

ARMS, Bearing of

See also 'Militia'.

On June 29, 2008 the Supreme Court ruled that the Second Amendment entitled the American Citizen to bear Arms to defend themselves and to hunt. This is the first time since the Second Amendment was ratified that the Court ruled on it to define its meaning and purpose.

The following are quotes on the subject of the citizen's right - and responsibility - to bear arms:

"If cowardly and dishonorable men sometimes shoot unarmed men with army pistols or guns, the evil must be prevented by the penitentiary and gallows, and not by a general deprivation of a constitutional privilege." *Arkansas Supreme Court, 1878*

"I am hereby resolved that under no circumstances shall the freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights be infringed. In particular I am opposed to any attempt on the part of the Federal Government to deny the people their right to bear arms, to worship and pray when and where they choose, or to own and control private property." *Ezra Taft Benson, speech, The Proper Role of Government, 1968*

"Foolish liberals who are trying to read the Second Amendment out of the Constitution by claiming it's not an individual right or that it's too much of a safety hazard don't see the danger of the big picture. They're courting disaster by encouraging others to use this same means to eliminate portions of the Constitution they don't like." *Alan Dershowitz*

"As civil rulers, not having their duty to the people duly before them, may attempt to tyrannize, and as the military forces which must be occasionally raised to defend our country, might pervert their power to the injury of their fellow citizens, the people are confirmed by the article in their right to keep and bear private arms." *Tench Coxe, in "Remarks on the First Part of the Amendments to*

the Federal Constitution." under the pseudonym, "A Pennsylvanian" in the Philadelphia Federal Gazette, June 18, 1789

"Among the many misdeeds of the British rule in India, history will look upon the act of depriving a whole nation of arms, as the blackest." *Mahatma Gandhi*

"Are we at last brought to such humiliating and debasing degradation that we cannot be trusted with arms for our defense? Where is the difference between having our arms in possession and under our direction, and having them under the management of Congress? If our defense be the real object of having those arms, in whose hands can they be trusted with more propriety, or equal safety to us, as in our own hands?" *Patrick Henry, 3 J. Elliot, Debates in the Several State Conventions 45, 2d Ed. Philadelphia, 1836.*

"I'm on the side of the men who invented the country. They believed in the Second Amendment, and I believe in it, too." *Charlton Heston*

"This Year Will Go Down In History. For The First Time, A Civilized Nation Has Full Gun Registration! Our Streets Will Be Safer, Our Police More Efficient, And The World Will Follow Our Lead Into The Future!" *Adolph Hitler, 1935 'Berlin Daily' (Loose English Translation) April 15th, 1935 Page 3 Article 2 by Einleitung Von Eberhard Beckmann "Abschied vom Hessenland!"*

"The right of citizens to bear arms is just one guarantee against arbitrary government, one more safeguard against the tyranny which now appears remote in America, but which historically has proved to be always possible." *Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D-Minnesota)*

"No freeman shall be debarred the use of arms."
Thomas Jefferson

"The Constitution of most of our states (and of the United States) assert that all power is inherent in the people; that they may exercise it by themselves; that it is their right and duty to be at all times armed and that they are entitled to freedom of person, freedom of religion, freedom of property, and freedom of press." *Thomas Jefferson*

"The strongest reason for people to retain the right to keep and bear arms is, as a last resort, to protect themselves against tyranny in government."
Thomas Jefferson Papers, 334 (C.J. Boyd, Ed., 1950)

"While the gun control lobby is fond of portraying Second Amendment defenders as paramilitary kooks, they are the ones who repeatedly exploit tragedies to further their political agenda and forever blame anyone or anything other than the wrongdoers." *David Limbaugh*

"Besides the advantage of being armed, which the Americans possess over the people of almost every other nation ... notwithstanding the military establishments in the several kingdoms of Europe, which are carried as far as the public resources will bear, the governments are afraid to trust the people with arms." *James Madison, author of the Bill of Rights, in Federalist Paper No. 46, at 243-244.*

"...to disarm the people is the best and most effective way to enslave them..." *George Mason, 3*

Elliot, Debates at 380.

"The supposed quietude of a good man allures the ruffian; while on the other hand, arms, like laws, discourage and keep the invader and the plunderer in awe, and preserve order in the world as well as property. The same balance would be preserved were all the world destitute of arms, for all the world would be alike; but since some will not, others dare not lay them aside...Horrid mischief would ensue were one half the world deprived the use of them..." *Thomas Paine, I Writings of Thomas Paine at 56 (1894).*

"The right of the citizens to keep and bear arms has justly been considered, as the palladium of the liberties of a republic; since it offers a strong moral check against the usurpation and arbitrary power of rulers; and will generally, even if these are successful in the first instance, enable the people to resist and triumph over them." *Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story*

"The Constitution shall never be construed to authorize Congress to infringe the just liberty of the press or the rights of conscience; or to prevent "the people" of the United States who are peaceable citizens from keeping their own arms... Government is not reason. It is not eloquence. It is a force, like fire: a dangerous servant and a terrible master". *George Washington*

"Before a standing army can rule, the people must be disarmed; as they are in almost every kingdom in Europe. The supreme power in America cannot enforce unjust laws by the sword; because the whole of the people are armed, and constitute a force superior to any bands of regular troops that can be, on any pretense, raised in the United States. A military force, at the command of Congress, can execute no laws, but such as the people perceive to be just and constitutional; for they will possess the power, and jealously will

instantly inspire the inclination, to resist the execution of a law which appears to them unjust and oppressive." *Noah Webster, "An Examination into the leading Principles of the Federal Constitution."* in Paul Ford, ed., *Pamphlets on the Constitution of the United States*, at 56 (New York, 1888).

"Privately owned firearms were ubiquitous in America during the lifetimes of the Founding Fathers and well after that. It was taken as a given that individuals had the right to keep and bear arms. It was only the willful disregard of original intent and the clear statements of the Founders on the subject that allowed Franklin Roosevelt's activist, liberal Supreme Court in 1939 to disavow what had been a uniquely American birthright. Gun-control agitators have based all their arguments on the post-1939 history of federal regulation of firearms – and assiduously avoided any acknowledgement of what the Founders themselves wrote and intended. Thus, the social engineering of activist judges clearly hostile to the Constitution as written and determined to remake it more to their own liking has come to take precedence over what the Founders attempted to bequeath to subsequent generations of Americans." *Washington Times*

"The notion that disarming ordinary citizens who pose no threat to anyone will somehow deter a psychotic who is gunning down total strangers,

apparently for no reason at all, is as ridiculous as the idea that 'controlling' hunting knives would have saved Nikole Brown Simpson and Ron Goldman -- or that a ban on box-cutters would have stopped the September 11 hijackers. ... The person responsible for the recent spate of killings [in Maryland] probably did not buy his weapon over-the-counter. It's doubtful he patiently filled out the reams of paperwork required of law-abiding gun purchasers. No background check would have impeded his dastardly agenda. Such a person will always obtain the tools of his trade, regardless of what the law says. That's why they are called 'criminals,' after all." *Washington Times*

"In 1996, Britain banned handguns; since then, gun crimes have risen by 40%. ... Australia also passed severe gun restrictions in 1996 and made it a crime to use a gun defensively. In the subsequent four years, armed robberies rose 51%, unarmed robberies by 37%, assaults by 24% and kidnappings by 43%. ... The problem with these harsh gun laws, experts say, is that they take guns away from law-abiding citizens, while would-be criminals ignore them, leaving potential victims defenseless. The U.S. has shown that making guns more available is actually a better formula for law and order. ... In the U.S., 33 states have right-to-carry laws. In those states, deaths and injuries from multiple-victim public shootings fell on average by 78%." *National Center for Policy Analysis*