

From: Pisarik, Holly
To: plarosa@sled.sc.gov <plarosa@sled.sc.gov>
Date: 7/27/2016 11:39:38 AM
Subject: FW: Time for a Serious Reckoning with Reality

From: Bill Stephens [mailto:wstephens@sparrowhawk.org]
Sent: Wednesday, July 27, 2016 9:40 AM
To: Pisarik, Holly
Cc: Taylor, Marshall
Subject: FW: Time for a Serious Reckoning with Reality

Surprise!!!

From: Bill Stephens
Sent: Monday, June 13, 2016 8:54 PM
Subject: Time for a Serious Reckoning with Reality

As a person who has hunted all his life and who believes Americans are entitled to own weapons to defend themselves from criminals and enemies - foreign and domestic - as well as use them for sport, I must say **I do not stand with the NRA and its members in resisting all government regulation of firearms in America.**

I am a devout Jeffersonian, so this statement is not made lightly or without serious consideration of the consequences and potential overreach of government power. I have been at the receiving end of government abuse that ended my professional career and my professional consulting firm. I know something about government abuse.

The **Second Amendment** of the United States Constitution 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.*"

The second part of the sentence, "*...the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed...*" is predicated on or founded on the clear and concise affirmation that "***A well regulated Militia [is] necessary to the security of a free State...***"

The Communist rulers of China once observed that an invasion of the United States would be met with a gun behind every rock and tree – and that long-term occupation would be virtually impossible.

Indeed, firearm sales are brisk, with more than one million sold in the 50 states each month. The founders of the United States understood the deterrent of armed civilians and the need for individuals to protect themselves from criminals and enemies.

My conclusion: The Citizens of the United States have a fundamental Constitutional right to bear arms within Constitutionally-based regulation – and the United States government – acting on behalf of and under authority of the collective body Citizens of the United States – has a fundamental responsibility to regulate firearms within Constitutional intents and purposes.

Put plainly, I believe no citizen is entitled to own unregulated firearms that are capable of facilitating mass killing – firearms that are effectively weapons of mass destruction. What these weapons are called is a matter of semantics, and the regulatory standards need to be established on a performance basis rather than prescriptive basis, e.g., not just a matter of total cartridge count, but also rate of delivery and destructive capacity and lethality of ammunition or force. We are now facing the reality of many new types of weapons that do not employ cartridges with projectiles, so regulations will necessarily be more comprehensive.

Also – the “gun show loophole” needs to be closed, and sales between individuals need to be recorded. President Dwight D. Eisenhower once said, *“Those who value their privileges above their responsibilities soon lose both.”* At this point in the life of our democratic republic, unrecorded and unfettered gun ownership transfers must be defined as “privilege”. Our individual and collective responsibilities must now be valued above our privileges. Criminals and enemies have made minimally-restricted and minimally-regulated ownership of high-rate/overkill firearms infeasible and perilous for innocents. Responsibilities must be valued highest at this moment in history.

Government programs should be established to furnish and install digital chips in existing firearms. This would help protect the property of the tens of millions of legitimate gun owners and would help law enforcement locate stolen weapons.

The concealed weapons carry permit programs operated by each State are, in reality, an effective implementation of the fundamental Constitutional underpinning referred to as “a well-regulated militia.” The concealed weapons permit programs should be expanded, and training by law enforcement and military experts and authorities should be enhanced and made available at no cost immediately.

Certainly, there is more to this topic than can be addressed in a short piece on principles. Time for true patriots to shed their recalcitrance and reactionary opposition, and join American society and right-thinking, responsible firearms owners in a reasoned and reasonable approach.

What our nation does to try to keep weapons out of the hands of criminals, foreign and domestic enemies, and insane or unstable people is the single most difficult challenge our nation faces. The fact is that sales of digital entertainment products that turn killing into games without consequences are a major factor in desensitizing sane people to murdering others. “Music” that celebrates killing makes billions for its “artists” and their business partners. Children of an angry God wreak havoc on civilizations, seeking virgins in Heaven.

Strange that citizens in our society argue that gun manufacturers are responsible for killing, yet insist that the First Amendment prohibits regulation of the diabolically misanthropic people, businesses, and “religions” that promote irrational killing. Again, *“Those who value their privileges above their responsibilities soon lose both.”* No one should have a right to destroy or conspire to destroy the fabric of peaceful coexistence. If this aspect of our society is not soon and effectively addressed, I predict responsible citizens could decide that the responsibilities of those who guard our freedoms via the Second Amendment could outweigh the privileges of those who would defile and destroy the integrity of our society while attempting to shield themselves from retribution behind the First Amendment. It shouldn’t have to come to that. We are better than that. At least that’s what we tell the rest of the world.

The harsh reality is that we need immediate and intelligent collaboration and compromise in defining the reasonable boundaries of both the First Amendment *AND* the Second Amendment. Continued partisan politics and polarization will produce larger and larger tears in the fabric of our relatively peaceful coexistence.

William A. Stephens

- Opinionated and brash social commentator who values the First Amendment
- Responsible gun owner, hunter, sports shooter, and Concealed Weapons Permit holder
- American Citizen of the World who believes our Creator existed within all living beings at their conception – and that he may be living in the darkened basement of some.

Travelers Rest, SC