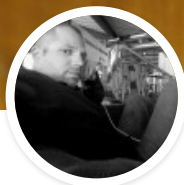
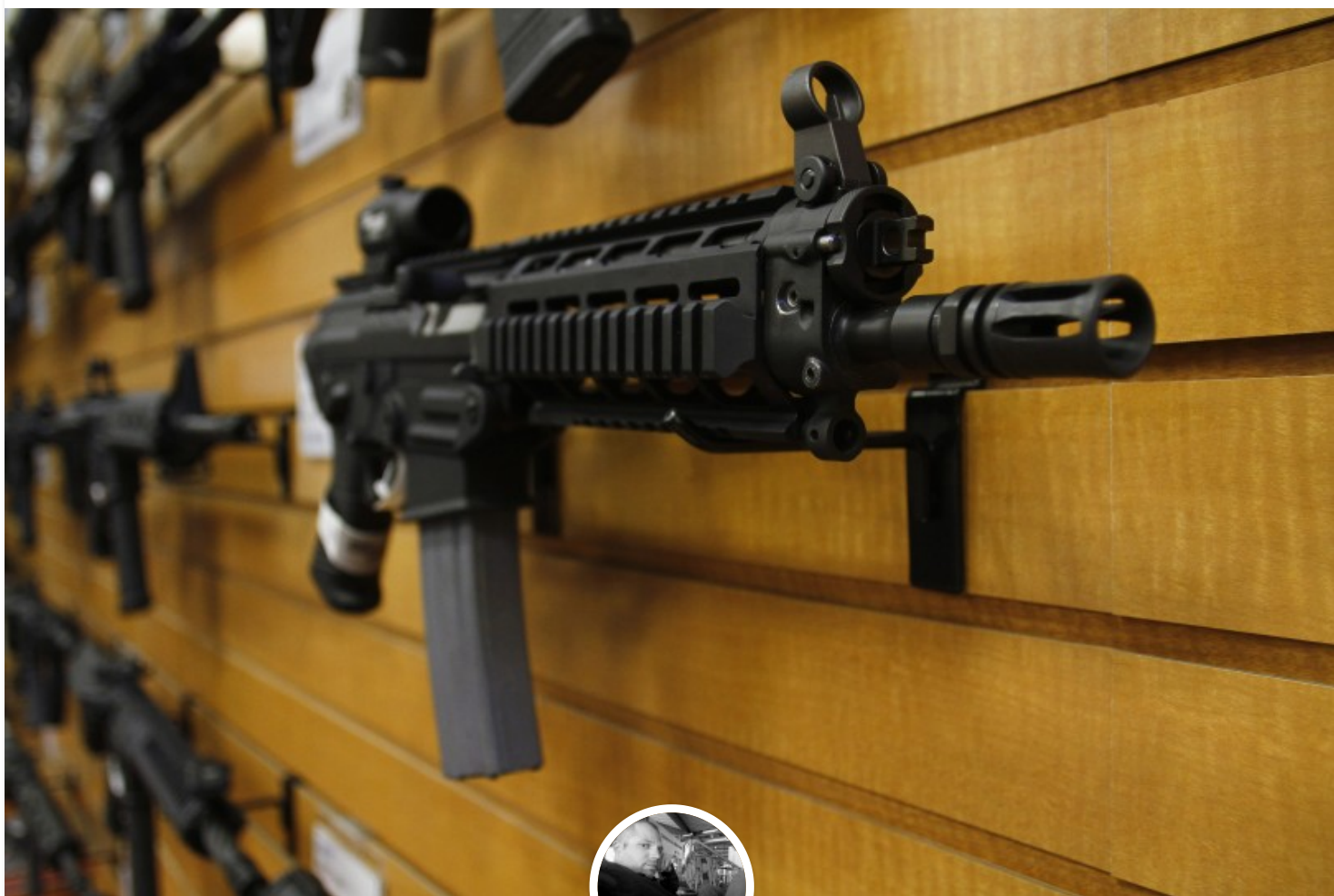


Interest

# The Problem with the “Assault Weapon” Debate in America

by AJ Powell 0 Comments 15 min read

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In the last several years, there has been a mainstream media storm over the political debate – and indeed, national debate – regarding the civilian purchase and use of Assault Weapons in the United States. Proponents of banning them from civilian purchase have included activists, major organizations, corporations, career politicians, celebrities, members of the media, and even a president. Opponents to banning them from civilian purchase have come from exactly the same groups just mentioned as well, and there have even been a number of historically significant laws enacted in the past specifically covering the subject at hand. It’s clearly a topic of national debate, spawning a mass of public outrage and opinionated finger-pointing, social media ignorance, and political propaganda. But there’s just one problem... ..the entire debate is based on a lie.

“Assault” is an action, not a firearm. What YOU’RE thinking of is a “Selective-Fire” rifle, and they are ALREADY banned.

There is NO SUCH THING as an “Assault Rifle”. So let’s just ditch that term right now. What most people think of when they speak this term, is a “Selective-Fire” firearm. Selective-Fire rifles maintain the capability of allowing the user to change – with a selector switch or lever – the firearms ability to be set to “safe”, then to “semi-automatic”, and then further to “burst” or a “fully automatic” fire-rate.

There are NO Selective-Fire rifles legally sold in the United States to civilians. Automatic weapons and selective fire capable firearms were heavily regulated by the National Firearms Act of 1934. Next, the Gun Control Act of 1968 affected the importation and civilian ownership of fully automatic firearms. And finally, the Firearm Owners Protection Act of 1986 fully prohibits sales of newly manufactured machine guns to non-law enforcement or SOT (special occupational taxpayer) dealers. It is therefore safe to say that ALL – as in 100% – of the firearms legally sold to the general public (i.e. civilians) across the nation – that merely look similar to Selective Fire rifles used by the government and military – are indeed NOT “assault weapons” of any kind. They are simple Semi-Automatic firearms, and are no different from any other rifle sold under any other make or model. The ONLY difference in design between a Remington hunting rifle and an AR-15 is the number of rounds carried in the magazine.

So why in the world is the United States, a nation with 535 legislative representatives, a mass media, activist groups and organizations, a justice system, corporations, and even an executive representative – all of whom you would think *might* maintain *some* form of intelligence – debating over a fallacious argument with a clearly false definition?

The answer is, because the debate has nothing to do with the truth about what the firearms actually are, and everything to do with a political agenda.

What they’re attacking isn’t a specific type of firearm; they’re attacking the public’s ability for ownership and choice, and using the firearms general “look and feel” as their method of “classification”, and further, using criminal acts where these look-alike’s were used as justification for their agenda-driven political attacks. The debate on so-called “assault weapons” isn’t about the actual firearms at all, it’s about politicians, ignorant media, a largely ignorant public, and agenda-driven special interest groups trying their hardest to:

1. Make you *think* there is a gun control problem,
2. Trying to place blame on one specific type of falsely labeled firearm (based on looks alone) for the made up problem, and
3. That they are trying to do something about it, often under the false pretense of, “So you can feel safer.”

The argument of whether or not to ban Selective-Fire weapons, however, is invalid because:

1. Selective-Fire weapons are already banned. You won’t find them for sale at your local pawn shop, hunting store, or walmart, and NO civilian has access to buy them like they do any other firearm.
2. The accused “assault weapons” at the source of the argument are not even Selective-Fire weapons at all. They are no different than any other firearm already available to the civilian population.

Additionally, it is VERY important to note some FACTS about the differences between civilian firearm purchases and ownership versus criminal firearm attainment:

1. ALL firearms are ALREADY highly regulated by a long series of state and federal laws.
2. Firearm purchases by ALL civilians already require a background investigation, and many places require longer waiting periods than others.
3. Criminals don’t attain firearms through legal sources – meaning they get them from illegal sources such as gang and criminal black-market sales, illegal importation, theft (the LARGEST means of criminal

acquisition), second-hand sales on the streets, etc.

1. This means that the overwhelming vast majority of gun violence will *never* be deterred through the use of “stricter” regulations, illegal laws created by the executive (instead of the legislative – the ONLY branch authorized by the Constitution to create law), or any other unconstitutional, illegal form of government infringement upon the rights of law-abiding citizens.

## So why is all this important to understand?

To start, before we go any further, it is important to understand what makes a *Selective-Fire Rifle* an actual “Selective-Fire” Rifle here. And to do that, we need to understand the basics of firearm fire-rate categories.

- **A Single-Action firearm** is one where the user must cock the hammer first before squeezing the trigger. The trigger will not operate the hammer otherwise, and without the user pulling the hammer back first, the firearm will not function. An example here would be a Single-Action Revolver Pistol.
- **A Double-Action firearm** is one where the trigger can operate the hammer. A user can choose to either pull the hammer back themselves prior to squeezing the trigger (which is commonly taught by instructors), or simply squeeze the trigger and the hammer will move back and release without the user pulling it back first. An example here would be a Double-Action Revolver Pistol.
- **A Semi-Automatic firearm** is one where – after the first round has been fired, a mechanism (usually a sliding mechanism) pushes the hammer back in preparation for the next suppression of the trigger. Examples here include Semi-Automatic Pistols and Rifles.
- **A Fully Automatic firearm** is one where suppression of the trigger – and holding it in its suppressed position – allows a cyclic system to continuously release the hammer, fire a round, use the generated pressure from firing the round to reload, re-position the hammer, and release the hammer again to repeat the cycle until there are no more rounds left.
- **A Selective-Fire Firearm** is classified as one whereby the user is able to manually switch the firearms fire-rate capabilities between different rates of fire with the use of a switch or selector lever. An example would be a military model M-4 or M-16 with the ability to selectively switch between Safe, Semi-Automatic, and Three-Round-Burst or Fully Automatic, through the use of a user-operated selector lever on the side of the firearm.

Now, there exist many more classifications for an entire host of different types of weapons out there, but you get the point. The options a particular model of firearm has available to customize it with in no way changes its firing capabilities. Adding a folding or collapsible stock to a rifle doesn’t make it fire more rounds per suppression of the trigger, and neither does adding a pistol grip, a forward pistol grip, a flash suppressor, a high-intensity flashlight, a laser pointer, a red-dot scope, or even a detachable magazine – no matter how many rounds that magazine may be capable of carrying. Not one of these things changes the rifles actual capabilities for action. The only things that do, are it’s ability to fire, how many rounds it may fire per suppression of the trigger, and whether or not the user has the capability to select amongst different rates of fire.

Yet, none of these facts seem to matter much to the media, some of the overly opinionated public, agenda-driven interest groups, or politicians... and even some websites hell-bent on perpetuating the debate either.

Recently the media, politicians, corporations, special interest groups, the general public, and even lots of websites have joined the ranks in renewing the heated debate over gun control laws and the banning of “assault weapons”, further perpetuating the *fake* issue. But the perpetuation of the debate is really nothing more than the spread of false information and propaganda feeding. It’s agenda-driven at best, and not only does it maintain zero factual grounding, it doesn’t even address the reality of the issue of violence it falsely claims it addresses. In other words, we can’t argue that firearms are the problem, because to do so would be a clearly illogical misinterpretation of reality.

Indeed, when terrorists commit violent acts around the world, we blame the terrorists for loss of life; we don’t blame the type of firearm they used. Likewise, when a cop viciously guns down an old lady in her car because the cop says they “felt threatened”, we blame the cop, not the pistol he is legally allowed to carry

(note, that's just an example, don't read into it)... so why when a deranged lunatic guns down people in public do we find a horde of people blaming the pistol or rifle the lunatic used? Why, when terrorists commit atrocious acts with firearms, we say it was an act of terrorism, but when a criminal commits an atrocious act with a firearm we say it's a gun problem, and worse so, consistently go right back to the debate over the use of make-believe "assault" weapons, when in fact not a single Selective-Fire weapon was ever-present at the crime scene to begin with? The argument is clearly fallacious, and so many other fallacious arguments are in this debate as well.

Here's one example.

We can look at gun violence between two similar cities – one where no guns are allowed and one where they are – and find that crime statistics in firearm related incidents are lower where firearms are legal. Further, we can conduct multiple comparisons between multiple cities of comparative values and find consistency in the original findings. Why is that? It's simple really... there's two reasons:

1. Firearms are *the great equalizer*. In much the same way as the build-up of arms aided in the prevention of the break-out of WWII between Russia and the U.S. during the Cold War, the Prisoners Dilemma also works to deter possible criminal firearm use.
2. Laws that restrict the sale and/or ownership of firearms in no way stop criminals from getting them and using them. All these laws do is disarm a law-abiding public. And as we can see in the comparative cases between two cities, a disarmed public typically results in higher crime rates that use guns.

Yet, despite these two facts, we find activists, special interest groups, politicians, websites, and opinions across the vastness of social media all screaming that gun ownership creates violence, and that [non] "assault" rifles are at the source of gun violence. First, these people obviously have no idea that "assault rifles" don't actually exist, no idea what the definition of a Selective-Fire weapon actually is, and finally, every argument they come up with to try to ban yet another accessory, modification, or capacity capability does *nothing* to curb or reduce violence, including those crimes committed with or without the use of firearms.

No... the United States doesn't have a "gun problem"... it has a criminal problem, and a society largely unwilling to both admit it and focus on social changes necessary to deal with criminal issues.

The reality of the entire situation is this:

1. That there is **NO gun problem**, there is a criminal problem and a refusal to admit that.
2. That there is **NO assault weapon problem**. Assault weapons do **NOT** exist and are not being used in criminal acts.
3. There is **NO Selective-Fire weapon problem EITHER**. Remember that Selective-Fire Weapons are those with the capability to allow the user to switch between different rates of fire. Flashy accessories, additional grips, and even the ability to hold 30 or more rounds in a magazine does **NOT** make a non-selective, normal, semi-automatic AR-15 rifle an "Assault Rifle" nor Selective-Fire capable. The weapons used in the highly publicized criminal acts of today are very often simply regular, normal, semi-automatic weapons – the same as any normal hunting rifle or range pistol – that only have an *appearance* similar to *real* military and police weapons, but in no way can actually be classified as the same.
4. There exists **NO benefit** to disarming a citizenry **OR** restricting their choice in personal armament.

At the end of the day, it boils down to the Constitutionally protected right of American Citizens – and citizens *only* – to buy and maintain firearms – which includes possession, training, and use. That Constitutionally protected right in no way specified what kind, how many, or with which capabilities... and there was (and still is) a very good reason for that too. **If you think for one second that the Second Amendment was included in the Constitution so people could hunt, you're sadly mistaken.** The Second Amendment was included in the United States Constitution for **two** primary reasons.

**First, to provide for the worlds largest and most powerful military force.** The truth is that the United States was never meant to have a large standing military like the one that exists today. It was never meant to have a massive government with massive debt and massive operating expenditures either. The nation was designed to be self-reliant from outside resources, with independently operating governmental power retained to each state, a limited national-level government with limited-time of representation (meaning it was not meant to be a career choice), and its military force was designed for defensive posture – in many ways like Japan’s military is today. Both the government and the military were to be small and easily controllable, however, the nation yet still was designed to have the greatest military strength and projection of power in the world. This is – and was – possible by a establishing a well-armed and well-trained militia and National Guard. The first reason the Second Amendment was created was so that every single citizen of the nation maintained the ability to be called to arms for the defense of the nation, so that the nation could – in a day or so – raise the largest military force in the world, project that force for defensive purposes, and then disband/retire that force when no longer needed – in many ways like Switzerland is today.

**And Second, to provide a check and balance.** The founders of the nation knew that firearms are the great equalizer between men, and that all governments, given enough time and without recognizable ability of a non-government body to impose consequence upon them, shall eventually become corrupt. Arming the people of the nation – the rightful owners of the nation – provided exactly that check and balance. With a well-armed public, the founders nearly guaranteed that the people maintained positive control over their government. So that the people of the nation would have the power to defend themselves against a possible future tyrannically oppressive government. So that the people would not only maintain the ability to defend themselves from oppression, but also so that the people would maintain the ability to rise up and take back their nation should the day come when their government became too big, too powerful, and as a result, oppressive and tyrannical, and that they may start over anew.

The problem with the “Assault Weapon” debate in America today is that it is a debate built on lies, misinformation, propaganda feeding, bias reporting, cherry-picking data, and perpetuated for political agendas. It really has nothing to do with facts about the real classification of firearms, and everything to do with blaming firearms as the *cause* of the real problem so many refuse to address and focus on – criminality in the society. “Assault” is an action, not a weapon. “Assault Weapons” do **NOT** exist. What MOST people think of when using that fake term are “Selective-Fire” weapons. And NO, Selective-Fire firearms are **NOT** sold to the public.

Consider this: If you argue that “Making guns illegal, or even that making certain types of guns illegal, or even that making certain carrying capacities of guns illegal, will curb or reduce gun violence...”, then why are drugs in America (a nation that treats drugs as a criminal issue instead of a medical issue) still as massive an issue today as they were in the 1980’s? If you disarm lawful citizens from their Constitutionally protected right to bare arms – up to and including free choice in which, what, how, etc., you’ll only make criminal activity all the more easier to commit... And that includes ALL types of criminal activity... from petty theft, to national tyranny from an oppressive oligarchical government...

Food for thought.

### **SOUND OFF!**

What are YOUR thoughts on the subject? Can you think of any other arguments either for or against? Do you have anything of value to add to the discussion? What about different perspectives?

**Let us know in the comments below!**

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## About the author

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### AJ Powell

AJ is a retired U.S. Army NCO who served in both the U.S. Navy and U.S. Army. He is a combat veteran, and has participated in contingency operations around the world. AJ is the Owner of Veteran Leadership Solutions, the Founder and Editor in Chief of The Warfighter Journal, and is a published Sociological Analyst, Researcher, Guest Lecturer, and Public Speaker. He is a graduate of Pennsylvania State University with a focus on Sociology and a science degree in Organizational Leadership, and is published in the field of sociology. AJ is an inductive analyst; public figure; researcher/writer; aviator; a certified advanced operational diver; professional instructor, trainer, mentor, and adviser; snowboarder; motorcycle rider; world traveler; he enjoys long distance endurance events, and much more.