

The Language of Liberty Series



“Our 2nd Amendment”



*By TN Senator Mark Green, M.D.
Guest Columnist*

On December 15, 1791 the states of our fledgling democracy ratified ten amendments, which became known as the Bill of Rights.

The preamble to the Bill of Rights states it clearly, “the conventions of a number of states ...expressed a desire, in order to prevent misconstruction or abuse of its powers.” The intent of the Bill Of Rights was to restrain government abuses. These were designed to be checks and balances on the government. The second amendment 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.”

Here, the founders state that to keep the state free, people have the right to keep and bear arms. The “why” we need a second amendment is clear: to protect a free state - to protect freedom.

James Madison initially proposed these amendments on June 8,

1789. Only six years prior to their proposal, the Treaty of Paris, ending the War with King George, was signed in 1783. The final agreement with England on America's boundaries did not occur until 1795 with the Jay Treaty. The Bill of Rights was passed within eight years of a bloody war where citizen soldiers picked up their own weapons and overthrew a tyrannical government. It is clear the authors of the second amendment intended to provide the citizenry a means to defend freedom from government, both at home and abroad.

The second amendment, while it allows citizens to protect themselves from other citizens, goes well beyond just allowing us to defend ourselves from a criminal. Considering the timing of its writing, and the men who penned and ratified the document, the right to keep and bear arms was to be the ultimate check and balance against tyranny. Further, considering the nature of free standing armies in the time of its writing, and the success of the militia, the armed citizenry were for all intent and purpose, the last line of defense of freedom. Our founders firmly believed each citizen had a part to play in the defense of the nation from external threats as well.

When considering magazine size and weapon type, comments like "you don't need a ten round magazine to hunt deer," completely misses the point of the second amendment. If the founding fathers meant weapons in the hands of citizens were only for hunting, why say "for the security of a free state?" As yet there have been no documented overthrows of countries by the deer population.

From a practical standpoint, with the purpose being to protect people from tyranny and to secure a free state, the citizenry should be allowed to maintain whatever weapon allows for a balance of power between the citizens and the government. If the government can have an M-16, then so should the citizens.

Further, the arguments suggesting that banning weapons decreases crime have been shown to be utterly false. The Wall Street Journal Op Ed written by John Lott and published January 17, 2013 pointed out that even the studies cited by Senator Feinstein of California never showed any decrease in crime. A follow up study done by the same group after observing the assault weapons ban concluded, "we

cannot clearly credit the ban with any of the nation's recent drop in gun violence. And, indeed, there has been no discernable reduction in the lethality and injuriousness of gun violence.”

The Op Ed also points out that since the end of the assault weapons ban in September of 2004, murder and crime rates have actually decreased in America. However the greatest wisdom in the Op Ed is Mr. Lott's observation that “with a single exception, the attack in Tucson last year, every public shooting in the US in which more than three people have been killed since 1950 has occurred in a place where citizens are not allowed to carry their own firearms.”

In recent years, as our enemies in the War on Terror evolve their tactics, the importance of one of the original intents of the Second Amendment has re-emerged. Early on, Al Queda used cells involving multiple people. Any such clandestine activity has higher risk, or chance of discovery when multiple people are involved. The FBI, CIA, and NSA's disruption of many cells from Washington to New York prove this. Now, ISIS uses “lone wolves,” as seen in Dallas and Chattanooga in 2015. In fact, they transmit over 100,000 tweets per day recruiting lone wolves. No matter how good the three letter agencies are, they can never stop every lone wolf. However, an armed citizen can.

In this fight, our citizens truly are as Ralph Bristol of Nashville's 99.7 WTN talk radio says, “Homeland Security”.

The framers of our nation's constitution and the amendments intended to protect the citizens, and allow the citizens to protect themselves, are wisdom that transcends time. As the president of the NRA recently said, “the only guy who can stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.”

Whether protecting themselves from a tyrannical government or from a criminal bent on destruction, citizens of this nation have a right guaranteed by the second amendment to the constitution to keep, and when necessary, bear arms. I will defend that right as long as there is breath in me.

Sen. Mark Green is a Tennessee State Senator representing the 22nd District and is the president/CEO of Align MD. Dr. Green served as an army special operation flight surgeon assigned to the 160th Special Ops Aviation Regiment and was involved in the mission to capture Saddam Hussein. Dr. Green monitored and interviewed Saddam for 6 hours on the night of his capture, which led to his book "My Night With Saddam". Dr. Green is a graduate of West Point.

The Language of Liberty series is a collaborative effort of the Center for Self Governance (CSG) Administrative Team. The authors include administrative staff, selected students, and guest columnists. They may be contacted at info@tncsg.org To learn more, go to CenterForSelfGovernance.com.

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