

Guns

Well, I wasn't going to touch this one unless asked. This is headline news today. Regardless of which side you are on, you probably have very strong feelings. However, given the recent attack in Florida, I believe that I have to say something. When I decided to run, I made a promise to myself and my wife that I would always be honest. I would never pander to a group that I was talking with, just to gain a few votes.

First, I was a Combat Medic in Vietnam. I wasn't a Conscientious Objector (i.e. not believing in caring a weapon). Anytime I went off base, I carried my M-16 and a 45. I believed then and believe now, that personally, I won't shoot anything that isn't shooting at me. I do not own a hand gun or rifle.

But many of you do. The second amendment guarantees your right to bear arms. I have no interest in taking legal guns away from anyone. Nor, as a District 20 House member, would I vote for a total ban on guns. If you choose to have a hand gun to protect your family, that is your choice. If you enjoy hunting, that's a decision for you to make. It is not my right to make those choices for you.

First, the statistics: How does the US rate with other major countries in number of murders per 100,000 people as compared to number of guns per 100,000 people? In other words, does more guns mean more safety? Does less guns mean fewer deaths?

	Number of Deaths per 100K	Number of guns per 100K
US	10.5	1.0
France	2.8	0.3
Canada	2.0	0.3
Germany	1.0	0.3
Australia	0.9	0.2
UK	0.2	.07
Japan	0.1	.006

Guns in the home for self-defense: For every time a gun in the home is used for self-defense, it is used for suicide 11 times, assaults and homicide against family or friends 7 times and results in unintended killing 4 times. Is the gun at home worth the risk?

Back on June 26, 1934, Congress passed a law that effectively outlawed machine guns. This was a reaction to mobsters killing each other and law enforcement officers using these weapons. This obviously made sense then and now.

When there is a law, there will always be someone to find a way to get around it. The AR-15 is essentially a Military M-16. The difference is that the AR-15 is semi-automatic (shoots one bullet every time you pull the trigger) and the M-16 can either be semi-automatic or automatic (i.e., a machine gun). You can kill a lot of people in a very short period of time with a semi-automatic weapon. You can kill a lot more with a fully automatic weapon.

So, first we have the Bump Stock. The only purpose of this AR-15 (and other similar rifles) accessory is to convert a semi-automatic weapon into a fully automatic machine gun. In other words, it skirts the 1934 law. The Bump stock isn't a machine gun, it just makes an AR-15 into one – and therefore currently legal. This isn't a second amendment rights issue. It's a saving life issue. After all, if you need a machine gun to go hunting, you need to find a new hobby. I would outlaw the Bump Stock now!

AR-15s and similar weapons: I have never fired an AR-15, but based upon my experience firing a M-16, most people can kill a person from 300 meters on semi-automatic. It's definitely the weapon of choice if you want to commit mass murder. This is not a hunting rifle.

What about hand guns? Hunting rifles? Shot guns? I'm OK with these. Obviously, you can still kill someone with any of these weapons, but not as many and not as fast.