

# Opinion



## The original intent of the Second Amendment

What does the Second Amendment mean? This has been debated over the years, and most recently as a result of the murderous Las Vegas shootings.

My thoughts on guns and the Second Amendment have nothing to do with hunting or other shooting sports, although those are very popular pursuits.

One must understand the Declaration of Independence was written to sever the colonists' bonds with the English ruling government. Following many attempts to reconcile their differences, they failed. When the Declaration was written, the signers knew this revolution against England would be met with forceful repression.

And they were correct.

It's what happens when people revolt if other means no longer work to settle serious differences.

The Second Amendment was included in the Bill of Rights. None of the Bill of Rights grant power to government; they limit government and describe

natural or "God-given" rights which mankind basically inherit at birth. They are not granted by government but are natural preceding even the existence of government.

The Bill of Rights is about the preservation of freedom, justice and liberty. I think the Founders feared unchecked government power.

This is where we find the Second Amendment. Where the limits to government power are clearly stated.

So, when the Second Amendment refers to a well-regulated militia and the individual's right to bear arms, it's a specific mandate providing a citizen's right to arms beyond that of the National Guard, the standing army or other armed forces "of the government."

While it protects the ability of citizens to maintain arms that might be needed to assist their government in fighting an enemy, it also — and maybe more importantly — it also allows citizens to resist their own government and protect themselves and their freedom if

### GUEST VIEWPOINT

DAVE PECK  
FLORENCE

it ever becomes necessary against their own government.

If that unfortunate day comes, instruments of the state like the U.S. military forces or even National Guard may not be your friends — just as the British army (the colonists' government at the time) became the enemy.

We often hear statements that the Second Amendment was authored with only muskets in mind and modern firearms should not be considered in the same light due to their technological superiority.

I don't agree.

At the time, muskets were modern, state-of-the-art weapons on par with the best weapons available (the exception being heavy weapons like cannons) to the British army or any other army of the time.

Had even more efficient firearms been available, I'm

certain the citizens and soldiers would not have hesitated to keep or use them. Semi-automatic firearms certainly fall into that category.

No doubt, even in those days, some used firearms criminally. But the Second Amendment remained intact.

So in the spirit of that amendment, The Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, I don't think we should suppress the rights of the majority as a reaction to individual criminal acts, as horrendous as they may be.

Today, we live in a Republic with strong democratic values.

We have a system of checks and balances.

We can vote.

Though it seems we could never lose it or fall into the chaos of some kind of dictatorship, it has happened many times in world history; we would be naive to think we are somehow immune.

The Second Amendment provides a final critical protection or "check" against tyrannical government, crime, terror-

ism or anarchy for American citizens.

I don't think exercising our Second Amendment rights should be taxed like the "sin" taxes on alcohol or marijuana. After all, taxing another right — voting — through poll taxes is prohibited.

While some limits to the Second Amendment may be necessary, such as the ban on fully automatic weapons or the bump stock device used in the Las Vegas murders, it's important these restrictions be kept to an absolute minimum in order to preserve our freedoms and Constitutional rights.

Finally, if some people or some in government have the ultimate goal of diluting the Second Amendment to the extent it becomes meaningless, they should proceed using the process prescribed in the Constitution to actually amend or repeal it if they can.

I would oppose this but it would be a far more honest approach than trying to regulate our Second Amendment out of existence.

### LETTERS

#### COMMENDING THE CHANDLERS

I wanted to commend Mark and Cynthia Chandler for taking an action which they feel is appropriate in

terms of reducing gun violence in our country.

As Eleanor Roosevelt said, "It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness."

If each of us tried to do

something to reduce gun violence we might find ways to make a difference.

—Bonnie Rose Allen  
Florence

#### UNDERSTANDING MILLENNIALS, LGBTQ

In the three-part series in the Siuslaw News about millennials (Sept. 30, Oct. 4, Oct. 7), I never gave a thought about what young men and women in our community workforce did for entertainment.

At times, I did wonder what teens did if they did not have after-school activities. I grew up in the Southern Coastal town of Ventrua. After school there were football or basketball games and afterwards we had sock hops (school dances where you danced in your socks), a great recreation center and of course the beach — so there was so much to do, even dragging (cruising) main street in your car was an activity (See "American Graffiti").

For millennials, however, there is almost nothing to do or any place to meet someone in their age group. Part of the reason could be that the primary focus has been on making Florence a retirement community. The problem is, without a younger workforce, the city will die.

As for the first part in the Siuslaw News series on our LGBTQ community (Oct. 11), I grew up not knowing what a gay person was.

It was in 1960 while at art school in Los Angeles that I had my introduction to the LGB culture. During my first two months I had one gay roommate that became openly effeminate, and then another roommate for two years who was in the closet.

I went to classes with gay men, lesbians and bi-sexuals and most were out in the open. We studied and partied together and I never gave it a thought.

While my wife and I were living in San Francisco, I worked along side a young gay man for two years before, eventually, I found myself at his bedside the night before he died of AIDs.

It is not tolerance but acceptance of everyone that makes a difference.

Although I admit that I have difficulty with the Religious Right and have no tolerance for hate groups.

I give hugs to Jennifer French for speaking out and who I haven't hugged in sometime.

—Win Jolley  
Florence

#### WALL STREET CORE OF PUERTO RICO'S WOES

Donald Trump seems to hold Puerto Rico solely responsible for its financial disaster.

However, Wall Street just may be the real culprit.

Puerto Rico lost its status as a Wall Street tax haven in 2006. Investments along with thousands of skilled laborers departed, resulting in tax loss to the country and contributed to an economic recession. Prior to this, an amendment to bankruptcy laws specifically excluded Puerto Rico from filing Chapter 9.

Without transitional help from Washington D.C. after the law change, and unable to meet the budget, Puerto Rico borrowed — with some of the loans at higher rates than what are considered legal under U.S. law.

The loans required priority of payment over other financial obligation, such as schools and infrastructure. This status raised the Wall Street bonds from junk status to triple tax exempt and a huge profit for Wall Street and hedge fund operators.

Puerto Rico, still stalled in recession and unable to pay the obligations, was "helped" this year by Washington D.C. by stepping in and imposing a fiscal board appointed by the Supreme Court to control the economy so Wall Street obligation could be paid, under the duress of investors suing hedge fund operators.

The stringent measures are raising costs while eliminating benefits and services, including the closure of many schools in a country where 46 percent of the population now lives below poverty level and unemployment is at 11 percent.

Now Puerto Rico is left to deal with the hurricane damage.

—Karen Mahoney  
Florence

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