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Idaho Common Sense™



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Guns, the Constitution and Switzerland

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A fact regularly ignored in much of the gun debate – the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution. In 2008, the Supreme Court revisited the constitutional meaning of the right of the individual to “keep and bear arms,” and unequivocally affirmed our constitutional right of individual gun ownership.

That should end the debate because a constitutional right is not the same as a governmental privilege; neither the legislature nor the Supreme Court can change a constitutional right. Yet, gun control advocates continue discounting this reality with ongoing legislative assaults on our rights.

The diatribe continues with tired and illegal arguments. One popular “explanation” for limiting gun ownership is that the Founding Fathers intended for citizens to have muskets; therefore, anything beyond a hunting gun is not protected by the Constitution.

False. First, the Constitution makes no mention of limiting gun ownership in any way, to any type of weapon. Second, the muskets owned by citizens of the time were the very same muskets carried by the military. In other words, the Founding Fathers intended the citizens’ weapons to be the same as the military’s, precisely because the Second Amendment was to arm us to protect ourselves from the government, should that be needed.

Another argument is that the Constitution was intended to be a living document, evolving with the

times and needs, reinterpreted by the Supreme Court.

False again. There is no language in the Constitution suggesting the government or its agent, the Supreme Court, can reinterpret or change the Constitution. The Founding Fathers clearly stated the only way to change the Constitution is via Article V, an amendment. The Constitution is amendable, but it is not re-interpretable.

Another popular false argument is that gun control reduces crime. Even if it were true (which it is not), the government simply does not have the legal authority to take our guns.

I have a proposal. Let’s copy the Swiss. The Swiss build shooting ranges like we build golf courses. Those who advocate taking our guns away would cringe at the Swiss, labeling them gun nuts. Guns are everywhere in Switzerland.

Why? Because every able-bodied male is required, at the age of 20, to attend the Swiss equivalent of military boot camp and remain in the country’s national guard until the age of 30. During those years they keep in their home their military rifle, similar to our military M-4.

And when they complete their military obligation, they have the option to keep their weapon, once the fully automatic feature is removed, making it similar to our civilian AR-15.

While every able-bodied Swiss male serves in the military, less than 1 percent of United States males ages 18 to 24 serve in our nation’s

armed forces, according to the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, a “project dedicated to collecting and distributing United States census data.”

Moreover, the Swiss love of guns goes well beyond the military, with the government building gun ranges, sponsoring shooting competitions and holding gun training clinics for all citizens. Only two nations have more guns per-capita than Switzerland and it has more people trained to use guns per-capita than any place in the world.

And guess what? It is one of the safest places in the world, although one could argue this does not prove a link between gun ownership and less crime because other factors could be involved. But Switzerland is an excellent example that gun ownership does not mandate increased crime as we are continually threatened it will.

And there might be an added benefit. What if we could get Congress as excited about spending money building shooting ranges and providing the citizens with weapons as they are about spending money on water taxis and bridges to nowhere.

Remember, Congress has repeatedly proven its desire to spend huge sums of money, with little concern on how the money is spent. So let’s give them some valuable, useful “pork” to stuff into their legislative bills. At least we would be getting something of benefit from their determined waste.

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