

Coös County Democrat Committee

Basic Positions

Guns and other weapons

“Common sense laws regarding the purchase, requirements, use and disposal of weapons should be adopted to help ensure they will only be used in a safe and responsible manner.”

Note that we use the term “weapons”, and not just “guns”, and we do not differentiate between long guns and handguns.

Americans have long believed that guns, as well as a variety of knives, swords, and other types of weapons, should be available for any who would decide that they are needed, without regard for what that need may be, or how they would be used. We have lost our ability to apply common sense to this problem in a way that is meaningful, and it has resulted in the deaths of thousands of individuals on an annual basis. Weapons have been ingrained into our culture, they have been allowed by the constitutions of both the country and many of the states, and the laws regarding them are only nominally enforced. They are used for putting food on the table of families, and there are statements that the pervasiveness of guns have been a factor in other countries deciding not to invade the United States. Unfortunately, there are few, if any, checks and balances involved with the purchase, training, proper use, or disposal of most guns. They are easy to obtain - too easy, many would argue. It may be, time to apply a set of reasonable laws, enforceable, to these weapons; that does NOT mean that any body will be knocking on your door asking or mandating that you surrender your weapons, except under extenuating circumstances involving the safety of yourself or others.

1. Weapons made with the intent of harming yourself or another should require a comprehensive mental health check prior to being able to purchase or transfer them.

There should be no HIPAA or other privacy based restrictions that would prevent the reporting of a persons mental health status to a central, secure, law enforcement repository, and in order to be effective, this repository of information should be maintained at the federal level, with each state mandated to report information. If somebody does not have the mental, moral, emotional, and cognitive ability to use a

weapon in a way that is safe to themselves and others, they should not be allowed to own one.

2. Weapons should only be available to those who have demonstrated competence in their storage and operations.

At this time, anybody can go into a store and purchase a weapon, without regard for the qualifications to handle and use the weapon in a safe and responsible manner. This often leads to people who may be entirely unqualified to possess the weapon using it. Competency should be a mandatory requirement for all weapons, to ensure that they can use the weapon effectively, responsibly, and safely, and individuals should be prequalified periodically to ensure their continued ability to do so.

3. The government should not be in a position to subsidize or provide weapons or ammunition to any individual not in the military or accredited as a law enforcement officer.

Government organizations, at any level, should not be in a position to make it easy for any individual to purchase a weapon or ammunition for a weapon, at a reduced or discounted price through government manufacture or selling of confiscated weapons.

4. There must be a practical and positive means to remove weapons from those who have sought to, or have stated a desire to, harm another through the use of the weapon, without depriving one of their rights as a citizen, and the rights granted to lawful citizens by the U.S. Constitution.

People are not perfect, and at times they may well exhibit signs of mental illness, anger, or a violent intolerance of others. When situations like this occur, there should be a national level means to document this activity, and have a requirement for government (not necessarily law enforcement) to enter the premises of the individual and remove any and all weapons they may have, in order to ensure they are unable to harm themselves or another. In some cases, this means that the weapons should be permanently removed, and they should not be allowed to obtain a replacement.