

I am emailing in support of safer, common sense gun laws governing storage and ownership eligibility. I understand that responsible gun owners may be concerned that safer laws will interfere with their freedoms, so I wanted to share my father's experience as a gun owner in the United Kingdom to reassure them that safer conditions are not necessarily onerous restrictions. My father lives in England which has perhaps the strictest gun laws of any developed nation. He owns two rifles for precision target practice. In order to be allowed to keep them in his house he needs a gun license, and to get it he filled out a form and a local policeman came to his house and checked on his safe. To put this in context, when I adopted a dog from a shelter i had to get two neighbors to write letters of recommendation, pay a large fee to the shelter, fill out 3 forms taking responsibility for the puppy and stating that i have never been convicted of animal cruelty and that if i sold or gave the dog away to a third party I would first hand over the details of exchange to the animal organization. I also had to sign a form saying I would not use the dog for any nefarious purpose, including dog fighting, animal experiments or use it to generate income. I then had to write a check upfront for shots and neutering at a vet from their approved list and mail in a certificate afterwards saying that i had completed the required medical procedures.

My father and I both renew these licenses every year, i pay \$8 for my dog, he pays a bit more for his gun license, but we think that's fair as my dog brings me more pleasure than his guns give him.

While it is true that having a gun license in England does give the authorities the right to come to your house any time they want to make sure that guns are stored properly if they are not in

use, it has never happened. The only time he has heard of it happening is when someone in his town was pulled over for drunk driving and a policeman showed up a short time later to make sure that the gun was properly stored. I think this is a good thing, if someone is too drunk to drive they are too drunk to clean their guns or deciding to do some target practice. I am sure that most law enforcement officers have better things to do than make house calls but it is good to know if there is a report of domestic violence or other illegal activity they have an automatic right of entry before the situation gets worse. Surely someone who does not routinely indulge in illegal activity can have no problem with that?

Last year my daughter's violin teacher was shot by her husband. I feel sure that if he had had to walk away from their dispute, find a key to the safe, take out the gun, find the ammunition and load it he would have 'cooled off' and realized that walking away was all he needed to do. Many domestic disputes that currently end in homicide would end in a hangover and an embarrassed apology the next day if people with guns were legally required to store them safely and this requirement was enforced.

Just as an aside, while my father can't squeeze his flat screen into the gun safe, he definitely has room for some pieces of jewelry my mother inherited and important documents, so if a burglar DOES break in they won't get away with anything easy to carry, and who is emotionally attached to a TV?

I get it, I really do, I can see why some people would resist tighter legislation. If you like to hunt or take part in target shooting competition like my dad, why should you be made to feel like a criminal with background checks etc? But I feel that people are looking at this from the wrong side. Taking a driving test is unpleasant and involves waiting in line for hours in the

legendarily unpleasant confines of the DMV, but no one is suggesting we allow 16-year-olds to just leap in a car and drive without some assurance that they know where the brake is. And no one is suggesting that we give up taxing and insuring our cars, what if someone runs into you and they don't have insurance? Background checks and gun registration are to gun owners what driving tests and car insurance are to car owners, common sense things that make life safer for everyone. And to continue the analogy, if someone steals my car I'm going to report it to the police, first of all to get the insurance money but also in case it is in a hit-and-run or used to rob a bank. Why shouldn't gun owners be compelled to report a gun theft for the same reasons?

I suspect that anyone opposing rational safety measures may not be thinking of their freedom, but perhaps anticipating more inconvenience than the reality will bring. And convenience is no reason to refuse to make our communities safer. With rights come responsibility, and having a gun, just like having a dog or a car, is a responsibility.

Best wishes,

Hannah Kinnersley