

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"...We're going to have to take one step at a time...So then we'll have to start working again to strengthen that law, and then again to strengthen the next law, maybe again and again. Right now, though, we'd be satisfied not with half a loaf but a slice. Our ultimate goal – total control of handguns in the United States – is going to take time."

Nelson T. "Pete" Shields,
Chairman Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence

"The country should rethink the Second Amendment."

Max Boot in a Feb 2018 editorial in the Washington Post

Gun control supporters will *"have to persuade more people of the need to confiscate millions of those firearms."*

David Scharfenberg in an Nov 2017
editorial in The Boston Globe

"To end all gun deaths, we need to ban all civilian guns...we are a nation that reveres our constitution, we are also one that changes if when it becomes clear that the Founding Fathers failed to see what modern times require."

Greg Bates in an op-ed to The Portland Press Herald

"They (the NRA) have in essence become a terrorist organization."

Connecticut Gov. Dannel Malloy

"Australia's success story is an example for us all. America will remain a deadly nation for our children, its schools caught in the crossfire, unless we insist politicians and the NRA curb their lobbyist efforts and allow the creation of policy that acts in the best interests of public safety."

Derrick Johnson, NAACP President in a
column for Black Press USA

"...anything that looks like a machine gun is assumed to be a machine gun."

Josh Sugarmann, Violence Policy Center

This is the last installment in Nelson Lund's excellent piece "The Right to Arms and the American Philosophy of Freedom"
CONCLUSION

No observer of American life is more respected by conservative intellectuals than Alexis de Tocqueville. Describing the new form of oppression that he saw emerging in democratic societies, Tocqueville imagined a future power, "immense and tutelary," presiding over a mass of self-absorbed individuals:

[This power] is absolute, detailed, regular, far-seeing, and mild. It would resemble paternal power if, like that power, it had for its object preparing men for manhood; but it only seeks, on the contrary, to keep them fixed irrevocably in childhood; it likes citizens to enjoy themselves, provided that they think only of enjoying themselves. It willingly works for their happiness; but it wants to be the unique agent and sole arbiter of that happiness; it provides for their security, foresees and provides for their needs, facilitates their pleasures, conducts their principal affairs, directs their industry, regulates their estates, divides their inheritances; can it not take away from them entirely the trouble of thinking and the pain of living?

A thousand illustrations of Tocqueville's prescience can be found in the agenda of the progressive left. Conservative intellec-

tuals complain constantly and rightly about the erosion of individual liberty by bureaucratic government, about the enervating effects of the nanny state, and about the suffocating atmosphere of euphemisms and repressed resentment imposed by the political correctness police. But few of these pundits raise their voices against infringements of the right of self-defense, which is the core principle on which our liberal republic was founded. Some even actively urge the government to regulate that right into irrelevance by depriving us of the tools needed for its exercise.

Whatever else has contributed to the decay of America's republican spirit, forgetfulness or ignorance about the philosophy underlying our free institutions are among the least excusable failings that public intellectuals can display. Our most fundamental liberty now depends too much on lawyers and judges construing legal texts and on associations like the NRA, which many conservatives regard as just another special-interest lobby that sometimes serves as a convenient political ally.

Conservatives should pay more attention to the views of John Locke, William Blackstone, and every one of our Founding fathers. Their philosophy was not infected by some silly romanticism about guns or an outmoded frontier mentality. It was based on the reality of human nature and on reason.

—Nelson Lund, JD, PhD, is University Professor at
George Mason University's Antonin Scalia Law School



GUN CONTROL PUSH SUCCESSFUL IN INCREASING GUN SALES

Nearly 2.8 million gun-purchase background checks were processed last month (March 2018), according to FBI data released Tuesday — an indication that renewed talk of gun control in the wake of February's Parkland school massacre is fueling a record nationwide firearms buying spree.

Close to 335,000 more checks were run through the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) last month compared to a year earlier. That's the biggest year-over-year monthly increase since President Obama left office.

The uptick is likely a reaction not so much to the Valentine's Day shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School as it is to the push in Congress and a number of states to enact stricter controls on gun purchases.

The numbers are also consistent with a reported upswing in National Rifle Association membership numbers and donations to the NRA post-Parkland, said Robert Spitzer, a professor at SUNY Cortland who has written multiple books about gun policy.

"It is certainly not likely to last, given how these numbers fluctuate historically," Mr. Spitzer said. "In the months to come, there will certainly be pressure on Congress to act, but it will not — no way. So that will relieve political pressure."

But Erich Pratt, executive director of Gun Owners of America, said the most recent upswing should continue as long as the threat of potential new gun controls is front and center.

"This increase in sales will continue, no doubt, as long as the anti-gun left continues its vocal push — using the Parkland tragedy to divest Americans of their constitutionally-protected rights," Mr. Pratt said.

In contrast to Mr. Obama, whose calls for new gun controls helped spur record sales during his administration, Mr. Trump campaigned on an expressly pro-gun rights platform, lessening the fears that activists' Second Amendment rights would be curtailed once he was elected.

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Several gun control groups didn't respond to questions about the March increase, but have said they fear gun rights groups will try to jump-start sales in the relatively down market by pursuing bills to expand concealed carry rights and passing other pro-gun legislation.

"Gun industry profits have slumped under this administration, and so the NRA has pushed for dangerous legislation that would profit gun manufacturers at the expense of public safety," Cassidy Geoghegan, a spokeswoman for Everytown for Gun Safety, said last month. Published in the April 4, 2018 Washington Times

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GUN CONTROL ADVOCATES SHOULD CALL FOR REPEAL OF THE SECOND AMENDMENT

Buckeye, AZ – (Ammoland.com)- You've probably heard about former Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens' recent editorial in the New York Times.

In it, he lauded the "civic engagement" of the "school children and their supporters" demanding additional gun control laws in marches around the country to "minimize the risk of mass killings." He also called on them to expand their demands and not just settle for minor tweaks in existing law, but rather to make their goal the full repeal of the Second Amendment to the Constitution.

We at The Firearms Coalition wholeheartedly agree with him. We would love to see gun control advocates actually demanding out loud and in so many words what they really want, rather than pretending that they would be satisfied with just a few minor restrictions or some "commonsense reforms." It would be refreshing to have them openly admit to their ultimate objectives, without pretending to support the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

From top to bottom, anti-rights groups are a sham. They lie about their objectives. They lie about their data. They lie about their "membership" and funding. Even their names are lies. They use terms like "for gun safety," "against gun violence," and "violence policy," but they have nothing to do with gun safety or violence prevention. Their single objective is, and always has been, demonization and criminalization of guns and gun owners.

Years ago, when most of these groups were founded, they were much more open about their intentions. The National Coalition to Ban Handguns, and Handgun Control, Inc. were pretty clear about what they wanted – a total ban on civilian-owned handguns, with exceptions only for police and specially licensed security guards while on-duty. Other civilians who wished to own a handgun would be limited to only certain styles, and even those, only in controlled range environments where they would have to store them securely, and never take them off the premises.

But in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the leaders of these groups began to realize that their agendas were not popular with most Americans. Not only were they not getting the traction they wanted for their legislative efforts, being forced to take less than they wanted, but they found that they were unable to garner many members or financial supporters either. They found them-

selves relying on funding from wealthy foundations, Hollywood celebrities, and New York and Silicon Valley billionaires.

While past leaders had openly described a step-by-step process of enacting stricter and stricter laws until their goal of a gun-free society was achieved, the new leaders adopted a whole new vocabulary of "gun safety," "gun-violence prevention," and "reasonable, commonsense measures to keep our children safe," while denying their true intentions.

The new approach to gun control, or "gun safety" in the new parlance, included vehement denials that they wanted to ban guns or take guns away from people, while calling for the banning of certain guns, and campaigns to make more and more people "Prohibited Persons" who can't legally purchase or possess firearms. In private, every now and then, one of them will quietly admit that total prohibition is still their ultimate objective.

We aren't surprised that Justice Stevens would support repealing the Second Amendment, but we're amazed at his candor, and would welcome the opportunity to have an open and honest debate about the right to arms.

While many Americans will say that they feel there is a need for some sort of gun control, that support wanes as they learn more about specific proposals.

"Expanded background checks," meaning a prohibition on private transfers, is a good example. Polls consistently report that over 80% of Americans support the idea, but when these proposals have actually been put to the voters, the results have been much less impressive. In Washington State, proponents of the measure spent some \$14 million dollars pushing their plan, while opponents spent barely \$1 million. But even with the lopsided spending on emotional and misleading ads, voters approved the measure by an unimpressive 60%. When a similar initiative was brought to Nevada, the bill passed by less than 1/2 of 1%, losing in every county except one. When the initiative was brought to voters in Maine it was rejected, and plans to introduce the initiative in Arizona were shelved as the promoters realized that a win there was very unlikely.

Support for gun control wanes as people know and understand details about gun control proposals. So yes, please gun control advocates, do take Justice Stevens' advice and drop the pretense.

Declare your real objectives, and focus your attention on repealing the Second Amendment. Stop avoiding the phrase "gun control" and hiding behind fake terms like "gun safety," and let's have an honest, open debate on the real issue: Our individual right to arms.

We think Justice Stevens is among the worst judges to ever wear the robes, but on this particular question, we fully agree with him: It's time to stop obfuscating and go for the real prize.

So come on Bloomberg, Schumer, Feinstein, and Soros: Come and take it. We dare you.

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THE RIGHT TO KEEP AND BEAR ARMS

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