

Foolish politicians and police now seek to ban semi-automatic "assault rifles." They ignore the fact that only honest citizens will comply; criminals will still have them. **Such a ban will only increase the criminals' ability to victimize the innocent.**

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Guns are not the problem. They are inanimate objects. Gun control advocates talk as if guns could act on their own, as if human beings cannot control them, so the uncontrollable guns must be banished.

Let us put the responsibility where it belongs, on the owner and user of the gun. If he or she acts responsibly, without attacking others or causing injury negligently, no crime or harm has been done. Leave them in peace. But, if a person commits a crime with a gun, then impose the *severest penalties* for the injury done to the victim. Similarly, hold the negligent gun user fully liable for all harm his negligence does to others.

Rather than banning guns, the politicians and the police should encourage gun ownership, as well as education and training programs. A responsible, well-armed and trained citizenry is the best protection against domestic crime and the threat of foreign invasion. America's founders knew that. *It is still true today.*

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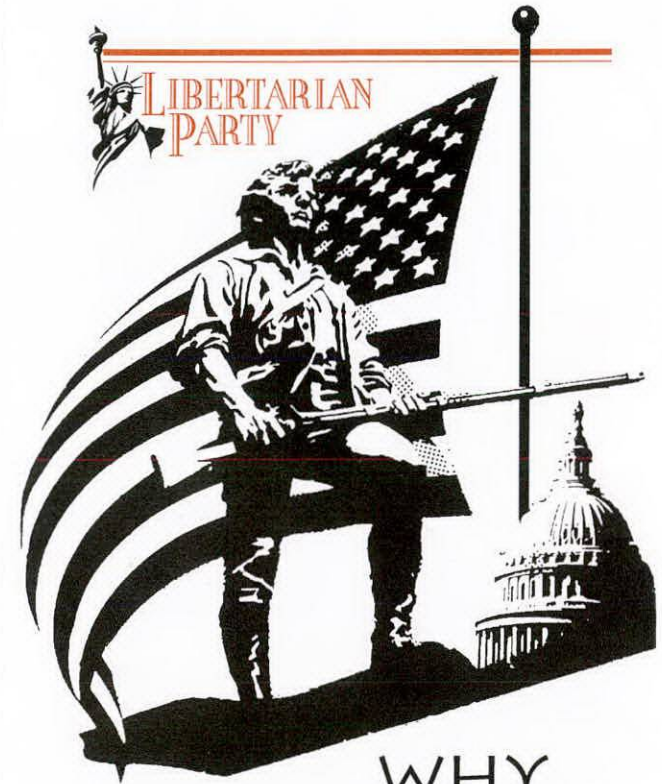
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WHY
LIBERTARIANS
SUPPORT

Equal Rights

FOR AMERICA'S

Gun Owners

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Equal Rights ★ FOR AMERICA'S Gun Owners

Libertarians, like other Americans, want to be able to walk city streets safely and be secure in their homes. We also want our Constitutional rights protected, to guard against the erosion of our civil liberties. In particular, Libertarians want to see all people treated equally under the law, as our Constitution requires. *America's millions of gun owners are people too.*

Law-abiding, responsible citizens do not and should not need to ask anyone's permission or approval to engage in a peaceful activity. **Gun ownership, by itself, harms no other person and cannot morally justify criminal penalties.**

CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

America's founders fought the Revolutionary War to throw off British tyranny. Most of the revolutionaries owned and used their own guns in that war. After the war, in 1789, the 13 American States adopted the Constitution, creating the federal government. Before ratifying the Constitution, the people demanded a Bill of Rights to prevent our government from depriving them of their liberties as the British had done.

One of the most important protections we have against government tyranny is that we are presumed innocent of any crime until proven guilty, before a jury, in a proper trial.

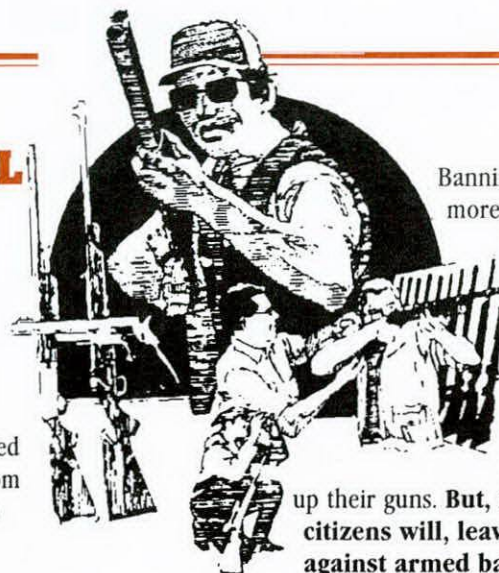
But, gun control advocates would declare all gun owners guilty without trial, simply for owning guns, although millions of them have never used their guns to harm another person. Such blanket condemnation is immoral, unfair and *contrary to the principles* on which America was founded.

THE PROHIBITION LESSON

Gun control advocates are much like the prohibitionists of the early 20th Century. By making liquor illegal, they spawned organized crime, caused bloody, violent turf wars and corrupted the criminal justice system. Today's war on drugs has exactly the same results.

Prohibition didn't stop liquor use; the drug laws can't stop drug use. **Making gun ownership illegal will not stop gun ownership.**

The primary victim of these misguided efforts is the honest citizen whose civil rights are trampled as frustrated legislators and police tighten the screws.



Banning guns will make guns more expensive and give organized crime a great opportunity to make profits in a new black market for weapons. Street violence will increase in new turf wars.

Criminals will not give up their guns. **But, many law abiding citizens will, leaving them defenseless against armed bandits.**

THE RIGHT OF SELF DEFENSE

Libertarians agree with the majority of Americans who believe they have the right to decide how best to protect themselves, their families and their property. Millions of Americans have guns in their homes and sleep more comfortably because of it. Studies show that where gun ownership is illegal, residential burglaries are higher. A man with a gun in his home is no threat to you if you aren't breaking into it.

The police do not provide security in your home, your business or the street. They show up after the crime to take reports and do detective work. The poorer the neighborhood, the riskier it is for peaceful residents.

Only an armed citizenry can be present in sufficient numbers to prevent or deter violent crime before it starts, or to reduce its spread. Interviews with convicted felons indicate that fear of the armed citizen significantly deters crime. A criminal is more likely to be driven off from a particular crime by an armed victim than to be convicted and imprisoned for it. Thus, widespread gun ownership will make neighborhoods safer.