

Legislators: Please accept my thanks for taking seriously the opportunity to shape history in a way that will make everyone proud. I mean everyone. There is uniform support for meaningful change that protects people without encroaching upon constitutional rights. I'd like to share with you my thoughts for a couple of approaches.

We all acknowledge that choices and constitutional rights go together. There is a constitutional right to speak, but the right has boundaries. If you choose to speak, and choose to do so outside permissible boundaries, you will face consequences. The same balance of rights and choices applies to the constitutional right to possess a firearm and to use that arm for traditionally lawful purposes.

I submit the following two points. First, we all agree as well that one can lawfully possess a firearm. But if you steal it, or buy that which another stole, then you do not have the right to possess that firearm. Possession of stolen property, no matter what its nature, is not lawful. Laws that regulate but do not unduly restrict how one comes to possess arms exist. Your challenge is to strengthen those laws. A great start is to require that every buyer have a suitable background to lawfully possess firearms. Felons, by virtue of their prior conduct, have lost that right. Those without the mental capacity to function safely with a firearm have lost that right. All that is needed is a more efficient and accurate way of separating the law abiding and compos mentis from those who are not. It is time for that method to be revisited and strengthened.

Second, liability must attach to those whose firearms cause harm. There are people who spend more time securing the shoes on their feet than the firearms in their home. Irresponsible exercise of a constitutional right is properly subject to regulation. I submit that the consequences that result from the improper exercise of the right to bear arms must be subject to redress. If we impose upon those who own or keep dogs a strict liability for the injuries caused by such dogs, should we do less for those who own or keep firearms? I believe that financial consequences of irresponsible possession will create the incentives for more responsible possession of firearms. The concepts behind these ideas are simple, well established, and effective. It is time to place those concepts into effect with firearms.

Thank you for taking the time to read this message. I know you have been chosen for this task because you have the strength and fortitude we the people need to make something better for us all. God speed.....L

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