

My name is Carl Lavell and I have been a lifelong resident of Minnesota. I wanted to take a moment to provide my thoughts and concerns with gun control generally, and specifically with the currently proposed bills HF14, HF15, HF 396, and HF 601.

Gun control is the low hanging fruit of the gun violence debate. It is the frustrating yet predictable cop out by politicians who are unwilling or incapable of addressing the root causes of gun violence. Among those root causes are: drug and alcohol abuse, domestic abuse, poverty, racial inequality, broken homes, lax sentencing for repeat offenders, isolation, and mental health issues. It is easier to pass a new law or regulation with a bare majority, than it is to do the hard work that would make a real difference. "But we already have initiatives to try and address those issues", I hear you exclaim. Then your current solutions to those problems are inadequate; you have to do more.

Gun control is also rooted in racism. Gun control in the US can be traced back to the end of the Civil War. Southern States enacted Black Codes, laws to prevent newly freed slaves from owning firearms and protecting themselves. These laws soon spread north along with the African American population. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. himself applied for a concealed carry permit after his home was firebombed in 1956. His permit was denied because he was deemed "unsuitable". Gun control today is still racist, disproportionately affecting African Americans and preventing them from exercising their god given, constitutionally protected right to keep and bear arms. Gun rights are women's rights, LGBTQ rights, and minority rights.

Think to yourself, will Universal Background Checks aka Universal Gun Registration (HF14) help a young man growing up in Minneapolis know his absent father? Will Red Flag Gun Confiscation Orders (HF15) help someone who is one missed pay-check away from living on the street? Will Safe Storage Laws (HF 396) do anything to help the battered wife defend herself from her abusive husband? Will mandatory reporting of lost and stolen firearms (HF 601) cause a repeat offender to rethink committing yet another crime? The answer to all of those questions is no.

HF14, Universal Background Checks, is nothing more than the transparent preamble to confiscation. It is a tactic used by virtually every dictator in history. Criminals will not register their firearms, even with the weak threat of a misdemeanor charge. Registration does nothing to prevent a crime, and is only another lever to make lawful gun ownership increasingly difficult and expensive. I can only imagine how differently the first days and weeks of the war in Ukraine would have played out, had the Ukrainian people been disarmed as the MN DFL is driving towards. From President Trump's targeting of DACA recipients, to President's Obama looking the other way when the IRS targeted the tax-exempt statuses of conservative organizations, to the DOJ under President Biden targeting parents at School Board

meetings, government has proven they cannot be trusted with "lists".

HF15, Red Flag Gun Confiscation Orders, Red Flag laws are insultingly un-American. Even the ACLU opposes them due to their disregard for due process. HF15 would provide every vindictive ex-lover or political activist a means to strip someone of their constitutional rights. This would be inconceivable if applied to any other constitutional right, such as Freedom of the Press, Freedom of Religion, or Freedom of Speech. It is a disdain reserved specifically for the Second Amendment.

HF 396, regarding Safe Storage requirements, is useless as proposed. Allow me to explain. It is already a federal crime to allow any child or prohibited person from accessing your firearm, so the law is redundant. It is also completely unenforceable. For example, the Minneapolis Police Department can't even prevent crimes done out in the open such as prostitution, drug sales, and vandalism. Yet we're supposed to believe they have the time and resources to go door to door and scour peoples' homes to ensure they have their firearms locked up? It is the definitive example of an unreasonable search. By all means, I believe in and would happily advocate for safe storage. Put out PSA's, create tax incentives for purchasing gun safes, give them away to folks who can't afford them. But don't waste time and tax payer dollars pretending that a mandate would accomplish anything.

Finally we get to HF601, regarding the mandatory reporting of lost & stolen firearms. This is the gun control equivalent of "she shouldn't have worn that dress". It punishes the victim of a loss or theft while doing nothing to deter the thief. What exactly do you do with this information? Let say someone steals a lawfully owned firearm in Minneapolis. Are MPD officers going to fan out across the city, search inside every car trunk and under every park bench, not resting until they find that one missing weapon? Of course not. The only reason this has been proposed is to openly declare you will punish the victim, to deter lawful gun ownership with the threat of open-ended liability for any crimes committed with their lost or stolen property.

Minnesotans are sick and tired of gun violence; we can all agree on that. But we will never solve this problem if we continue to ignore the root causes, and waste time and tax payer dollars trying to ram through the same failed gun control policies. You instead need to redouble your efforts to address drug and alcohol abuse, domestic abuse, poverty, racial inequality, broken homes, lax sentencing for repeat offenders, isolation, and mental health issues. You'll help a lot of people who need it, and dramatically reduce gun violence in passing. Everyone wins.