

Anabella Mayorga

H-7373

From: lmchouse1@gmail.com
Sent: Sunday, March 3, 2024 7:34 PM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: Safe Storage Bill
Attachments: Anti safe storage bill.pdf; East Greenwich Attempted Robbery 2-6-24.pdf; ProJo 2-7-24 State Police Report.pdf; Who is the american gun owner 3-2024.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Please find the enclosed letter AGAINST the safe storage gun law.

Thank You,
Lisa Corsi
29 River Farms Drive
West Warwick, RI 02893

This letter is in opposition to the proposed "Safe Storage Bill".

In my 63 +years I have never been involved in politics nor do I want to start now. However, this bill is a terrible attempt at gun safety. I am someone who never entertained the thought of owning a gun until I turned 59 and watched the country, I love become something close to a third world country when it comes to violence and crime. The judicial system seems more concerned with the rights of criminals than they are victims. It is commonplace to let rapists and violent criminals out of prison after only a few years while keeping non-violent white-collar criminals behind bars for extended times. Our police are no longer respected, and their ranks are shrinking daily. We can no longer count on our wonderful police to run to our rescue in a timely manner and are therefore forced to provide our own security.

So, here I was, at age 59 along with several of my single girlfriends aged 59-75 concerned enough about our safety that we all decided to learn to shoot and properly handle a firearm. Having a nursing background where saving lives was what I did every day, I never thought I would want to learn how to apply deadly force to save my own life. With this bill, if someone should break into my home, with the intention of doing harm, I will have no access to my firearm. You are essentially telling criminals that all homes are "gun free" zones, so there is no deterrent to breaking in and doing God knows what to the occupants.

Recently, in East Greenwich, a young man followed a gentleman into his garage, put a knife to his head and tried to steal his car. Fortunately, the homeowner was carrying his own firearm and scared the criminal away. This same young man then went to another home in East Greenwich and threw a rock through the patio door to gain access. Again, the homeowners had access to their firearm and stopped this individual before he hurt anyone and held him at bay for the police. What would have happened to these homeowners if their firearms were locked in a safe? Luckily, we will never know! (Ref: Article – West Bay - WPRI 2-6-24)

Over 10 years ago, a friend and his family (also in East Greenwich) were the victims of a home invasion. Although he was a gun owner, his gun was locked away in a safe. He was a big man – 6'5" tall and ex-military, so he never felt he would need his firearm for self-defense. His wife and children were tied up and watched as the intruders beat him, finally realizing they had the wrong person and had broken into the wrong home. If he had access to his firearm, he and his family would never have had to endure this trauma.

I also had a childhood neighbor, Charles DeCaro and his wife CNN Reporter Lynne Russell who were accosted in a hotel room by 2 intruders while traveling across the country in 2015. Lynne was being held at gunpoint and fortunately for them Charles was able to secure his wife's weapon and kill one of the intruders. He was shot 3 times (thank God he survived), and his wife was fine while the second intruder was captured by police. Had both he and his wife not been carrying weapons and had the training to use them, more than likely this would have had a much different ending.

Recently, as posted in the Providence Journal, the Rhode Island State Police have noted that gun violations have increased by over 40%. (Ref: article Providence Journal 2-7-24). These violations are for criminals, mostly drug related, not law-abiding citizens. The violations are for unregistered guns, ghost guns, large capacity magazines etc. This is proof that the new magazine laws and other gun laws do nothing to make our lives safer. These laws will be followed by the law-abiding gun owners, criminals will

NEVER care or follow any of these laws. Now you want to pass a law that gives the criminals more power over the average citizen – shame on you!!

As stated in the enclosed article you need to be aware of who the newest gun owners are, and their reasons for purchasing a firearm. (Ref: Article Who is the American Gun Owner – America's First Freedom 3-2024). Safety is the number 1 reason.

Since learning to properly handle a firearm and feeling that I can now protect myself, I find myself active in other gun activities. I shoot on a pistol team and take part in other shooting competitions. I have met a wonderful community of people from all walks of life. This community is made up of business owners, nurses, doctors, engineers, educators, blue collar workers, retired individuals, widows, and widowers of all ethnic and religious backgrounds. All these people take gun ownership seriously, train constantly and promote safe gun ownership. But all of us want to decide for ourselves whether we will lock up all our firearms or keep them available for immediate access should we need to protect ourselves in our own homes.

I will not argue the idea that no one should be allowed to tell me what I can or cannot do in my own home, rather I will plead that you do not pass a bill that makes me and all Rhode Island citizens sitting ducks unable to protect ourselves should the need arise.

Please reject this terrible bill.

Concerned Rhode Island Citizen,

Lisa Corsi

29 River Farms Drive

West Warwick, RI

WEST BAY

Police: Man tried to steal car, then broke into home in East Greenwich

by: [Shaun Towne](#)

Posted: Feb 6, 2024 / 04:27 PM EST

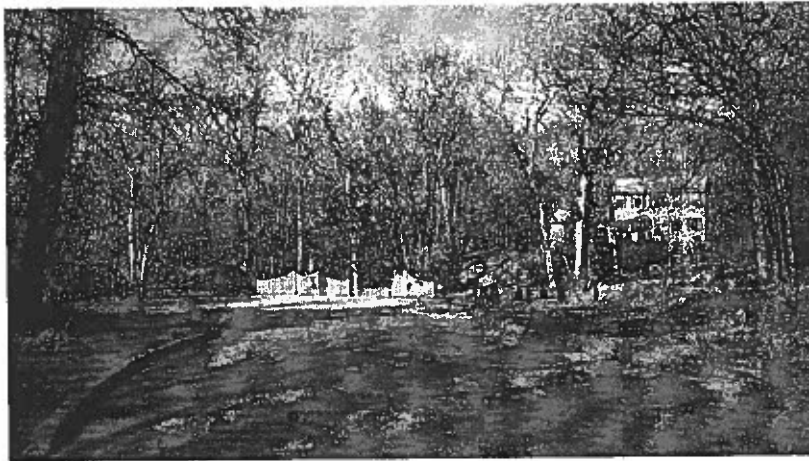
Updated: Feb 6, 2024 / 06:23 PM EST

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EAST GREENWICH, R.I. (WPRI) — A New Hampshire man is facing several charges after he allegedly tried to steal a man's car in East Greenwich, then broke into another home by smashing a glass door while two people in their 70s were inside.

In both cases, according to police, the suspect ended up having a gun pointed at him by the homeowner, and eventually responding officers.

Brett Everett Johnson, 30, of Hampstead, was arrested Sunday morning in the kitchen of a home on Shippeetown Road.



Justin Road in East

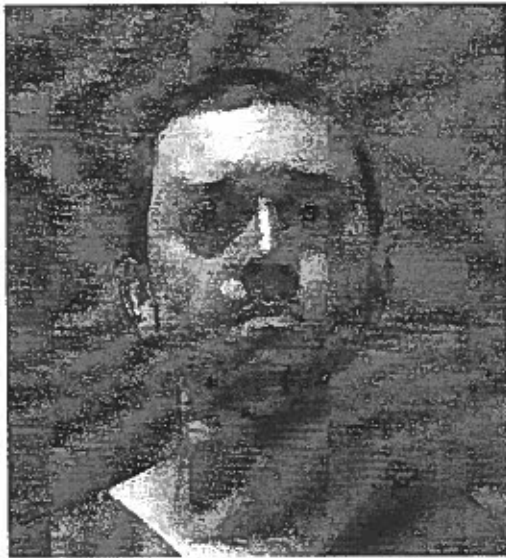
Greenwich

The police report obtained by 12 News says the initial call came in just before 7 a.m. from a home on Justin Road. The victim, a man in his late 50s, told police a man armed with a knife had followed him into his garage and demanded that he hand over his car.

The victim instead pulled out a handgun from an ankle holster and pointed it at the suspect, who ran off toward Division Street. The victim also told the officers that he accidentally fired one shot into the air.

After speaking with the victim, police began searching for the suspect. A short time later, police got another call from nearby Shippeetown Road. According to the report, the caller said a man was on their deck, holding a rock and trying to get in through a sliding glass door. The man was bleeding, having already broken a window, the report says, and police were also told the homeowner had the suspect at gunpoint.

Police said they arrived to find the suspect kicking and punching the glass door, which he was able to climb through. The report says police went inside and found the two victims and the suspect, who had had "large bleeding wounds on both his forearms." Police then ordered him to the ground, to which he complied before they put him in handcuffs. A knife was found in the suspect's back pocket, according to police.



Brian Johnson

While Johnson was being treated for his injuries at the scene, he was heard muttering, "I should have charged at the guy who pointed the gun at me," the report says. Police said Johnson refused to answer their questions after he was taken to Kent Hospital for treatment.

Johnson was arraigned Monday on charges of breaking and entering of a dwelling of a person over 60, breaking and entering dwelling with resident on premises,

first-degree robbery, assault with intent to commit specified felonies, obstructing police, and two counts of vandalism. Court records show his bail was set at \$20,000 and he was ordered to undergo mental health monitoring and have no contact with his alleged victims.

Johnson is due back in court May 20 for a screening.

State police: Weapons violations up 41% in 2023

Mark Reynolds
Providence Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Rhode Island State Police seized 326 guns in 2023.

And the agency also saw weapon offenses increase 41 percent over the course of the calendar year.

Both the percentage increase, and the overall volume of gun seizures in 2023, drew some attention recently as commanders looked over last year's statistics.

The agency's overall operations did not change in any significant way in 2023, but the work of state police intensified as troopers encountered more guns and narcotics, said state police Maj. Ken Moriarty, who commands the detective bureau.

Troopers on patrol encountered some people carrying weapons illegally, but the bulk of the 2023 seizures and weapons violations took place in the realm of counter-narcotics, Moriarty said.

In 2023, he said, it appeared that people involved in narcotics transactions were carrying more guns than in the past.

Also, narcotics-related arrests increased 35 percent generally last year, according to a state police news release. Arrests related to narcotics and firearms carried out by the state police High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Task Force rose 51 percent.

In some situations, police gathered up 10 or 11 guns, Moriarty said. Similar circumstances frequently led to far fewer guns in the past, he said.

The haul of 326 guns, included about 90 untraceable ghost guns.

State police also seized 20 illegal switching devices, which can convert a semi-automatic pistol into a gun that automatically shoots a continuous



Student Trooper Mark A. Jerrick (right) and fellow troopers from the 2019 Rhode Island State Police Training Academy class take the oath of office during the graduation ceremony June 28, 2019, in Lincoln. In 2023, the Rhode Island State Police seized 326 guns and saw a 41 percent increase in weapons offenses. BOB BREIDENBACH/THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL, FILE

stream of fire at the pull of a trigger.

Highway shootings lead to more seizures

A run of highway shootings, eight in all, also led to additional seizures of guns, ghost guns and illegal high-capacity magazines.

State police investigators attached to the agency's major crimes and technical investigations units have gained some expertise that helps them track down people who open fire on other cars on the highway, Moriarty said.

One of the shootings took place on a ramp that leads from Route 6 East onto Dean Street in Providence.

In a bout of road rage, a 32-year-old Providence man, who was on parole, shot into a car occupied by four people, according

to state police. The shooter was arrested.

In another road rage case, state police said, a 30-year-old East Providence man was arrested after he fired a shot into another vehicle on a ramp that carries northbound traffic off Route 95 at state government offices in Providence.

Four people with ties to street gangs were arrested. Meanwhile, state police, Central Falls police and Pawtucket police worked together on investigations that led to the arrests of another four suspects.

State police Col. Darnell S. Weaver thanked troopers and their allies in law enforcement for their efforts.

"This work yielded measurable results that contribute to the protection of lives and prevention of crime," Weaver said.

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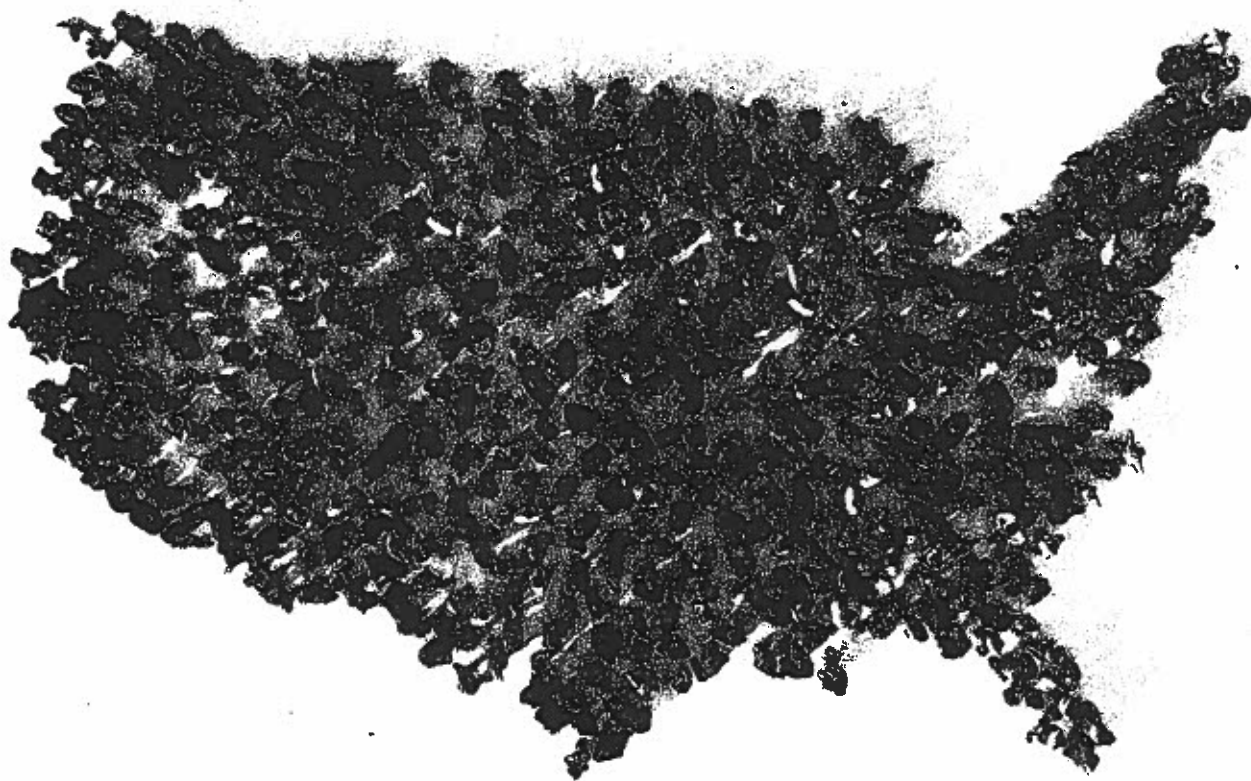
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WHO *is the* **American** *Gun Owner?*



All of
US!

By **Susanne Edward**

Many in the mainstream media and in Hollywood have long painted a stereotypical portrait of the American gun owner: He is supposed to be an old, balding, poorly educated white guy, possibly with a Southern accent. But, while the anti-Second Amendment legacy press may be more interested in politically useful (to them) parodies than in opening their eyes and minds, the truth is that the real and very law-abiding American gun culture is much larger and more diverse than they like to report.

First and foremost, the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution recognizes the right to keep and bear arms of all law-abiding citizens; indeed, according to Pew Research, at least one-third of adults exercise this right. A Gallup poll conducted last October found that 44% of Americans say there is a gun in their household and that 30% say they personally own a gun. And, as many have argued in the pages of *America's 1st Freedom*, these numbers are likely low because it seems probable that quite a few gun owners would decline to tell some stranger calling that they own a gun or have one in their home.

Meanwhile, last October, a Gallup survey also found that 64% of people said that having a gun in their home made them safer—this, despite the fact that gun-control groups and many in the media have been falsely claiming for decades now that guns in the home make people less safe.

Despite the media spin, what the millions of new gun owners since 2020 are finding is that the lawful firearm community is incredibly open and diverse.

So, let's take a deep dive into gun making, selling and use across this diverse swath of the American population to see what is really happening in America.

Figures recently released by the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) "guesstimate" that American civilians own roughly 422.9 million firearms—or about 1.2 guns per person. Handguns now comprise the majority of purchases—about 57%, according to the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF). While ammunition sales are a little more complicated to estimate per capita, the ATF asserts that in 2022, the gun sector produced 8.1 billion rounds of ammunition.

That's a lot of Americans exercising their rights by owning and

44%

of Americans say there is a gun in their household

shooting a lot of guns. And these citizens belong to a wide range of age groups and ethnicities and live in every state and city. Such diversification became even more pronounced amid the COVID pandemic and the unrest in 2020 when millions bought their first guns.

Many of the new gun owners are women; for example, the Well

Armed Woman, a coalition of female gun owners, has expanded to 300 chapters across 43 states with more than 20,000 members. For most women, possessing a firearm comes down primarily to self-protection.

Regan Wolfe, a young professional from Tennessee, is just one of many women who recently acquired her first gun, a Smith & Wesson .380.

"It is empowering. I go out of town often with my friends on road trips to different places. It is usually just me and a girlfriend," she said. "We are all in our twenties, and I wanted to feel safer knowing that if I got a flat tire or ended up in a bad part of town, I have something to protect myself with."

Her sister Rachel, younger by two years, also purchased her first firearm at the same time. As a university student, Rachel pointed to the increasing threats on campus. She emphatically stated she no longer wants to feel like a "sitting duck" waiting for a criminal to target her or some group she is in. The sisters and their cousin took training classes and vowed to do whatever it took to keep themselves safe.

Texas native Kat Joel-Reich knows firsthand what it is to be rendered helpless. One day in 2014, just after 3 a.m., she and her husband, both in their 60s at the time, were the victims of a home invasion and assault.

"Our door was broken down, and my husband was brutally assaulted while I hid in the house making the 911 call," she said. "At that time, I did not believe you needed a firearm unless you were military or police. So, we didn't have any guns in the house. Lucky for us, our 911 response time was six minutes in total. The police arrived and saved the day. But it is not always as quick as six minutes, and those six minutes seemed like forever. It was brutal."

A week later, Kat took her first class in self-defense with a firearm and never looked back.

The firearms community has also expanded in recent years to include many more black Americans who have grown tired of the soft-on-crime policies implemented by many Left-leaning officials. In 2020, black Americans purchased firearms at a 58% higher rate than in 2019, according to data from the NSSF. Yet even before such a clamorous year, many were already turning toward legal gun possession. In 2015, black American gun-enthusiast Philip Smith founded the National African American Gun Association. Each new member learns about the extensive history of gun ownership in the black community.

It is often lost in public literature that the Second Amendment was pivotal during the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. This constitutional right, which is colorblind, enabled many black Americans, especially in the rural South, to defend themselves, their families, their neighbors and their broader communities. Now, there are chapters, often multiple, of the National African American Gun Association in almost every state and even in the District of Columbia, totaling more than 120 chapters that have more than 48,000 members. That marks a sharp rise from 2019, when there were 30,000 members and 75 chapters.

In particular, black American women have recently emerged as one of the fastest-growing groups of new owners. Nearly half of the new gun owners from the 2020 spike were women, and a fifth of those were black. And, as the Institute for Women's Policy Research points out, black women experience higher rates of domestic violence than other racial groups.

Jessica Royal, then Cothon, has experienced this firsthand. Her personal firearm saved her life. As a new mother trapped in an abusive relationship, the Nashville native quietly obtained her concealed-carry permit and prayed that she would never need to pull that trigger; however, the jarring worst-case scenario came two

days after Christmas in 2013.

"That night, he set out to kill me," said Jessica, remembering how her partner gripped his hands tight around her neck and how the room blurred and her life flashed before her eyes as her three young children slept nearby.

Despite the fog of painful memories, some moments remain crystal clear. Jessica screamed to her mother to call 911. But, even as she did, she knew it would take many minutes for law enforcement to arrive, and she saw something dif-



Various surveys show that almost half of new gun owners are women. Also, new gun owners are now much more likely to be Asian, black or Hispanic than they were just a few years ago.

ferent in her ex's intoxicated eyes that night, something she hadn't seen before.

"Something came over me. A question was running through my mind: What would my babies do without me?" said Jessica. "I knew I had to fight with everything I had."

Jessica stumbled to her feet and grabbed her handgun from a nearby drawer. As her partner stormed toward her, she pulled that trigger.

"It was like something out of the matrix; everything was just

floating," said Jessica. "I had gone into survival mode, but it was his life or mine. And I chose mine."

Jessica does not regret her decision. There is no guilt, she says, only immense appreciation for a renewed lease on life.

A December 2021 study published by the American College of Physicians also reported that roughly half of new firearms owners are women and half are a racial minority. Again, that is a massive shift from the "old white man" stereotype. Hispanic American purchases also rose by 49% and Asian American purchases rose by 42% in recent years, according to the NSSF.

Chris Cheng, a California-based Asian-American competitive shooter who won Season 4 of the History Channel's *Top Shot* show,



has long urged his fellow community members to purchase a firearm. Cheng also represents another minority concerned about backlash and safety. He came out as openly gay many years ago and now works to dispel the media myth about gun ownership only being for a certain type of person.

88%

of U.S. firearm owners view protection against crime as the primary reason for making such a purchase

“What has been particularly interesting to see is that many of my friends and acquaintances in ‘liberal anti-gun’ parts of the Bay Area have been considering and purchasing their first firearms,” he said.

Moreover, a report published in 2022 by the Statista Research Department documented that at least one in five Democrats own a minimum of one firearm and a further 31% reside in a household with a gun. While this is less than the roughly 48% of Republicans who own at least one gun and the 66% who live in a gun-owning home, it still shows the diversity of those who exercise their Second Amendment rights. There is even an official “Liberal Gun Club” with an ever-expanding 31 chapters across 35 states. Its mission is “to provide a pro-Second Amendment voice for left-of-center gun owners in the national conversations on firearms.”

The reasons why so many are exercising their Second Amendment rights have a relatively common denominator. A 2021 Gallup survey found that 88% of u.s. firearms owners view protection against crime as the primary reason for making such a purchase. A further 70% also see target shooting as a key reason, while 56% cited hunting.

American gun owners also contribute to the economy. The gun and ammunition industry pays more than \$7.85 billion in business taxes yearly, including property, income and sales-based levies; however, the NSSF emphasizes that the total economic impact of the firearm and ammunition industry in the u.s. reached \$70.52 billion in 2021, a 269% jump compared to \$19.1 billion in 2008.

In particular, hunters and recreational shooters contribute more than \$45 billion in wages and income to support nearly one million jobs and they spend over

\$90 billion every year on trips. Every time a recreational shooter or hunter purchases a gun, ammunition or related equipment, they must pay an 11% excise tax under the decades-old Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, which is commonly known as the Pittman-Robertson Act and is nearly 90 years old. These taxes have generated over \$14 billion since 1937, averaging some \$800



In a Gallup survey, 56% of gun owners cited hunting as one reason they own firearms. Millions of Americans still hunt for their own meat.

million annually in recent years.

According to Statista, there were around 15.9 million hunting-license holders in the u.s. in 2023, compared to 15.4 million the year before. There were nearly 39 million hunting licenses, tags, permits and stamps issued in the u.s. over the course of the past year. The revenue generated pays for the salaries of state agency employees who manage wildlife conversation and who help to keep wildlife viewing free and accessible to the public.

Without the voluntary conservation efforts of America’s hunting enthusiasts, the health of our

wildlife and the habitat they use would be very different.

Montana boasts the highest gun-ownership rate per capita, followed by Wyoming, West Virginia and Idaho. At the bottom of the list are Hawaii, New Jersey and Massachusetts.

But, regardless of one’s location, the gun-owning world has always been incredibly open and has long promoted the importance of solid training and safety. Thus, the number of training opportunities—whether tailored for beginners or the very experienced—is abundant across America. The NRA trains more than a million people in the u.s. annually and features a network of “more than 125,000 instructors, 8,000 coaches and 2,200 training counselors.” You can find many near you by going to NRAInstructors.org and typing in your zip code.

Finally, many of those who don’t currently own a firearm refuse to rule out the prospect of buying a gun for self-defense; for example, the Pew Research Center notes that almost half (42%) of Americans who don’t currently own a firearm “could imagine themselves as gun owners in the future.” The report also stated that “56% of black non-owners say they could see themselves owning a gun one day, compared with smaller shares of white (48%), Hispanic (40%) and Asian (38%) non-owners.”

While there is a lot of talk in the media these days about how Americans are “more divided than ever,” one thing is certain: the Second Amendment is a freedom issue that has the power to unite more than divide. The 100-million-plus u.s. citizens who exercise this natural right occupy a much broader spectrum of the country than many in the mainstream media and some politicians want the American public to know. ⑩