

Gun Safety Task Force Subcommittee
Gun Safety Public Hearing
Monday, January 28, 2013

Senator Looney, Representative Miner, committee members:

I am concerned today that many of our legislators and other politicians are looking at gun safety from the standpoint of “what do I, <as a firearms owner>, need, and if you believe I do not need it, then its OK to restrict its use, that is to say “ban it”. It bothers me that “you are deciding what I need”. When Gun Safety is a process of our legislators “deciding for us what is available, based solely upon what you see as our need”, we all lose. Not only do gun owners lose, but all of society loses, as we take one more step away from freedom of choice. What is wrong with “allowing me to choose what I want in a firearm”.

I am a recreation shooter. I compete in Cowboy Mounted Shooting. This is a shooting sport, galloping thru a course of ten targets, on a horse, with two single action revolvers, shooting each target as you go, with the goal of riding the fastest time and managing to hit all ten targets. What I **want** in a firearm is a Ruger Vaquero, stainless steel single action revolver, with turned down hammers. Many riders prefer the Colt Single Action Army Revolver. That is a revolver designed for the military in 1872. It was adopted as the standard military service revolver until 1892. ⁽¹⁾ A firearm designed for the military. A firearm which became very popular with civilians in the 1800's for self-defense. A firearm which is extremely popular today with both SASS competitors and Cowboy Mounted Shooters. It is a firearm made here in CT. How time changes our perspective. Today if I was a resident of Massachusetts, I could not buy a Colt Single Action Army revolver. It is not an approved firearm. My wants, my desires would have been taken away by the Massachusetts Legislators., if I was a Massachusetts resident.

I am an avid skeet shooter. I am a member and scorer for the Eastern Connecticut Skeet Club. An association of 14 clubs and over 350 skeet shooters, participating in a winter skeet league. I want, that is I choose to shoot an over and under shotgun. Many participants I shoot with want, that is choose a semi-automatic shotgun like the Remington Model 1100. “Semi-Automatic” wow, sounds dangerous doesn't it. “Semi-automatic” sounds bad, we'd better ban it. It's what is commonly used in skeet. It is commonly wanted for hunting. It is a great shotgun, wanted by many. Would you ban it just because it sounded ‘dangerous’. I hope not!

I have a friend who was in the military. He chooses to own and shoot an AR-15, a civilian model of the firearm he used while in the military. It is a very nice firearm. It is very accurate. It is fun to shoot. There are numerous competitions across the country, allowing lots of opportunity for recreational shooting of this great firearm. It is not, as recently demonized, just for killing. In fact, (according to 6mmBR.com), “the most popular form of organized rifle-only competitive shooting in the United States is NRA High Power Competition. There are more High Power matches held across the country than benchrest matches by a huge margin. High Power Competition encompasses primarily Service Rifle (i.e. AR-15), and Match Rifle, with the lesser sub-discipline of Sporting Rifle”.⁽²⁾ Vice-President Biden recently told us that he'd chose a shotgun over a rifle for self defense. Well I am glad he thinks firearms are useful for self-defense. However, I prefer to make my own choice and not be subjected to ‘his choice’, or “what he thinks I need”. He also is not a recreational

shooter So I am of course very skeptical accepting his advice on ‘what I need for a High Power Competition match’. Sorry, Mr. VP, but I want my choice, not yours!

I think banning, restricting or eliminating choice is not proper. Gun Safety is important. However, it is not about the firearm. It is not about the type of firearm.... It is about its use and that is the question and road you should travel.

We’ve had a similar instance in the past. I do not drink adult beverages very often. My favorite time is Saturday, at my club with friends, having a ‘couple of beers’ with lunch. That is all I want. It is not what I need, but it is what I want. I bet most of you enjoy your favorite alcoholic beverage on an occasion as well. Heaven knows, you don’t need it! But you enjoy it ... you want it and you want the freedom to make that choice. So, how would you feel if all alcoholic beverages with more than 20% alcohol by volume were banned? There goes your Jack Daniels whisky. There goes your Stolli Vodka. Yep what if you were told all you needed was a beer or glass of wine, no whisky no vodka. Or worse ... what if you were told NO ALCOHOL period! Well, think back, to the introduction of the 18th Amendment to the US Constitution and the subsequent Volstead Act. Yes, prohibition of ‘intoxicating liquors’. Your choice was banned taken away. By all accounts, these two legislative actions were a complete failure. It not only took away your freedom to consume alcoholic beverages with virtually no social benefits, but it also contributed to a largely unanticipated consequence, that was the production, importation, and distribution of alcoholic beverages — once the sole province of legitimate business — being taken over by criminal elements, infusing millions of dollars and horrendous violence into the criminal world, and around the nation as a whole.⁽³⁾ Thankfully, this poor legislative action was overturned in 1933. As a final thought in this correlation, perhaps your ‘fact checkers’ may confirm for you one more item That is, more people are killed because of alcohol use than firearms use. (75,000 alcohol versus less than 10,000 for firearms. ⁽⁵⁾⁽⁶⁾)

Please learn from history bans do not work and often have huge unintentional consequences. Bans on any type of firearm, magazine, or ammunition is not the answer to Gun Safety. Please, take another road Do not take away our choices do not take away my choices, my firearms, my freedoms.

Thank you.

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(1) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colt_Single_Action_Army

(2) <http://www.6mmbr.com/highpowerbasics.html>

(3) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Volstead_Act

(4) <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6089353/ns/health-addictions/t/alcohol-linked-us-deaths-year/#.UQNNDdV52FI>

(5) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gun_violence_in_the_United_States