



Second Amendment: Why?

BY: Mindy Rader, Rockland Post Contributor



We talk about the meaning of the Second Amendment which reads, “A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.”

I tried to go back in time and do some research on the issue. When the Constitution was written, states and citizens very often did not have an organized national guard. That is a more recent development. Rather citizens were called upon to bring their arms, their horses and whatever else protective items they owned to help defend their region. The government didn't provide guns to these citizens who were often poorly trained and poorly organized and led by politicians. It's a little different right now. But I'll also tell you why it's not different.

The Second Amendment still plays a vital role in modern life. The right to bear arms is fundamental to any Democracy. In Switzerland, their citizens are legally allowed to own firearms. Owning a gun outside the military is legal. They pass background checks and obtain firearm regulations permits. And yet guess what, they don't have these massive shootings in Switzerland. So, the question is, why do these events happen in the United States but not in Switzerland? The answer is simple. They are a homogenous population, and they don't have the level of lawlessness that we have in this country.

When you hear headlines in this country about shootings, it's always the gun that shot somebody. No folks, it was not the gun it was somebody who pulled the trigger. I think part of the reason this happens is because we let people who are mentally unstable purchase firearms. Even worse, most mass shootings such as those in Chicago are people shooting illegally obtained guns at friends and neighbors and in gangs. Certainly, having restrictions on firearms is not going to prevent illegal ownership. Finally, in any dictatorship, the first thing that happens is that the people's rights to have guns are taken away and guns are confiscated. Look at Iran today, Maybe, if some of these citizens had guns, they wouldn't be massacred in the streets.

There should be some limitations, of course. The Second Amendment is not absolute about guns. However, it needs to be done in a reasonable and structured way that makes sense. Clearly, the way we are doing it in our country right now makes no sense. That I think is the important point. I own a firearm. Before I got one, I took a course in firearm safety. It is a shotgun, so no license was needed. I learned how to use the gun and shoot the gun. I learned how to keep the gun safely. In much the same way you would learn to drive a car. And speaking of weapons, how many times has a car been used to commit mass murder? Many times. Do we want to ban cars? Or for that matter, people have used knives to murder people. Should we ban knives and tear food with our teeth?

I guess what I am trying to say is there needs to be reasonable non restrictions on gun ownership. You should have to prove you have no mental health issues, be over a certain age, be clean from drugs, and not have been radicalized or committed a crime or the like. We shouldn't allow guns in schools or public buildings unless it's by police officers. Open carry in my mind is just asking for trouble. It's not the Wild West we live in. It's almost better to have concealed carry. In my mind, a good citizen with a gun augments the police and thus meets the definition of a militia. Maybe this is another way of looking at things. Maybe we should start opening our eyes and realizing that there are plenty of bad people in our society. Much more so than probably in Switzerland. A well-armed militia, that is the average citizen acting in defense of law and order is an important component of our society.

You hear stories about assault weapon bans. Can anybody explain what an assault weapon is? They are not talking about banning machine guns, I agree with banning them. They are talking about banning a gun that holds multiple bullets. That's almost any gun that holds more than one bullet at a time. We should rather direct our focus on mental illness, radicalism and criminals. We have taken the rights of mental illness to a point, and the same for criminals and radicals, that they supersede the rights of the average American. The rights of the minority outweigh the majority.

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She's on their side, not ours.

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