

## **Response to National Association for Gun Rights Candidate Survey by Lee McQueen, Independent, Arkansas, District 4**

### **1. A gun is a tool, not a status symbol.**

Much rather than "proud" gun owners, North America is in far greater need of responsible and accountable gun owners.

My family hails from rural Arkansas and therefore, had guns in the house used for hunting and home defense. Members of my family also enlisted in various branches of the U.S. military, received recognition for marksmanship, and are either still serving or are now decorated veterans.

For these reasons, we understand as a family that a gun is a tool, not a status symbol. Gun ownership is a responsibility that requires accountability.

For example, rural Arkansas regularly deals with a serious feral hog issue that has resulted in extensive damage to property, food and industrial crops, plus other wildlife due to over-population. In this instance, guns are required to address over-population of feral hogs in order to protect greater society.

I believe in the U.S. Constitution and the Second Amendment, which means that I believe in a "well-regulated militia" as a constitutional obligation. At present, our militia is not well-regulated due to constant harassment, intimidation, and veiled threats issued towards legislators and candidates for office by powerful gun lobbyists.

This failure of congressional duty has led to a society in which car and vehicle ownership and operation are more strictly regulated than gun ownership and operation.

### **2. Congress should restrict access to assault weapons and high capacity ammunition magazines.**

I believe in federal restrictions on military-style assault weapons, bump stocks, and high capacity or extended ammunition magazines. These machines are not acceptable for civilian use in sports, hunting, or home defense. These machines are designed specifically for the mass killing of humans, which is not an acceptable occupation for civilians.

A Quinnipiac poll finds that 61% of Americans support a nationwide ban on the sale of assault weapons. An NPR-Ipsos poll finds that 82% of Americans support a ban on bump stocks.

### **3. Congress should require universal background checks on all private gun sales.**

I believe in required, thorough, comprehensive pre-purchase background checks in all private sales including gun show and internet sales. Just as issuance of driver's licenses, car registration, and car insurance require inquiry into a person's background, so should gun purchase, possession, and operation.

The Washington Post reported in 2017 that “The FBI's background-check system is missing millions of records of criminal convictions, mental illness diagnoses and other flags that would keep guns out of potentially dangerous hands.” For instance, those convicted of domestic violence charges should not have access to firearms.

A Monmouth University poll finds that 83% of Americans support comprehensive background checks for all gun purchasers. A Quinnipiac poll finds that 97% of Americans support background checks for all gun buyers.

According to the Giffords Law Center, “A 2017 study estimated that 42% of US gun owners acquired their most recent firearm without a background check.”

We need to do much better than this.

Not everyone in society has been deemed "fit" to own and operate a car. Neither is everyone in society "fit" to own and operate a gun.

For the safety of everyone on our roads, highways, and interstates, car ownership and operation are regulated and compliance is frequently checked and enforced by proper authorities. Non-compliance with vehicle regulations often results in suspension or even revocation of privileges, again, for the greater good of society.

So should the same be for guns.

#### **4. People, certainly our nation's children, come before profits.**

I believe in single payer healthcare, which includes universal access to mental health therapy and drug addiction therapy plus other forms of counseling, free at the point of service, again, for the greater good of society.

I believe in restricting the use of our school systems as for-profit centers of pharmaceutical consumption, which has coincided with the rise of school shootings. Instead, I believe in increased funding for and use of teachers and counselors with the professional skills to manage classrooms, develop education curriculum, and address behavioral issues of children for best positive outcomes.

I believe these education professionals should receive the very best training via free college tuition so we have the very best guiding our nation's youth towards the brightest futures possible, rather than criminalizing our nation's youth into the school-to-private (for-profit) prison pipeline.

Arming teachers is not the solution. 58% of Americans oppose allowing teachers and school officials to carry guns on school grounds. However, increasing teacher and counselor pay to a professional level and requiring professional development in conflict resolution, may decrease unnecessary violent interactions.

Certainly, criminalizing students is not the solution, though developing curriculum that emphasizes peaceful resolution and diplomacy may also decrease unnecessary violent interactions.

The children of this nation must come before profits by the gun, pharmaceutical, and private for-profit prison industries. We must stop allowing this predation upon our children.

Civilized nations raise and nurture their youth.

Barbarian nations predate upon and devour their youth.

#### **5. Congress should increase legal age to buy a gun to 21.**

A CNN poll finds that 71% of Americans favor preventing people under the age of 21 from buying guns. A Quinnipiac poll finds that almost 78% of Americans support requiring people to be 21 years of age or older to purchase a gun.

Youths can enter military service at age 18. However, unlike civilian youth of the same age, military recruits receive thorough training on responsible and accountable possession, operation, and maintenance of firearms.

## **6. We need an "unbought and unbossed" Congress.**

75% of Americans think that Congress needs to do more to reduce gun violence.

Only 17% of Americans think that Congress is doing enough right now.

70% of Americans disapprove of how both Republicans and Democrats are handling the issue of gun violence. One party serves to obstruct, favoring the gun lobby over public safety and the greater good. The other party serves to undermine, using "say anything, but do nothing" as a guiding philosophy on public safety and the greater good.

It is time to elect an independent Congress that will act to protect the greater good of society.

As an independent candidate for Arkansas's District 4 House seat, I intend to be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

As an independent candidate running on a progressive platform, I have not and will not accept funding from the gun lobby, or any other lobby, for that matter. I accept only small dollar campaign donations from individuals rather than PACs, likely making me the only candidate for the District 4 House seat who remains "unbought and unbossed."

For this reason, I focus on what is best for greater society, children and families, rather than industries, corporations, PACs, and their lobbyists who have concluded that their profits come before human lives.

I, Lee McQueen, remain on the side of the children and families of Arkansas's District 4 who remain my highest priority.

Any responsible and accountable gun owner would agree.

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