

General Gun Rights Talking Points

Defensive gun use stories (& “How can you support people having AK-47 or AR-15?”):

- I'm glad Stephen Willeford had his AR-15 and was able to shoot the Sutherland Springs attacker
- I'm glad a 20-year-old in Houston used his AK-47 to fend off 5 home intruders and stay alive. <https://abc13.com/5-shot-and-3-dead-after-home-invasion-in-east-houston/5097015/>
- Ask the Tulsa woman who used her handgun in April to kill an attacker who was literally on her back. <https://ktul.com/news/local/police-investigating-south-tulsa-shooting>
- Or the Arlington man who used his concealed handgun to kill a shooter who opened fire in a sports bar. <https://www.star-telegram.com/news/local/community/arlington/article148499769.html>
- Oklahoma 2020 headline: concealed permit holder kills alleged attacker and thwarts mass shooting. <https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2020/03/30/concealed-permit-holder-kills-alleged-attacker-and-thwarts-mass-shooting/>
- More stories / current news stories: <https://www.thetruthaboutguns.com/category/defensivegunuseoftheday/> and <https://www.facebook.com/ArmedCitizensFightBack/>

Stats and sources:

Defensive gun use — study ordered by Obama / CDC <https://www.nap.edu/read/18319/chapter/3#16>:

“Defensive use of guns by crime victims is a common occurrence.”

“Almost all national survey estimates indicate that defensive gun uses by victims are at least as common as offensive uses by criminals, with **estimates of annual [defensive gun] uses ranging from about 500,000 to more than 3 million, in the context of about 300,000 violent crimes involving firearms in 2008.**”

“consistently lower injury rates among gun-using crime victims compared with victims who used other self-protective strategies....”

Homicide rates in homes with guns: See <https://www.justfacts.com/guncontrol.fourexamples.asp#times> to debunk the lie of 3x more likely for homicide in homes with guns (correlation doesn't equal causation; other factors are at play)

U.S. murder rates / gun ownership: www.justfactsdaily.com/five-fallacies-about-guns-and-violence/ and <https://www.justfacts.com/guncontrol.fourexamples.asp> (see #2)

Suicides: Study in 2005 by the National Academies of Science: “*Some gun control policies may reduce the number of gun suicides, but they have **not yet been shown to reduce the overall risk of suicide in any population.***” <https://www.nap.edu/read/10881/chapter/9#192>

Gun-free zones: 94% of mass shootings from 1950 through June 2019 happened in “gun-free” zones — places where citizens couldn't legally carry guns <http://bit.ly/2NmzYI8>

General gun ownership & use data with citations: <https://www.justfacts.com/guncontrol.asp>

Racist roots of weapons laws:

- New York's ban on gravity knives (recently repealed) was used to target minorities. 80-85% of people arrested were minorities. <http://pappalardolaw.com/2019/06/gravity-knives-legal-in-ny/>
- Texas' first gun-ban law was passed during Reconstruction. It said you can't carry a handgun outside your property. It applied unequally, targeting blacks. It also targeted blacks in a similar manner to voting literacy tests: blacks were more likely to have handguns; whites had long guns.
- Today, my black and brown friends tell me they are still looked at differently when they walk into a gun store or carry a gun peacefully. Any type of red flag law would certainly be used against our minorities and immigrants from other countries.
- Clayton Cramer, *Racist Roots of Gun Control*. www.constitution.org/cmt/cramer/racist_roots.htm
- David Babat. *Discriminatory History of Gun Control*. digitalcommons.uri.edu/srhonorsprog/140/

*"In its earliest forms, **gun control existed to keep firearms out of the hands of African-Americans, especially free blacks, who were a perceived threat to white supremacy.** As wide spread immigration into the United States began, people in established positions of power started to feel threatened by these new groups and took measures to keep firearms out of the hands of immigrants. . . . Many attempts to control guns result in **a disproportionate burden on the poorest and most vulnerable people in our society with no proven benefit to the surrounding community.**"*

- David Kopel & Joseph Greenlee. "The Racist Origins of Gun Control Laws." (2017) <https://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/civil-rights/347324-the-racist-origin-of-gun-control-laws>
- "First to ban open carry, Texas could be one of last to OK it." Houston Chronicle. (2014) <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/politics/texas/article/First-to-ban-open-carry-Texas-could-be-one-of-5974401.php>
- *Watson v. Stone*, 148 Fla. 516, 524, 4 So. 2d 700, 703 (1941) — This case relates to a Florida handgun ban similar to Texas' handgun ban. Here, a white man was convicted of carrying a handgun illegally; the Florida Supreme Court overturned the conviction. Judge Buford wrote a concurring opinion that included this statement:

*"I know something of the history of this legislation. The original Act of 1893 was passed when there was a great influx of negro laborers in this State drawn here for the purpose of working in turpentine and lumber camps. . . . **The statute was never intended to be applied to the white population and in practice has never been so applied.**"*

Terminology issues:

Often, gun control activists use certain terms to try to make their side sound more appealing. Point this out and show the truth. Here are some examples:

- "Gun violence:" This is mis-identifying the problem. I've never met a violent gun. I've met violent people. I've seen guns be used by evil people for harm, or — much more often, by peaceful people for good.
- "Assault Weapons:" What makes it an assault weapon? If I throw my phone at you does it become an assault phone? If the gun is wood (not black) does that fix your problem?
 - I think what you're talking about is a misnomer you've created that identifies a gun that adjusts to fit a person — like a driver's seat goes forward and backward to fit people of different heights.

- Assault is a verb, not an adjective. It's an action, not a mechanical feature of a gun.
- Every day, guns are used many more times to save and protect than to inflict harm to innocent people. Even extremely low-end estimates still say guns are used at least 150-200 times a day for self-defense. This use includes the weapons commonly mislabeled "assault weapons." Therefore, if you must use an adjective, it would be more apt to call them "weapons of peace and safety."
- "Automatic" or "Semi-automatic:" Let's be sure we know what we're talking about. Automatic weapons are heavily regulated already and you can't just go into a store and buy them. Semi-automatic firearms are probably what you're talking about. A semi-automatic firearm means that after you pull the trigger and the bullet goes forward, the gases make the slide go backward and get rid of the empty brass casing without you having to push a bolt or something else to make that happen. Then it chambers another round. But you still have to pull the trigger again to make another shot go forward. "Semi-automatic" is simply a term identifying the type of action inside of a gun — or, the mechanical function that prepares a bullet to be shot. There are many other action types as well, such as lever action, bolt action, pump action, and revolvers.

How can you support someone having a 100-round drum magazine / large capacity magazine?

- Unlike you and me, Suzanna Gratia Hupp actually lived through a mass shooting. She watched the shooter change his magazines. She says *it would not have mattered* if he'd had 1-round magazines or 100-round magazines. <https://youtu.be/FgrlsuO5PLc?t=85>
- Where are you going to draw the line? 50 rounds? 30 rounds? 12, 10, 8, 3?

General answers for gun control issues:

- Gun control would not have stopped the shooter. Mass shooters get their guns illegally (stealing, stealing from cops, etc.) or legally (passed all background checks, wouldn't have had any red flags).
 - <https://gunowners.org/goa-to-congress-ten-times-red-flag-gun-confiscation-orders-would-have-not-prevented-mass-shootings/>
 - <https://gunowners.org/the-massive-failure-of-the-nics-and-universal-background-checks/>
- Gun control is a feel-good measure that they tell you will keep you safe. But in reality, your legislators can't guarantee your safety because they can't control the actions of criminals. What they can do is empower you to protect yourself instead of making you more vulnerable.
- Criminals don't follow the law. I've never seen a mass murderer say, "Aww dammit, I wanted to go shoot up this school but there's a sign that says 'no guns' — or, 'I haven't gotten my license to carry yet'." Laws such as permit requirements or "gun-free" zones only hurt law-abiding who'd want to protect themselves but won't break the law.
- Metal detectors: it's not hard to sneak guns or other weapons past a metal detector. Or, a shooter can shoot through it. Also, it creates a bottleneck of people like sitting ducks.
- Gates, fences, other barriers: The Odessa shooter was contained inside a walled enclosure. Law enforcement shut the gates. He just got in a car and drove through the wall and continued his rampage. These types of barriers may deter some actors, but cannot stop those intent on evil.
- Red Flag: These laws hurt the vulnerable and kill the innocent.
 - A cheating husband in CA used his state's red flag law to get authorities to take away his wife's Glock.
 - Cops killed Gary Willis when they came for his gun under a red flag law <https://gunowners.org/md-police-kill-armed-man-in-his-own-home-during-red-flag-law-gun-confiscation/>

Our points:

Try to communicate these overarching general concepts in any testimony, interview, or conversation, in addition to using specific talking points to address specific issues.

- Armed civilians save lives.
- In a worst-case scenario, carrying a gun gives you a fighting chance at saving your own life.
- Let's value life enough to stop making policy decisions out of fear, and actually use reason. (In other words, legislation must be crafted with the understanding that criminals won't follow the law; law-abiding citizens will, and gun control laws keep them from defending themselves.)
- Stop talking about the murderers and give more airtime to the heroes who use guns as an instrument of peace to save lives.

Tips on Communication:

There are many barriers to communication. When we have conversations (in person or online) with others, let's be sure that we are not creating more barriers than necessary by the way we interact. Here are a few tips:

- **The other person is not the enemy.** Their gun control ideas are the enemy; they are simply a friend that you have not yet won over.
- **Be clear.** If you're texting or writing comments on social media, re-read it before you post. Edit it so it says what you want it to more clearly.
- **Be specific.** For example, when you say "uphold our gun rights" or "the legislators need to do what they're supposed to" or "shall not be infringed" you know exactly what you mean. Others don't. If your goal is to actually communicate something, do the work and be specific about what you mean — such as explaining how a permit requirement is an infringement on a right.
- **Find common ground.** Most gun rights activists will have divergent opinions on at least some part of gun rights. That's ok — don't make it. Even the most rabid gun-grabber probably cares about their kids. Find the thing that you both care about. Find something you can agree on, even if it's not at all related to guns or politics.
- **When there seems to be a disagreement, pause.** If possible, re-read what you wrote and what the other person wrote. Try to see how what you wrote could mean something different than you intended. Try to see how what they wrote could mean something different than how you read it.
- **An armed society is a polite society.** Prove it. Love your haters. You can vehemently disagree with someone who is wrong but still be kind. You can show grace and kindness in your interaction without backing down one inch from your strong position. Be that person.
- **Don't make it about you.** If you have to get glory for your actions, or if you have to have everyone think you're right, you may want to reconsider being active in grassroots politics. But if you can work because you believe in the cause and because you know it's right, and ignore the slights and the naysayers, you will accomplish amazing things.

Activist Rules:

1. Show up
2. Be ready for anything
3. Be willing to work with anyone who shares a common mission.
4. There is no limit to how much you can accomplish if you don't care who gets the credit.