



Americans Against Gun Violence
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Untitled Essay

By

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The Second Amendment of the United States Constitution 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." These words have been twisted by the gun lobby and, as a result, misinterpreted by the Supreme Court to keep money flowing into the hands of gun manufacturers at the expense of tens of thousands of American lives every year.

In four different cases from 1876 to 1980, the Supreme Court affirmed and reaffirmed that the Second Amendment was meant to protect state militias, not to grant individual gun ownership rights. However, this interpretation changed with the *District of Columbia v. Heller* decision in 2008, where the court ruled that the Second Amendment does protect an individual's right to own a gun. This decision came as a result of years of propaganda and hijacking of public opinion by organizations like the National Rifle Association of America (NRA) that have perpetuated a lie to the American public that an individual right to bear arms is vital for self-defense.

Ownership of a firearm actually puts an individual's life in danger, and by obfuscating and outright lying about that fact, the NRA and other gun interest groups have become responsible for countless lost lives. Household guns being used for violent acts or accidental deaths is overwhelmingly more common than their being used for self-defense. Even if a gun owner is assaulted, the possession of a gun makes the victim 4.5 times more likely to be shot and 4.2 times more likely to be killed than an unarmed individual would be in that same situation. Additionally, a recent study on violence against law enforcement officers found that one in four officers killed on duty were killed by an assault weapon. Allowing individuals to possess firearms, including assault weapons, jeopardizes the lives of

law enforcement officers who are better trained and equipped to protect people than untrained armed individuals.

The reason for the perpetuation of this outright lie is simple: monetary gain. The NRA received over 14.7 million dollars from gun manufacturers in the six years between 2005 and 2011 alone. Following the Heller decision, Beretta, a gun manufacturer, donated one million dollars for the NRA to continue working to overturn gun control legislation following the precedent set in the case. The NRA will continue to twist and fabricate statistics that claim that guns are effective as defensive weapons as long as these lies are lucrative for the gun lobby.

The myth of self-defense and constitutionality must be ended. The NRA and other pro-gun organizations cannot be allowed to twist the words of the Constitution to their own ends, with no regard for the safety of the American people. Gun control is not a political issue to be debated, but a necessity urgently needed to protect the lives not already lost.

References

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United States Constitution. Amend. II, Sec. 3.