

The history of the Second Amendment indicates that its purposes were to secure to each individual the right to keep and bear arms so that he could protect his absolute individual rights as well as carry out his obligation to assist in the common defense. It is evident that the framers of the Constitution did not intend to limit the right to keep and bear arms to a formal military body or organized militia, but intended to provide for an "unorganized" armed citizenry prepared to assist in the common defense against a foreign invader or a domestic tyrant. This concept of an unorganized, armed citizenry clearly recognized the right, and moreover the duty, to keep and bear arms in an individual capacity.

In the "Constitution state," no doubt exists as to our state's framers' intention. Since 1818, our constitution [Article First, § 15] has contained the provision: "Every citizen has the right to bear arms in defense of himself and the state."

This constitutional provision for an unorganized militia for the defense of the country was brought to light on the morning of September 11, 2001. The passengers on flight 93, having knowledge of the preceding events at the world trade center, took it upon themselves to defend their own persons as well as the wellbeing of the unknown intended targets of the plane they rode on. Terrorists had taken control of their plane and these few brave people made a decision to stand and fight. No one will deny the bravery of these few people, nor can they deny that they acted in accordance with the definition of an unorganized militia, for the defense of our country and its citizens. This situation is an anomaly, no one, save possibly our secret service, police and military, wakes with the intention of defending against such an attack. It is comforting to know that our citizenry contains such people. While these people did not use guns in their defense, had the situation allowed, I am assured that they would have.

The amendment was written for a specific purpose, not for a specific caliber, nor for a specific action of rifle. It was written for the responsibility of the American citizenry to defend the freedom of our country, against both our current enemies and future enemies, both foreign and domestic. The present munitions situation in our world requires an equal standing for these threats. Were we allowed only muskets to defend ourselves against terrorist attacks, as those who would say that that was the intention of the amendment, we would be seriously outgunned! Laws are already present for keeping military arms and those that act like military arms, i.e.; fully automatic rifles and handguns, out of the hands of civilians, except those with specific licenses. These laws had little effect on the gang and drug culture during the eighties when Uzis and other automatic weapons were a commodity amongst these people.

People often speak of a tyrannical government when they voice their opinions about the second amendment, and this is often countered by the opposition asking how you intend to defend yourself against our military's nuclear weapons, tanks, bombs, and general might. "How would this militia that you speak of defend against these things?" Our country has made many mistakes throughout its' history. As recent as World War two, we placed our own citizens in internment camps. Japanese Americans lost their homes, jobs and freedom. Perhaps we will not make any mistakes of this level in the future, but if we do it is the right and obligation of the American citizen to stand against our government's decision to do such things. The American people will not automatically stand with guns in hand; there will be progression, picketing, legal recourse, dialogue. If our government decides to take arms against its own citizens, responsible

citizens will stand if necessary. Our military and police forces are also made up of responsible American citizens. Many have already pledged to uphold the constitution in direct opposition to any government orders to disarm and or hold arms against the American citizenry. Should the need arise; it will be a fair fight, with many of those at the charge of those super weapons fighting on the side of the American citizens.

In the light of the many occurring natural disasters recently in The United States and events like the riots in California, it is imperative that those wishing to defend themselves are allowed to do so. Store clerks in California defended their property against looters and criminals with AR-15 rifles. Looting was rampant during Katrina, and subsequent hurricanes, tornadoes, and the like. Yet the only improper gun related actions during these times was attributed to law enforcement firing upon unarmed citizens. Why should American citizens be subjected to this treatment? Unarmed citizens are at the mercy of those that we allow to be in power, yet through the past few years we have seen that there are bad people in all levels of society and all positions of power. East Haven police officers are being prosecuted for racial profiling, Bridgeport officers are being investigated for beating multiple suspects, catholic priests are being investigated for child molestation, and recently a Brooklyn priest was caught running a meth distribution ring. We cannot ever assume that all people are bad, nor can we assume that all people in a certain group are good.

## The most important part

As for present laws, I believe that there are sufficient laws on the books, but perhaps some need to be expanded to cover more areas of gun ownership. I am required to have a permit to purchase a handgun in Connecticut, yet not to purchase a rifle. This is most obviously because rifles were long considered a hunting firearm. Hunting should be considered a right as it is often done to provide sustenance for a family. We should provide a cost effective method of providing inexpensive hunting permit while still allowing for a permitting procedure, and a reasonable method of firearm transfer equivalent to that of handguns. You see, I have sold handguns in vacant parking lots to people that I don't know. But I was protected by Connecticut's handgun transfer laws which require me to call DPS for verification. This process allows me to know that the person that I am selling the gun to has passed a background check, and I have authorization from the State of Connecticut to sell a handgun to that person. Therefore The State of Connecticut knows that I have transferred said gun to another qualified gun owner. **There, is the record that many people want!** Why cant this same system be used for long rifles? there is the entire system for gun registration that people want. **The state of Connecticut will not allow a gun owner to bring a weapon into the State DPS office, therefore, yearly registration will occur on an honor system! No proof that the gun is still in the possession of the proposed gun owner!** There is no reason for yearly re-registration of firearms. A Connecticut legislator was contacted by a hunter, whose choice of hunting rifle was not affected by the proposed assault weapons ban. He asked why he should have to re-register his weapon as it was not among the many proposed as an "assault" weapon. The legislator agreed that it was not and then stated "But think of the revenue that this will generate for the State!"

Is that what this will all be about? Will gun registration be used like a cigarette tax? Will a portion be used to fund mental health legislation? When Connecticut enacted its aggressive .50

cent per pack tax legislation, it was touted as a deterrent that would reduce the cigarette consumption in Connecticut. Cigarette sales increased in Connecticut the very next year by 1.3 million packs. This was used as a guaranteed method of income for the state. Tax revenues from this legislation have been redirected to other areas that have come up short on the State's budget. Legislators prey on the addicts because they know that they can't stop and that it is a guaranteed source of income. Why haven't cigarettes been banned? They cause more deaths and contribute to far more health problems and a greater financial burden than any gun problem ever could in our society. The answer lies in the financial contribution to our government, and lack of the gun economy to contribute as much to political campaigns and the tax base. If gun sales were equal to those of the tobacco industry, we would need only to place a warning sticker on the barrel of our gun; "Warning, the Surgeon General has determined that standing at the barrel end of this weapon could be dangerous to your health!"

Our society wants to blame. We need someone or something to apply our fears to. We are not accepting that our actions may be the cause of our society's woes. We call for stricter gun laws, yet we cry to reduce our incarceration rate. We are the world's leader in incarceration, and when gun laws are finally enforced, we will cry for the hundreds of thousands of minority people that are unjustly incarcerated or should I say, disproportionately incarcerated to be released. We had stricter laws for crack cocaine, because crack cocaine was an urban drug, and regular cocaine was a high society drug. We don't want to send the guys who helped build our economy to jail, just because they were celebrating a high profit deal, but we are willing to send a juvenile black person to jail because he got addicted to a different version of the same drug. 70,000 people lied on their gun purchase applications last year and the federal government prosecuted only 7 of them. Who failed there? Of the 70,000 other gun violations last year how many were prosecuted? The answer is around 23%, who failed there? You have the laws on the books, yet fail to prosecute. As has been stated by many people before, more laws won't change anything if you're not willing to prosecute the laws that already exist.

Finally, there are the tax implications of all the new laws that are being proposed. Who is going to pay for them? Many local budgets do not pass because people believe that teacher salaries are too high. Are these people willing to front the bill for law enforcement personnel to be in their schools? Perhaps we will just get rid of a few more teachers to cover the cost. Our government deemed the mental health institutions in our state to be too high a tax burden, and proposed inclusion as more politically correct way to place these people in our society. So we closed the mental health hospitals. Our governor deemed our State Police too expensive and rid us of that burden. Our government wants to destroy our teachers unions because those that teach our children are bleeding us dry, yet we don't fund their classrooms. The hospitals sit as giant rotting hulks, with severe desperation that some movie production company will snatch them up and cure all our woes. That they will pay for our communities. Pay for better schools. Pay for more police. Pay for better streets. And parks. And playgrounds. When will our savior come and deliver us, cost free, from our evils? Well folks, I hate to say it, but if we want to be delivered, we have to deliver ourselves. We have to step up. If you want to stay, you have to pay!

Because there aint no man coming to deliver the golden fleece to our doors. There is only the guy wanting to grab your last five bucks. Are you willing to propose to the people that want stricter gun legislation that we levy higher taxes on them, and all of us in order to pay for it? Because to them, according to their testimony, they would be willing to do anything to assure the wellbeing of our children. So they should be willing to accept the higher tax burden for mental health assistance, gun buy backs, yearly gun registration, and all of the other proposals made during their testimony. Or will the burden be put on legal gun owners, because they caused all this commotion? Will there be an equitable split of the burden for new legislation, or will the entire onus be placed on gun owners? Those requiring the burdensome tax implications should be required to accept the liability.

I thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Scott Lee Woodruff