

THE Gun Owners

47 YEARS OF NO COMPROMISE – 1976-2023

GOA Brings Permitless Carry to 27 States

“Permitless carry would never have passed in Florida were it not for Gun Owners of America.”

— Florida Talk Show host Royce Bartlett, May 2023

by Erich Pratt

Two more states joined the Constitutional Carry Club this year!

Well, sort of.

Florida’s new permitless carry law applies to concealed, but not open carry. And while Nebraska’s law covers both forms of carry, it only applies to those who are over 20 years old.

Regardless of their deficiencies, Florida and Nebraska now bring the number of permitless carry states to 27.

And that’s something worth celebrating!

In Florida, residents know the battle in their state represented the culmination of a multi-year battle by GOA activists.

“Permitless carry would never have

passed in Florida were it not for Gun Owners of America,” said Royce Bartlett, a radio talk show host who frequently covers political issues in the Sunshine State.

“GOA is the no-nonsense, no-compromise organization that spends their every waking moment on the front lines of the fight for the right of the people to keep and bear arms. There’s simply no other pro-2A group out there that does what they do,” Bartlett said.

GOA on the ground in Florida

Gun Owners of America was the first pro-gun organization to push Constitutional Carry in the country. And to that

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GOA’s John Velleco (right) met with Florida Governor Ron DeSantis prior to his signing of the permitless carry bill, which was legislation GOA had been pushing for several years.

GOA Endorses Key Legislation to Arm Teachers, Save Lives

By Aidan Johnston

Are you tired of seeing the leftist media using heart wrenching tragedies to push gun bans, Red Flag gun confiscation, and Universal Background Checks?

Even before the facts of the tragic Nashville school murders were known, the Bloomberg-funded zealots were calling for the very gun controls that have failed to stop mass killings in several anti-gun states.

To combat this, GOA is working with a congressman who represents part of Nashville, Tennessee.

The solution to mass killings is simple: No school that has armed teachers has ever experienced a shooting, much

less a mass public shooting.¹

And that is why Gun Owners of America proudly endorses Rep. Andy Ogles’ TEACH Act—which would help school staff and parents carry firearms on school property to protect their children.

The TEACH Act, or H.R. 2991, stands for the “Teachers Empowered Against Classroom Harm Act.”

So-called “gun-free” zones endanger America’s children, and the anti-gun movement has nothing left to offer our students in terms of safety and security. Consider just some of the ridiculous proposals from around the country:

- Workplaces have adopted “run, hide and fight” with improvised weapons

policies.²

- At Oakland University, the American Association of University Professors and the school’s student government purchased what a local police chief supposedly believed would be the most effective self-defense weapons for a campus — over 3,500 hockey pucks!³
- And an Alabama school decided the best “weapons” to use, in the event of a mass shooting, would be to throw canned food at the perpetrator!⁴

GOA is not sitting idly by while the anti-gun Left leaves classrooms as soft targets for mass murderers. Because these proposed “solutions” are no solution at all!

Gun owners know that mass public shootings end when a good guy or gal with a gun shows up to stop a deranged

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Activists weaponize Endangered Species Act to oppose hunting grizzly bears

The grizzly bear debate may seem like an issue only impacting hunters' rights, but all Second Amendment advocates should be concerned. The Biden Administration has weaponized the regulatory process and continues to set precedent whereby unelected bureaucrats can take away not just hunting rights but traditional firearms rights.

By Mark Jones

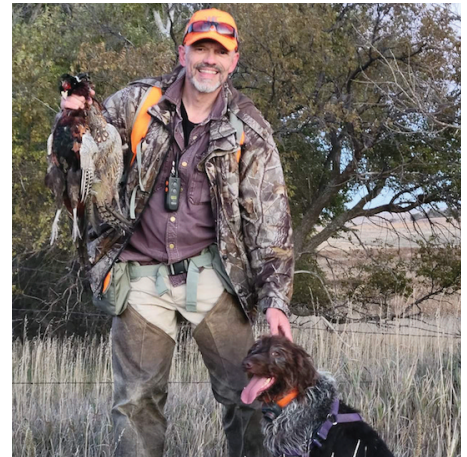
Despite several decades of rigorous research and crystal-clear data confirming their remarkable recovery, grizzly bears in the lower 48 states remain on the endangered species list.

This is thanks to the unscientific decisions of high-ranking government officials and activist judges reacting to the demands of animal rights activists who

oppose hunting. This decades long saga has continued despite the fact that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the federal agency charged with oversight of the list, and the three affected state fish and wildlife agencies (in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming) have repeatedly called for delisting based on scientific data.

Because opponents of delisting have

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Mark Jones is a certified wildlife biologist and the national director of hunter outreach for Gun Owners of America.

GOA Brings Permitless Carry to 27 States

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end, the gun rights group has been involved in every state where permitless carry has passed in this century.

In Florida over the past year, GOA has testified before the legislature ... hosted rallies ... delivered petitions ... generated massive media exposure ... and mobilized other right-leaning organizations.

After GOA Florida Director Luis Valdes met personally with Governor DeSantis, the resulting media coverage put intense pressure on the legislature to get the bill passed.

The fight started two and a half years ago when GOA's Valdes hit the ground running and called out the Republican Supermajority for their failure to pass any pro-gun legislation.

Through a coordinated effort of organizing grassroots activists to testify at the State Capitol, and a constant media barrage that was orchestrated by GOA, the issue never faded from the forefront.

GOA made permitless carry *the issue* for Governor Ron DeSantis, making it impossible for him to ignore. The legislature passed the legislation, and Gov. DeSantis signed it in late April.

But Florida's law is merely a half-step toward full Constitutional Carry, because there's still no legalized open carry. So GOA will continue to press for this in



GOA Florida Director Luis Valdes testified in favor of permitless carry legislation this year.

the next legislative session, in addition to working for a repeal of the under 21 purchase ban and a repeal of Florida's unconstitutional red flag law.

Cornhuskers Rally for Constitutional Carry

Nebraska Governor Jim Pillen (R) signed the GOA-backed permitless carry bill in April.

This law is true Constitutional Carry — as it protects both open and concealed carry without a permit.

However, like Florida's law, Nebraska's has a weakness, too. In this case, the permitless carry protections do not extend to young adults (18-20 year olds). These adults, who are legally allowed to possess handguns, will not be able to exercise their right to carry without a permit.

GOA's Rocky Mountain and Great Plains Regional Director Iain Graeme was on the ground in Nebraska, rallying

support for the bill.

"While not ideal, the new law is a solid first step," Graeme said. "The new law will make Nebraska communities more secure and enable Cornhuskers to exercise their constitutionally-protected rights without having to seek government permission first."

GOA reported earlier this year that two Nebraska Democrats broke with their party to support the Constitutional Carry bill.

According to the *Associated Press*, the two Nebraska Senators, who are black, opposed the existing concealed carry permit system because it "disproportionally affects people of color."

In doing so, Senators Justin Wayne and Terrell McKinney won kudos from many in the pro-gun community, such as Tom Knighton of *BearingArms.com*.

"Both Wayne and McKinney [are] right when they point out that gun control laws ... disproportionately impact black men," Knighton said.

"Criminals are already carrying guns without permits. They've been doing it for a very long time However, Nebraska's permitting requirements make it a challenge for law-abiding people to even get a permit."

This is one big benefit of Constitutional Carry. It levels the playing field for every decent citizen.

So at the end of May, 2023, the count stands at 27 permitless carry states. Only 23 more to go! ■

GOA Endorses Key Legislation to Arm Teachers, Save Lives

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murderer.

In 2021, the numbers show that 49.1% of all active shooters were stopped by armed civilians.⁵ Self-defense is the solution America is seeking.

If our elected officials are important enough to receive armed protection, then so should the children of this nation.

GOA-Backed Bill Helps Arm School Staff and Parents

It's long past time for schools who want to arm their teachers to be freed from unnecessary and unconstitutional bureaucratic red tape placed on their Second Amendment right to self-defense.

That is why GOA is working to eliminate that red tape — like the federal restriction blocking the Department of Education from helping train armed teachers.

Unfortunately, last year's anti-gun Cornyn-Murphy legislation explicitly prohibited Department of Education funding from being used to train teachers with "deadly weapons" — which we all know are the most effective self-defense tools.

This post-Uvalde gun control legislation that Biden signed does nothing to disarm future killers.

Even worse, this Cornyn-Murphy "compromise" turns schools into softer targets by making it harder for teachers to train with firearms.

The GOA-backed TEACH Act repeals the Cornyn-Murphy prohibition on helping teachers exercise their right to protect themselves and their classrooms.

Protecting Constitutional Carry

The GOA-backed school safety bill also modernizes the archaic *Gun Free School Zones Act of 1990* which is currently incompatible with Constitutional Carry.

With the passage of this GOA-backed bill, this law would no longer infringe on the rights of self-defenders who carry in one of the 27 states that recognize the constitutional right to carry a gun for self-defense without a permit.

To truly protect our schools, Congress also needs to prohibit the Department of Education from providing financial assistance to any anti-gun state or school that restricts the ability of self-defenders to carry firearms at schools. Concealed carry permit holders are extremely law abiding — with criminal conviction rates lower than that of police.⁶

Activists weaponize Endangered Species Act to oppose hunting grizzly bears

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politicized the intent of the Endangered Species Act and ignored scientific data, governors have stepped up and called for action. Multiple bills have been intro-

duced in Congress to return management authority over grizzly bears to the states.

These bears are one of the most intensively studied species in the U.S. In the lower 48 states, there are two main grizzly populations: the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, or GYE, and the Northern Continental Divide, or NCD. By all objective scientific measures, grizzly populations in the GYE have fully recov-

ered from "threatened" status on the list since 2003. Bears in the NCD also met and exceeded all recovery goals several years ago.

Research confirms that in the GYE in Wyoming, for example, an estimated 1,069 grizzlies roamed the demographic monitoring area in 2021. This area is defined by the Fish and Wildlife Service

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GOA has worked very closely with Rep. Andy Ogles (R-TN) in crafting and garnering support for H.R. 2991, a bill that will help arm willing teachers and staff in order to save children's lives.

Importantly, the TEACH Act protects the right to self-defense on school property. If a state or school wishes to receive Department of Education funding for any program, it will need to repeal any laws or policies that infringe on the right of teachers and school staff to keep and bear arms any further than current federal law — including TEACH Act's modernization of the *Gun Free School Zones Act* to respect Constitutional Carry.

Currently, 32 states allow staff to carry firearms to protect their schools and students.⁷ If Congress wants to "do something," it ought to support these programs.

So, the GOA-backed TEACH Act also creates a streamlined grant funding mechanism to assist these programs and any school that wishes to use them by reallocating the Secretary of Education's \$27.6 million personal slush fund. Let's use these funds to train teachers to protect our schools instead.

Congress would not be discussing these real solutions to preventing mass murder at our schools like arming willing teachers were it not for GOA's work to help introduce the TEACH Act and our grassroots activists forcing the conversation. That is something to be proud of!

The sooner Congress realizes the current "Gun Free" school zone policy has failed, the sooner this country can move forward with real solutions like the "Teachers Empowered Against Classroom Harm Act." ■

¹ Lott. "Schools that Allow Teachers to Carry Guns are Extremely Safe: Data on the Rate of Shootings and Accidents in Schools that allow Teachers to Carry." *Crime Prevention Research Center*. April 25th, 2019.

² Maxouris. "This university is arming students and faculty with hockey pucks in case of a shooting." *CNN*. November 28th, 2018.

³ *Ibid*.

⁴ Hetter. "Can canned goods stop school shooters?" *CNN*. January 14th, 2015.

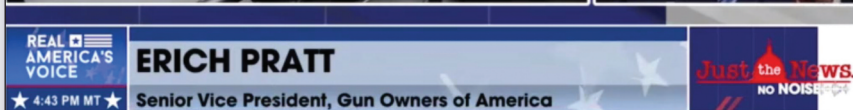
⁵ Colton. "FBI undercounts number of times armed citizens have thwarted active shooting incidents: report." *Fox News*. October 4th, 2022.

⁶ Lott. "Illinois: More evidence that concealed handgun permits holders are extremely law-abiding." *Crime Prevention Research Center*. June 18th, 2018.

⁷ Johnston. "30+ States Allow Armed Staff at School — And It Works." *Gun Owners of America*. 2023.



Gun Owners of America



GOA is opposing so-called "Assault Weapons" bans all around the country.

◀ Gun Owners Defeat Massive Gun Ban in Colorado

In April, hundreds of gun owners flooded a legislative committee hearing in Denver to register their disapproval with a proposed "Assault Weapons" ban. If passed into law, this bill would have outlawed 80% of commonly held arms within the Centennial State, based solely upon the guns' external features and the ability to accept standard capacity magazines.

The outpouring of opposition was overwhelming, especially for a blue state like Colorado. An unprecedented number of freedom-loving citizens showed up for a grueling 14-hour committee hearing and dominated the anti-gun opposition by a 6 to 1 margin.

Had gun owners not spoken out so loudly in opposition to this so-called "Assault Weapons" ban, residents would have had to register the vast majority of firearms within the state. Thankfully, gun owners showed up in significant numbers to oppose the infringements upon their liberties, and the petty tyrants were forced reconsider their sinister plans. Coloradans should be encouraged by this win but stay ever vigilant for the next battle.

▲ GOA Makes Progress Toward Repealing Illinois Gun Ban

Gun Owners of America secured a preliminary injunction in April against the Illinois "Assault Weapons" Ban and the standard-capacity magazine ban.

In his order, Judge Stephen McGlynn slammed some of the gun control laws in question, stating that the laws "seem to be written in spite of the clear directives in *Bruen* and *Heller*, not in conformity with them."

Unfortunately, a single judge from the US Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit stepped in to put a stay on the injunction, thus allowing the Illinois ban to remain in place pending appeal.

GOA's Senior Vice President Erich Pratt told Fox News that he predicts gun owners will have the last laugh, because this is "the same judge who wrote the foolish opinion which was overturned by the Supreme Court in *McDonald v. Chicago*."

Pratt insisted that, "We are fully invested in ensuring this law is defeated. And GOA will continue to fight until lower courts, executives, and lawmakers at all levels fall in line with the *Bruen* precedent."

GOA Launches 2A Defenders on College Campuses ▶

Did you know that GOA has a student group that focuses on educating college students about the text, history and tradition of their Second Amendment rights?

The college campus isn't just under attack by the anti-gun Left, they truly believe they own the turf. That's why programs like this which teach students that their rights are constitutionally-protected, and not government granted, are so important.

2A Defenders is GOA's college program, and Courtney Parker (pictured on the right) is the Director of Student Outreach. College students who would like to get information on starting a GOA-affiliated campus group can contact her at courtney.parker@gunowners.org.



America on the Frontlines



GOA Texas State Director Wes Virdell has led the grassroots mobilization in Texas, while walking the halls of the state capitol.

◀ GOA Members Slam Texas Reps for Breaking their Oath, as Gun Control Dies

In response to a shooting in a gun-free zone in Allen, Texas, the state legislature held a vote on raising the age to 21 to purchase a semi-auto rifle with a detachable magazine.

This bill to ban gun purchases for 18–20-year-olds would have done nothing to stop shootings by people intent on breaking the law and committing murder—especially given that the Allen murders were committed by a 33-year-old male with mental health issues.

Thanks to a quick response from GOA members across the state, the message was loud and clear that gun owners would not tolerate any infringement. The bill stalled, and the clock ran out for the bill to move forward.

Two Republican representatives, Sam Harless and Justin Holland, betrayed gun owners by voting for the bill in committee. Thanks in part to GOA's efforts, media reports indicate that grassroots gun owners have generated "intense pushback" for the betrayal.

GOA Rallies Gun Owners to the Texas Capitol ▶

In April, Gun Owners of America held their Texas G.O.L.D. (Gun Owners Lobby Day) at the State Capitol. The event began with Texas State Director Wes Virdell discussing GOA's accomplishments, as well as the history of the 2nd Amendment.

A panel of gun rights organizations also discussed current legislation and their plans for banning red flag gun confiscation laws, protecting Short-Barreled Rifles, and ensuring the right of young adults to purchase firearms.

The event closed out with Ted Nugent giving unfiltered truth about our rights and playing the National Anthem, as only Ted Nugent can!



Pictured with Ted Nugent (center) is GOA Texas Director Wes Virdell (left) and GOA Executive Vice President John Velleco.



◀ GOA Slam Dunks Gun Control in South Dakota!

Gun Owners of America put on the full court press in South Dakota to kill gun control legislation in February. GOA successfully mobilized the grassroots to oppose safe storage and Red Flag legislation in committee.

And Rocky Mountain and Great Plains Regional Director Iain Graeme (pictured here) testified in committee against the legislation.

GOA's testimony focused on highlighting our nation's First Principles and pointed out that such edicts are repugnant to the spirit of the laws that govern this Great Nation.

The battle in South Dakota was a tough fight due to strong opposition from the RINOs (Republicans in Name Only). However, due to the dedication of GOA members to the cause of liberty, we stopped this legislation dead in its tracks.

How GOA is Pushing Back Against the Billionaire Funded Anti-Gun Lobby

by Kailey Nieman

It is fascinating to see how manipulation tactics are used by the anti-gun lobby to trick the average American into thinking that there is some large grassroots movement to push gun control.

If you spoke to someone with anti-gun views, you'd probably hear stories about the boogeyman of the firearms industry and how that industry funnels millions upon millions of dollars from firearms corporations into politicians' pockets to push for less restrictions on firearms.

This simple-minded explanation couldn't be further from the truth. Major anti-gun organizations are funded by a small group of billionaire donors. Just take the "March for Our Lives" for example.

Founded during the aftermath of the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, March for Our Lives bills itself as a grassroots movement of young people working to restrict the average citizen's Second Amendment Rights. In reality, they're funded by about 36 wealthy donors.

According to March for Our Lives' tax documents, the group is funded almost entirely by large donations in excess of \$100,000. According to that same report, only 0.5% of donations came from people giving less than \$5,000.¹

Meanwhile, groups like Gun Owners of America rely mostly on small donations from regular individuals to operate. But until recently, those donations came directly from GOA members.

In April, GOA announced a partnership with Gearfire. For those not in the know, Gearfire is one of the largest point-of-sale system providers for gun ranges, gun shops, and firearms training facilities around the country.

The partnership allows patrons of firearms businesses to round up their purchases and donate the funds to GOA's Second Amendment Preservation Fund.

This is huge because gun stores and ranges are the lifeblood of the Second Amendment — and partnering with these outlets is helping fuel GOA's mission to protect people's Second Amendment rights.

The Gearfire partnership is an opportunity for average Americans to fight back against the billionaire class that wants to see them disarmed and the Second Amendment completely abolished.

Because of donations from average Americans, GOA can continue fighting on Capitol Hill — where we work with U.S. Senators and Congressmen to pass pro-gun legislation like the SHORT Act — and continue battling in the courts.

The Gearfire partnership isn't the only one that is helping fund GOA's fight against gun control. In February, Indiana-based Tippmann Arms debuted their Gun Owners of America themed M4-22 Elite rifle.

A portion of each sale will be donated to GOA's Second Amendment Preservation

Fund and aid in their fight against the draconian ATF Pistol Brace Rule, which will force Americans to register or destroy their 40 million braced firearms.

Likewise, Palmetto State Armory debuted its Sheepdog-15 series in March, which depicts GOA's Stephen Willeford image on the lower receiver. Willeford has been dubbed as the "Barefoot Defender" because of his role in using an AR-15 to stop an active shooter at a Texas church in 2017.

Similar to the Tippmann Arms deal, a portion of each Sheepdog-15 sale helps fund GOA's fight for 2A rights in the courts. ■

Kailey Nieman is GOA's Director of Development.

¹ www.gunowners.org/MarchForOurLivesTax

Support GOA's Legal Team!

When gun owners purchase either of these firearms below, a portion of each sale will go towards helping GOA fight for 2A rights in the courts. Gun owners can check out:

- ✓ The Tippmann M4-22 at gunowners.org/tippmann-goa
- ✓ The PSA Sheepdog-15 at gunowners.org/sheepdog-15



The M4-22 Elite rifle by Tippmann Arms displays a GOA logo on the receiver and is available at gunowners.org/tippmann-goa.



Palmetto State Armory is honoring GOA's Stephen Willeford for his brave defense of a Texas church and is offering the Sheepdog-15 receiver, which can be ordered at gunowners.org/sheepdog-15.

Activists weaponize Endangered Species Act to oppose hunting grizzly bears

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as suitable habitat for the long-term viability of the species. Yet the bears are routinely found up to 65 miles outside this range, which in turn bolsters the total number of bears in the ecosystem. Even more compelling, this total number far exceeds (by approximately double) all federal and state scientifically established requirements for a recovered and viable population.

Before joining Gun Owners of America, I spent three decades researching and managing game species at the state level — 10 of those years leading a state's black bear management program. Given my experience managing big game populations and having dealt with the interface between state and federal regulations and law, it's obvious to me that the grizzly bear debate boils down to one thing: The opponents of delisting are weaponizing the Endangered Species Act to ensure that these bears are permanently protected from hunting, something the law was never meant to do.

Delisting opponents and animal rights activists make unsubstantiated claims that states cannot manage grizzlies properly. They make excuses or ignore data that concretely confirm that grizzly populations have met and exceeded all state and federal recovery goals required under the law — for decades in some instances.

Most concerning, these delisting opponents ignore the fact that lethal grizzly control must now be implemented by taxpayer-funded government employees to maintain a balanced population and ensure public safety. In 2021 in Wyoming alone, 29 grizzlies were lethally removed by government officials. Most of these removals occurred outside the demographic monitoring area, again demonstrating that grizzly populations are thriving and expanding.

If delisted, the need for taxpayer-funded lethal removal would greatly diminish, as hunters would serve as the primary means of population control under state management plans, just as they do right now in Alaska and parts of Canada. Hunters, who actually serve as the largest contributors to wildlife conservation every year in the United States, would pay handsomely for the once-in-a-

lifetime opportunity to hunt grizzlies, generating significant revenue for the affected states in the process.

Wyoming, Montana and Idaho have long-term management plans in place to ensure grizzlies do not need to be relisted, and they've already proved that their management practices work. Look at how they've managed wolves since they were delisted a decade ago, or their successful management of other big game species such as bighorn sheep, moose, mountain lions and black bears. All of those populations have thrived, with hunters playing a major role in those efforts.

Since grizzly bears met and greatly exceeded all federal and state population recovery goals 20 years ago, continued management under the Endangered Species Act wastes taxpayer money, negatively impacts the economies of the affected states, cheapens the intent and purpose of the law, and robs the nation's hunters of an opportunity to play a major role in grizzly bear conservation.

We should be celebrating the grizzly recovery story and not trying to use the Endangered Species Act to promote an anti-hunting political agenda. ■

This article first appeared in The Washington Times on April 17, 2023.

Standing Your Ground Is A Constitutional Right

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elaborated that “[s]elf-defense is a basic right, recognized by many legal systems from ancient times to the present day, and ... individual self-defense is ‘the central component’ of the Second Amendment right.” Bruen bolstered this holding and expanded its scope by cementing the right of citizens to carry arms for self-defense in public, as “confrontation can surely take place outside the home.”

Additionally, while *Heller*, *McDonald*, and *Bruen* mark the beginnings of a modern renaissance in self-defense rights, one of the most compelling arguments for a constitutional right to stand one's ground is found in a case from 1895. In *Beard v. United States*, the Supreme Court reversed a manslaughter conviction resulting from a confrontation that took place on the defendant's property in Arkansas. The court took issue with one of the trial court's jury instructions, which had provided “that if the accused could have saved his own life and avoided taking the life of [the decedent] by retreating from and getting out of the way of the latter as he advanced upon him, the law made it his duty to do so; and if he did not, when it was in his power to do so without putting his own life or body in imminent peril, he was guilty of manslaughter.”

Here the Supreme Court rejected that notion because the

defendant had been in a place “where he had a right to be.” The justices explained that the proper “question for the jury was whether, without fleeing from his adversary,” the defendant was otherwise justified in using deadly force in self-defense. Regarding the duty to retreat in this case, the court put it simply: “We cannot give our assent to this doctrine.”

Here, by rejecting the imposition of a “duty to retreat” and focusing on the fact that the “defendant was where he had the right to be,” the court created a broad precedent acknowledging the right to stand your ground. They supplemented the concept with evidence from a multijurisdictional survey of self-defense law, reviewing precedents from state supreme courts in Ohio and Indiana, and treatises on both English and American common law.

It's a disgrace that a bodega worker or Kyle Rittenhouse faced aggressive prosecution merely for defending themselves in public because of “duty to retreat” statutes. Shame on Martha Raddatz for failing to call out the complete and utter lies from the Giffords anti-gun activist. Allowing her to present a completely false historical analysis of the inherent right to self-defense on a national stage was gross malpractice.

With the recent resurgence in federal protections for Second Amendment rights, it's high time to underscore that there is indeed a constitutional right to stand one's ground — a protection that applies to situations in one's home and in public. ■

This article first appeared in The Federalist on April 25, 2023.



Standing Your Ground Is A Constitutional Right

By John Velleco

There's a problem in our society when people face prosecution for defending themselves in public, and when a major network props up an anti-gun activist on

Sunday morning television to ridicule the basic right to self-defense with lies and rhetoric, the underlying issue and our rights at large as Americans face even greater peril.

Unfortunately, that scenario is exactly what America got in April when ABC's Martha Raddatz held a discussion with a Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence attorney on "stand your ground" laws, in which the so-called expert blatantly lied on the air claiming these statutes and precedents "upend centuries of common law on self-defense and allow people to carry guns outside of the home ..." This is utter nonsense.

Instead, while she briefly alluded to it on air, this so-called "expert on state gun laws" clearly is a supporter of the ludicrous "duty to retreat" laws that many leftist states still maintain. Despite the recent reinforcement of the inherent right to self-defense in *New York State Rifle and Pistol Association v. Bruen*, these statutes, as their names suggest, require citizens, when faced with a seemingly life-threatening situation, to determine whether they can refrain from the use of deadly force by essentially running away. Further, a citizen who uses deadly force — even when threatened — could lose a claim to self-defense and potentially be charged with a crime, up to and including homicide, if it's determined that a "retreat" should have been made.

In a constitutional republic that reveres and is structured to safeguard innate freedoms, including the right to self-defense, it is an abomination that a law-abiding citizen should be required to exhaust virtually all other options before defending himself. "Duty to retreat" not only costs precious seconds, but it also further emboldens violent criminals and can endanger additional lives.

An analysis of state statutes and case law reveals that,

when discussing the defense of oneself inside the home, some variety of "castle doctrine" can almost always be claimed. This concept requires no duty to retreat, as it reaffirms that one's home is his castle, and a person need not retreat to the furthest wall before defending self and family.

In public spaces, however, castle doctrine does not apply. Fortunately, most states have either judicially recognized or statutorily codified a legal doctrine known as "stand your ground." This doctrine posits that citizens in public spaces are not required to assess whether they can make a safe retreat before employing deadly force in self-defense. Keep in mind that, in all situations, self-defense must always be measured and justified. Stand your ground is not a general license to use deadly force in public. A citizen must reasonably fear imminent death or great bodily injury.

Twelve states still treat the right to self-defense with more skepticism merely if it occurs outside on the street rather than in one's own home. This is a serious matter, and quite possibly the next major Second Amendment question the Supreme Court will address. Gun Owners of America and the Gun Owners Foundation both contend that historical context and Supreme Court precedent are overwhelmingly on their side, which suggests an imminent end to "duty to retreat" mandates.

First, the Second Amendment's protections predate even the Bill of Rights. The moral basis for its provisions were drawn from the biblical right to defend oneself and others against harm. This principle was increasingly recognized and applied in England in the 18th century. For example, Sir William Blackstone's "Commentaries on the Laws of England," first published in 1765, plainly explained that, when one is "forcibly attacked in his person or property, it is lawful for him to repel force by force."

Moreover, the 2008 case *District of Columbia v. Heller* clearly affirmed the centrality of the "inherent" right of self-defense to the Second Amendment. Two years later, in *McDonald v. City of Chicago*, the Supreme Court further

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THE Gun Owners

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