

THE Gun Owners

36 YEARS OF NO COMPROMISE – 1975-2011

ATF Declaring War on Honest Gun Owners – Time for Congress to rein in this rogue agency

by Erich Pratt

They are coming for your guns any way they can.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives is waging a war on innocent gun owners, and not surprisingly, the Obama administration has done nothing to keep them in check.

Long-time readers of *The Gun Owners* are aware of how the agency has been going after honest gun dealers in recent years. Combine that with byzantine federal laws and regulations — subject to ATF interpretation — and it's no wonder the number of FFL holders has decreased almost 80%.

Then there was former National Guardsman David Olofson. In 2008, Olofson's AR-15 malfunctioned at a range — firing a three-round burst with a single trigger pull. The ATF could only replicate the malfunction after experimenting with different types of ammunition behind closed doors. Having achieved the result they wanted, the ATF labeled Olofson's gun a "machine gun," and he was sentenced to 30 months in prison

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GOA tops 300 media outlets in 2011



GOA Executive Director Larry Pratt appeared on CNN in the aftermath of the Tucson shooting in January. During the first two months of 2011, GOA spokesmen appeared on or were quoted in over 300 media outlets — including *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, NPR, CNN, Fox News and scores of radio stations and other newspapers. (See "GOA in the News" on page 4.)

U.S. Constitution is Read on the House Floor – GOA plays important role in this historic event

by John Velleco

It had *never* been done before. The U.S. Constitution had NEVER been read on the floor of the Congress.

And to no one's surprise, the voting records of most Congressmen demonstrate they've never read the document for themselves!

Gun Owners of America initiated a campaign in December to require the incoming Congress to read the Constitution. And our effort paid off in January when the House of Representatives read the Constitution on the floor of that chamber. This was quite a historic event.

One would think that every legislator (each of whom takes an oath to uphold the Constitution) would celebrate the reading of the document, but that was not the case.

"They are reading it like a sacred text," complained anti-Second Amendment Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), who told *The Washington Post* that the "ritualistic reading" on the floor was "total nonsense" and "propaganda."

The Representative who spearheaded the effort in the House disagreed. "As the written expression of the consent the Amer-

ican people gave to their government — a consent with restrictions and boundaries — the public reading of the Constitution will set the tone for the 112th Congress," said Virginia Rep. Bob Goodlatte in a statement.

Republican and Democrat Representatives alike took turns reading the Constitution out loud on the House floor, but there

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ATF Declaring War on Honest Gun Owners

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for an illegal “transfer.”

The agency also put millions of gun owners in its crosshairs when it reclassified shotguns that are equipped with pistol grips. By decreeing in 2009 that such firearms are not “shotguns,” the ATF acted as a *de facto* legislative-making body ... quietly turning millions of gun owners into potential criminals overnight.

If the weapons are not “shotguns,” then what are they? The NFA Owners Association suggests the only logical alternative is that such firearms are now “destructive devices” — in the same category as grenade launchers, which require owners to register their weapons and pay a \$200 tax.

Of course, failure to register such weapons and pay the required tax would result in the same treatment that David Olofson received.

One Senator on Capitol Hill is looking into the agency’s contemptible practices and asking pointed questions of ATF Acting Director Ken Melson.

In late January, Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA) questioned Melson about abuses stemming from Project Gunrunner, a program the ATF started in 2005 to stop U.S. guns from getting into the hands of Mexican drug cartels. In order to track illegal gun running, the ATF engages in (and approves of) illegal gun purchases made at gun shows and stores throughout the southwest.

The word is starting to leak out that the ATF has its fingerprints on many of the strawman sales that are grabbing so many headlines. On January 30, newspaper headlines in El Paso, Texas, stated that: “US agency intentionally permits arms to be trafficked into Mexico.”

So the ATF is actually helping to move illegal guns across the border. To make matters worse, says Sen. Grassley, one of the sales the ATF sanctioned went to suspected straw purchasers who later shot and killed Customs and Border Protection agent Brian Terry.

ATF cracking down on whistleblowers

But when Sen. Grassley asked the ATF head for an accounting, the agency



Acting ATF Director Ken Melson is coming under fire for the agency’s questionable practices.

instead cracked down on the internal “whistleblowers” who supplied him with the information.

Imagine that ... if the agency is willing to put the squeeze on its own agents, what are they willing to do to the rest of the population?

The ATF represents the epitome of why the Founding Fathers feared standing armies — professional, armed agents who could abuse the rights of the people — inside our borders.

This lack of integrity on the part of ATF management is reminiscent of a 1993 *60 Minutes* feature story. In it, ATF agent Bob Hoffman stunned interviewer Mike Wallace by saying that “the people I put in jail have more honor than the top administration in this organization.”

The ATF has had a long record of dishonesty and abuse — not only in its treatment of the few honest agents who work there, but also in their treatment of law-abiding gun owners. For example, during the Clinton administration, GOA obtained a transcript of a high-ranking ATF official who admitted that its agents habitually lie in court when testifying against machine gun owners.

Institutional perjury at ATF

Thomas A. Busey, who in 1995 was the chief custodian of machine gun registrations at ATF, stated during a training session for other ATF agents that “when we testify in court, we testify that the data base is 100 percent accurate. That’s what we testify to, and we will always testify to that. As you probably well know, that may not be 100 percent true.”

Busey went on to say that the error rate was “between 49 and 50 percent.”

In 1994, the ATF sent shock waves through the gun community when they admitted to computerizing 60 million gun dealer records. (They later stated this was okay because the records belonged to former gun dealers.)

To be sure, the dismal record of this federal agency is not just limited to their treatment of gun owners.

Until they were exposed in 1995, ATF officials used to organize a racist “Good O’Boy Roundup” in Tennessee. The “whites only” policy allowed federal agents to freely mock minorities — even to the point of conducting a traditional skit where an officer dressed as a Ku Klux Klansman would use a dildo to sodomize another officer (who was in blackface). ATF officials had known

for years about the racist overtones of the Roundup, but just ignored this fact.

Trampling gun owners’ rights

For over three decades, the ATF has worked hard to earn its notorious reputation. Even as far back as 1982, the Senate Subcommittee on the Constitution found that ATF agents regularly:

- “Trampled upon the Second Amendment” by chilling the exercise of the right to keep and bear arms by law-abiding citizens;
- “Offended the Fourth Amendment” by unreasonably searching and seizing private property; and,
- “Ignored the Fifth Amendment” by taking private property without just compensation and by entrapping honest citizens without regard for the right to due process of law.

The Subcommittee report also noted that about 75 percent of ATF gun prosecutions were aimed at ordinary citizens who had “neither criminal intent nor knowledge,” but were “enticed by agents” into unknowing technical violations.

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House Votes to Repeal Anti-gun ObamaCare – *But Democrats vote in lockstep to stall repeal in the Senate*

by *Erich Pratt*

There’s been a lot of news on ObamaCare recently.

In January, Federal District Judge Robert Vinson delivered a crushing blow to the nefarious health care law when he ruled that ObamaCare was unconstitutional and “non severable.” That means that if Vinson’s decision is ultimately upheld, the entire law is null and void.

A few days before this court deci-

chose to follow Harry Reid’s lead — voting to protect the President’s pet legislation.

The repeal bill faces tougher challenges in the Senate, but there are ways it could still pass. While skeptics believe the bill will die in the Senate, the truth is that many bills start without a majority of support in Congress, but ultimately get passed.

Besides, Republicans can throw a repeal of ObamaCare onto a “must

The House vote to repeal ObamaCare was a huge encouragement for gun rights activists who have been fighting for over a year to kill the anti-gun health care law.

sion, the House of Representatives voted to repeal the anti-gun law by a tally of 245-189.

This health care law, which was enacted last year, allows the ATF and FBI to troll through the ObamaCare database for gun owners to bar them from exercising their Second Amendment rights because of their medical information.

This could result in millions of Americans — who are suffering from PTSD and other similar conditions — being put into the NICS system and being denied the right to buy firearms.

While every Republican Representative voted to repeal ObamaCare, every Democrat Representative present voted to keep it, save three: Dan Boren (OK), Mike McIntyre (NC), and Mike Ross (AR).

In the Senate, Democrats voted in lockstep to block the repeal of ObamaCare by a tally of 51-47. By contrast, every Republican Senator threw his or her support in favor of the repeal.

Of special note was Democrat Senator Joe Manchin (WV) who told his constituents during last year’s campaign that he would “repeal the bad parts of Obamacare.” Many Mountaineers might have misinterpreted this to mean that Manchin actually supported a repeal of the obnoxious legislation.

But now that Manchin is ensconced in Washington for a couple of years, he

pass” appropriations bill and force the President to decide whether vetoing such a funding bill (to protect his beloved health care law) is really worth shutting off the lights in Washington — something that many freedom lovers would welcome! ■

Taking orders from Harry Reid?



In his first gun-related vote, Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) voted against repealing ObamaCare. Those interested in seeing how their Representative and Senators voted on the odious health care law can do so at: <http://tinyurl.com/6yfaqu>

Did Your Senator Vote Against the ObamaCare Repeal?

In February, the following Senators voted *against* an amendment offered by Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) to repeal the anti-gun health care law which was enacted last year:

Akaka (D-HI)	Coons (D-DE)	Lautenberg (D-NJ)	Reid (D-NV)
Baucus (D-MT)	Durbin (D-IL)	Leahy (D-VT)	Rockefeller (D-WV)
Begich (D-AK)	Feinstein (D-CA)	Levin (D-MI)	Sanders (I-VT)
Bennet (D-CO)	Franken (D-MN)	Manchin (D-WV)	Schumer (D-NY)
Bingaman (D-NM)	Gillibrand (D-NY)	McCaskill (D-MO)	Shaheen (D-NH)
Blumenthal (D-CT)	Hagan (D-NC)	Menendez (D-NJ)	Stabenow (D-MI)
Boxer (D-CA)	Harkin (D-IA)	Merkley (D-OR)	Tester (D-MT)
Brown (D-OH)	Inouye (D-HI)	Mikulski (D-MD)	Udall (D-CO)
Cantwell (D-WA)	Johnson (D-SD)	Murray (D-WA)	Udall (D-NM)
Cardin (D-MD)	Kerry (D-MA)	Nelson (D-FL)	Webb (D-VA)
Carper (D-DE)	Klobuchar (D-MN)	Nelson (D-NE)	Whitehouse (D-RI)
Casey (D-PA)	Kohl (D-WI)	Pryor (D-AR)	Wyden (D-OR)
Conrad (D-ND)	Landrieu (D-LA)	Reed (D-RI)	

GOA in the News

Firearms control doesn't work

Written by Erich Pratt

In the wake of the weekend's tragic shooting in Arizona, USA TODAY is once again bent on blaming millions of law abiding gun owners for the actions of one depraved individual.

Among other things, the Editorial Board wants to ban self-defense magazines that hold extra ammunition. While such a ban would not stop thugs like Jared Loughner from getting them, it would impact good Americans who don't like breaking the law.

The problem is, a magazine that holds lots of ammunition is exactly what one needs when the police are not around and you are faced with mob violence. This was the situation during the 1992 Los Angeles riots. Korean merchants used firearms with large magazines to defend themselves against violent looters — and it was their stores that were left standing while other stores around them burned to the ground.

We're being told now that more gun control is needed. Really? Let's not forget that Loughner bought his firearm from a gun store and submitted to a background check. He had a clean record. The background check was supposed to save us from gun violence, but no amount of gun control will stop people like Loughner from getting guns.

So what can be done?



Monday, January 10, 2011

Well, Rep. Heath Shuler, D-N.C., put his finger on the solution. He has a concealed carry permit, but confesses that he had stopped carrying his firearm last year. "Now I know I need to have (my gun) on me," Shuler said.

Is this too simplistic an answer? Consider that in 2007, a gunman entered the New Life Church in Colorado Springs intending to perpetrate one of the greatest massacres in U.S. history. He was armed with a thousand rounds of ammunition. Unfortunately for him, he was only able to kill two people.

The reason? He was met by a woman with a gun. Jeanne Assam is a concealed carry permit holder, and she used her firearm to fatally wound the gunman, thus saving hundreds of lives at this church.

The lesson? Gun control never stops armed criminals; law abiding citizens with guns do.

This article appeared on USAToday.com on January 10, 2011

In February, GOA's Larry Pratt took on Obama's ATF nomination in a hotly debated segment on Fox News. Readers can view the show at www.gunowners.org



Erich Pratt

Communications Director, Gun Owners of America

GOA Communication Director Erich Pratt blasted gun control proposals in the aftermath of the Tucson shooting in January.



Democrats lament GOA's power on Capitol Hill

January 21, 2011

"A few Democrats in Congress are drafting safety bills [in the aftermath of the Tucson shooting] — but they'll probably die in the face of overwhelming timidity. Few members have courage enough to defy lobbyists like Erich Pratt of Gun Owners of America, who declared:

"These politicians need to remember that these rights aren't given to us by them. They come from God. They are God-given rights. They can't be infringed or limited in any way."



Larry Pratt interviews Walter Williams on the GunOwner's News Hour

Don't miss Larry Pratt's exclusive interview with teacher, economist and radio personality Walter Williams. This is a must-hear interview. In it, Williams discusses the wisdom that helped him become the man he is today, and how as a young man he was transformed into a small-government libertarian.

Pratt and Williams also touch on the alarming misuse of schools' zero tolerance policies against anything remotely gun-related.

Fans of Walter Williams will also learn about some of his impish behavior where he challenged segregation during his military career and how he (as a black man) "defends" racial discrimination. You won't be disappointed.

Go here to listen to the GunOwner's News Hour interview with Walter Williams: gunowners.org/newshour

Senate rules survive attack by the Far Left
– GOA celebrates important victory

by John Velleco

In late January, GOA members and activists won a battle in the U.S. Senate that will have huge implications over the next two years.

At issue was the Senate filibuster, a well-known but little understood procedural maneuver that allows a minority of Senators to block legislation unless debate is "shut off" by a supermajority — usually sixty votes.

The filibuster has been particularly important to gun owners, as it has been used to stop the leadership of both parties in their efforts to end gun shows and ban so-called assault weapons. It has also been used for such purposes as slowing down (and forcing changes to) legislation to expand the Brady law.

The filibuster was put on the chopping block by anti-gun senators in late January, since they consider it an "arcane rule" that has been a pesky impediment to their socialist agenda.

On the first day the Senate returned to Washington in January, Majority Leader Harry Reid sought to place his own judgment over the Founding Fathers, the Constitution, and hundreds of years of precedent.

In a blatant abuse of power, Senate Democrats argued that the chamber is not a "continuing body" and, therefore, its standing rules could be changed on the first legislative day of the session by a simple vote of fifty Senators (plus Vice-President Biden). If successful, the plan would have ended the filibuster entirely in order to ram through whatever legislation they and President Obama wished.

The only way to accomplish this, however, was to throw the entirety of the Senate rules out the window. But even some Democrats were unwilling to go along with this scheme. To buy time, the anti-gunners even used a "magic calendar" and stretched the first legislative day from January 5 all the way to January 25.

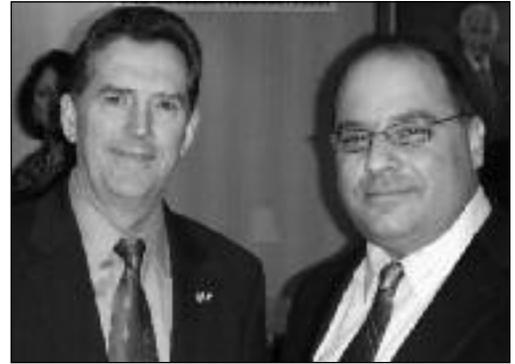
Alone among Second Amendment groups, GOA fought against this rules change. And we won what may prove to be the most important Senate victory of the next two years — something for which GOA members deserve a lot of credit.

(If this is the first you are hearing about GOA's involvement in this battle, you are probably not getting our legislative email alerts which are available for a free subscription at www.gunowners.org/ean.htm.)

The importance of this win cannot be overstated. Failure would have opened the door, for example, to a host of gun control legislation that typically follows a highly publicized tragedy such as the shooting in Tucson.

GOA members must be braced for many fights in the coming weeks and months. Already, at least a half-dozen anti-gun bills are being contemplated.

As emotions run high and compromisers hold their fingers in the wind, it will fall to pro-gunners like Sen. Jim DeMint (R-SC) to hold together a minority of Senators willing to fight against the gun control agenda of the President and his allies in the Congress. ■



Pro-gun Senator Jim DeMint (R-SC) with GOA's John Velleco (right).

Hall of Shame

The following Senators campaigned on being "independent" and "pro-gun," and yet they voted four times on January 27 to follow the Far Left's campaign to change the Senate rules in a way that would adversely affect gun owners' rights:

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Bingaman (D-NM) | Bill Nelson (D-FL) |
| Casey (D-PA) | Ben Nelson (D-NE) |
| Landrieu (D-LA) | Tester (D-MT) |
| Manchin (D-WV) | Udall (D-CO) |
| McCaskill (D-MO) | |

Brady Law mostly stopping honest folks, not criminals

by Erich Pratt

Now that the Brady Law has been in place for almost 20 years, its supposed effectiveness continues to come under scrutiny. But even before one looks at the actual numbers, there's a fundamental question that needs to be answered, and that is: are Brady Law background checks compatible with inalienable rights?

After all, if rights come from our Creator — as our Declaration of Independence states — then one wonders what business the government has screening good people before they exercise their rights.

We don't run background checks on journalists to make sure they're not liars ... we don't screen pastors to make sure they're not crooks.

We wouldn't tolerate placing "prior restraints" on these and other rights. So why the double standard with the Second Amendment?

Besides the obvious philosophical problems, many studies have shown over the years that background checks don't stop determined criminals from getting weapons.

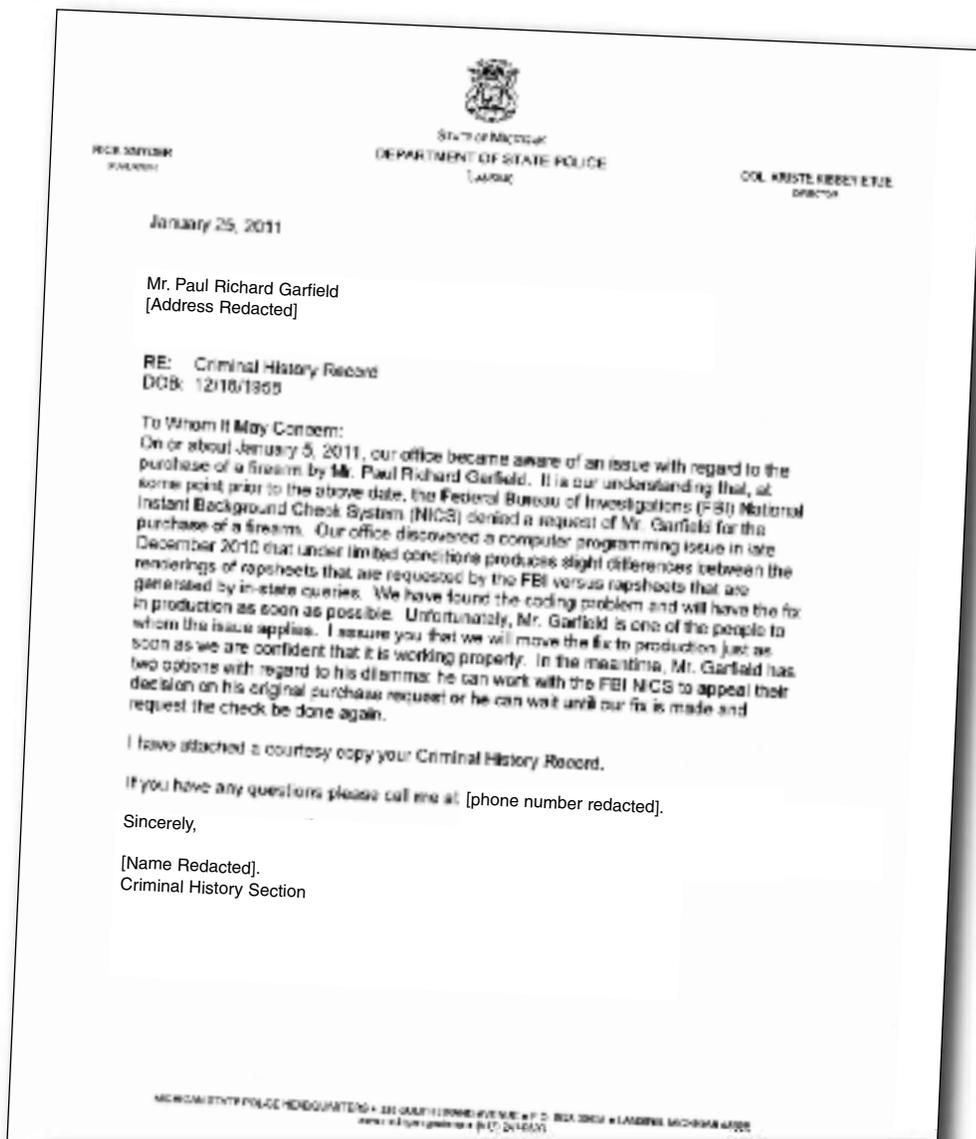
And a recent Department of Justice (DOJ) report is no different. This report, which contains figures for 2008, shows that the only people who are really inconvenienced by Brady background checks are law-abiding citizens.

According to the DOJ report, only one-tenth of one percent of people who are denied a firearm by a Brady check will ever be taken off the street. And many of those who are blocked from purchasing a firearm will later find their denials overturned, thus creating delays which amount to long, inconvenient waiting periods.

Take former police officer Paul Garfield of Michigan. He's been waiting since December of 2010 to purchase a firearm, but the "instant" check has been anything but instantaneous for him.

The state police discovered a "coding problem" in December which has resulted in Garfield's erroneous denial. (See the accompanying letter.)

The Michigan Department of State Police says it is working on the problem



How the Brady Law violates gun rights Gun Owners of America has provided a Fact Sheet entitled "Problems with Background Checks" at www.gunowners.org/fs2011b.htm

and will have "the fix in production as soon as possible."

Some might feel that such mistakes are the price we pay to make sure bad guys don't get firearms.

So, is it worth it?

The DOJ says that, of the more than five million background checks conducted on firearms purchasers in 2008, charges were only filed on 147 people for violating the Brady Law. And of that small number, a whopping 70% were never convicted. Hence, only 43 people were actually sent to jail for try-

ing to buy an illegal gun.

Researcher John Lott says that even these 43 cases overestimate the supposed effectiveness of the Brady law, since "few of these 43 cases stopped career criminals or those who posed real threats. The typical case was someone who had misdemeanor convictions for an offense he didn't realize prevented him from buying a gun."

Let's hope that the thousands of people who have been illegitimately denied weren't in any immediate danger. ■

U.S. Constitution Read on the House Floor

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was a definite difference in the interest level this event was generating on each side of the aisle.

Congressman thanks GOA for driving effort to Read the Constitution



“I want to thank Gun Owners of America for early support of the idea to read the U. S. Constitution on the House floor and for taking the lead to rally the grassroots in support of the Read the Constitution effort.”

— Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-VA)

something worth celebrating. But we must realize that this is just one step. Now we must hold their feet to the fire and see to it that they actually abide by the document.

In a letter, GOA thanked House Speaker John Boehner — who kicked off the reading with the Preamble — for bringing the measure to the floor. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV),

however, has given no indication that the Senate would read the Constitution (which comes as no surprise, since they violate it on a daily basis).

To force the issue in the upper chamber, GOA is working with several offices on a Resolution that would require the reading of the Constitution in the Senate.

So to help keep the pressure on and the issue alive on Capitol Hill, GOA is continuing to gather signatures at www.readtheusconstitution.org. Please sign the petition and be sure to have family and friends get on board as well. ■



The Republican side was mostly full; the Democrat side was mostly empty. This momentous event was certainly

ATF Declaring War on Honest Gun Owners

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The return of standing armies

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives represents the epitome of why the Founding Fathers feared standing armies — professional, armed agents who could abuse the rights of the people — inside our borders.

James Madison, the fourth President of our country and the man who is known as the Father of the Constitution, stated during the constitutional convention that, “As the greatest danger to liberty is from large standing armies, it is best to prevent them by an effectual provision for a good militia.”

Would several hundred federal police agencies (all of them armed) constitute a professional standing army of the kind that the Founders feared? Madison

Perjury at the ATF?



The chief custodian of machine gun registrations at ATF stated in 1995 that the agency’s records are only “between 49 and 50 percent” accurate, even though they testify in court that “the data base is 100 percent accurate.”

son would probably think so, especially since the Constitution only gave the federal government law-enforcement authority in four very limited areas.

Thomas Jefferson, our third President, agreed. While writing an opposition piece for Kentucky, Jefferson stated that the unpopular Alien & Sedition Acts of 1798 exceeded Congress’ authority:

The Constitution of the United States [has] delegated to the Congress a power to punish treason, counterfeiting the securities and current coin of the United States, piracies and felonies committed on the high seas, and offences against the laws of nations, and no other crimes whatever.

One should notice that enforcing “gun crimes” was not part of Jefferson’s list.

A new standing rule in the House of Representatives requires every piece of legislation to contain the constitutional authority that would justify its passage. If followed, this is a great idea because it would ultimately sink the ATF. ■



Shifting the Blame

by Larry Pratt

It should come as no surprise that opponents of freedom renewed their calls for more gun control following the Tucson massacre. It was as predictable as vultures hovering over dead bodies, and their narrative was full of efforts to shift the blame.

In New York City — presided

over by Mayor Michael Bloomberg (aka Michael Blameshift) — the murder rate spiked over 10% last year, even while it was dropping in the rest of the country. And yet Mayor Blameshift says that the violent crime problem in his city is somebody else's fault.

It's a textbook case of blameshifting. Consider history's first example.

After Adam and Eve took their infamous bite, they were confronted by the Lord who asked if they had eaten the fruit. Adam immediately said: "The woman you put here with me — she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

From then on, when we do wrong, our natural tendency is to say: "It's not my fault."

As a true son of Adam, Mayor Blameshift seeks to blame Arizona's and other states' gun laws for causing guns to flow into New York City. But he does not bother to explain why those guns don't cause much of a problem until they get to New York where they then somehow go nuts.

It is a bit much to hear the chief executive of a failed city lecture the rest of the country (which has a lower violent crime rate) on how the rest of us have to change by appeasing his demands.

It would have made a lot more sense to lament that, of the 40 or so people around Rep. Giffords at the time of the attack, no one had a gun. This, in spite of Arizona's very gun owner friendly laws recognizing citizens' right to carry a firearm — openly or concealed — without a permit.

Happily, people don't seem to be buying the snake oil peddled by Mayor Blameshift and the media. The response of folks in Arizona following the tragedy was a 60 percent spike in gun sales. Glock reported a 500 percent increase in the sale of "high-capacity magazines."

Perhaps more important for any political outcome was the response of various members of Congress. Several congressmen reported that they will now be packing following the shooting of their colleague. You know the debate may be ending when uber-liberal Representative Steve Cohen of Memphis, who calls anyone who disagrees with him a Nazi, announces that he has become a pistol packer, too.

Before Congress might consider Rep. Carolyn McCarthy's (D-NY) high-capacity magazine ban, they should learn more about guns than Clueless Carolyn knows. It is likely that all she knows about guns she

"In New York City ... the murder rate spiked over 10% last year, even while it was dropping in the rest of the country. And yet Mayor Blameshift says that the violent crime problem in his city is somebody else's fault."

learned by watching the movies where every good guy's shot always hits the bad guy and throws said bad guy crashing through the window. In real life, even if every shot hits the perp, five or ten rounds may be needed to stop his attack. And if there is more than one assailant, you are in real trouble if you have one of Clueless Carolyn's low-capacity magazines.



"Mayor Blameshift"

The McCarthys of the world will never "get it" completely. But at least we now have anti-gun Representatives like Cohen — who makes it a point to label his opponents as Nazis — carrying a pistol with him around town.

Might we suggest a Luger, perhaps? ■

THE Gun Owners

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