. If he had used that car to murder the school children, there would not be a rush of legislation to ban cars.

I believe this is an issue of individual civil liberties, property rights, and the right of self defense. The right to be safe is the right to be able to defend oneself and family. March for Change is demanding firearm bans with no grandfathering, which is to say that government should, in the end, forcibly take away citizens private property. This is an extremist position and definitely not "reasonable" gun control.

Firearm registration plans create more taxes, fees and paperwork that are so burdensome that they suppress firearm ownership, and can be a prelude to an even more broad confiscation of firearms as advocated by politicians like Dianne Feinstein, Andrew Cuomo, and as actually occurred in Europe, Australia, and New York in 1991 under Mayor Dinkins.

There are many misconceptions about modern sporting rifles. The term "assault weapons" is a pejorative to demonize the firearms. The firearm is neither good nor bad. It is the actions of the person using the firearm.

They do not "spray bullets" like a machine gun. They are semi-automatic rifles that fire only one shot each time the trigger is pulled.

They are not "higher powered" than other semi automatic rifles commonly available and in widespread use for civilian hunting and sporting purposes, because they use the same ammunition as is used for hunting and target shooting.

They are not military rifles. They are rifles that have been in common civilian use for decades. They may have similar cosmetic features as military weapons like pistol grips, adjustable stocks and barrel shrouds, but these do not make the rifle more lethal. Pistol grips are common in competitive shooting sports. Adjustable stocks help people hold the firearm securely. It does not seem reasonable or "common sense" to ban a rifle because it has a pistol grip or an adjustable stock. That seems like absurdity.

Even the Department of Homeland Security acknowledged in a request for proposal for 7000 AR-15's with 30 round magazines that the rifles are "personal defense weapons" that are "suitable for personal defense use in close quarters."

In a recent news story, on Jan. 4, 2013, an intruder broke into the Loganville Georgia home of Melinda Herman. She grabbed her two young children and a revolver, and hid in an upstairs crawlspace. The intruder went upstairs and opened the crawl space. Mrs. Herman fired all 6 shots from her revolver and hit him 5 times. He not only survived but had the strength to flee the house, drive away, and run into a wooded area. Imagine if there were two assailants, or if her aim had been less accurate in such a stressful situation. The story could have had a tragic outcome for Mrs. Herman and her children. Anyone who could imagine themselves in this terrifying situation I am sure would prefer to have more than 6 shots. Estimates range up to 2.5 million times a year that firearms are used to stop crimes. The first responders are the people at the scene. Seconds count. Police cannot be everywhere and can take tens of minutes or more to respond. In cases like the 1992 Los Angeles riots, and New Orleans in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina, there were periods of time that police were completely unavailable in sections of the cities, gangs ruled the streets, and citizens effectively fended for themselves using semiautomatic rifles with magazines that had more than ten rounds.

Self defense is a fundamental right, as are property rights which include firearm ownership.

It is for these reasons that I oppose firearm bans and registration that would force people to surrender their property. Contrary to making the community safer, bans are likely to make us less safe by limiting citizens' ability to defend themselves, and because criminals have less deterrence when law abiding citizens are unarmed.

Thank you for hearing public input on this subject, and for your thoughtful consideration on these issues of such high importance to the community.

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