

EXCLUSIVE: WAYNE LAPIERRE EXPLAINS HOW MASS SHOOTINGS THREATEN THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE.

On July 23, just three days after a self-styled “Joker” killed 12 movie-watchers in Aurora, Colorado, the National Rifle Association sent to its supporters in all states, including Colorado, a letter seeking contributions to help ensure the future of Second Amendment rights. Since the NRA has been criticized for the insensitivity of this letter, I have invited its author—Wayne Lapiere, Executive Vice President of the NRA—to explain it. He has done so as follows.

“You know, it never fails.

Every time people get shot and killed by some nutcase in this country, gun control fanatics start crying for new regulations.

Now don't get me wrong: the NRA cares when people get shot. Whether it's a dozen people killed and 58 injured in Aurora or six people killed just last Sunday at a Sikh temple in Milwaukee, we deeply and sincerely sympathize with the victims, with their families and friends, and with every community touched by these tragedies.

But we must never forget one simple thing. The worst thing about mass shootings is not that they kill or injure anyone, but that they revive the arguments for gun control.

Just consider what happened right after the Colorado shootup. Since the Joker ordered more than 6000 rounds of ammunition from online sites, one police commissioner--Charles H. Ramsey of Philadelphia—told ABC news that he didn't see why people should be able to buy ammunition on the internet. And since the Joker LEGALLY bought all the weapons he used in the shooting--an AR-15 assault rifle, a Remington 12-gauge shotgun, and two Glock .40 caliber handguns--the commissioner also said, "I don't know why people need to have assault weapons. There needs to be reasonable gun control put in place."

Reasonable gun control, commissioner? Is it reasonable to disarm the American people? Why do we need assault weapons in our gunshops and bullets on the internet? Simple. The world is a dangerous place. If just one of those moviegoers

had taken the simple precaution of bringing an assault rifle to the show, most of them would be alive and well today.

More to the point, gun rights are sacred. When will the gun-control fanatics of this land learn that nothing--absolutely nothing--is more precious to the American way of life than the constitutionally guaranteed right to bear arms? This is just one of the rights for which our forefathers fought and died. Since thousands of them gave their lives to gain these rights, why should we balk at sacrificing our own lives--and the lives of our children--to preserve them?

To justify gun regulation, nitpickers sometimes claim that the Second Amendment was drafted solely to make firearms legally available to "well-regulated militias." But the amendment plainly says that the right to bear arms "shall not be infringed." SHALL NOT BE INFRINGED. Nowhere does the amendment mandate background checks, gun locks, gun licenses, bans on assault rifles, or any of the zillion other handcuffs that gun regulators yearn to snap shut on us. And in 2008, in the case of DC vs. Heller, the Supreme Court clearly ruled that the second amendment gives individuals—not just governments—the right to own guns.

That's why I'm proud of the National Rifle Association, which never flinches in defending our absolute freedom to bear arms. Whenever gun control fanatics try to exploit episodes like the Aurora shooting, the NRA bravely holds its ground. It has thus taught both political parties to revere the rights of gun owners in this country and to resist the whining of crackpots like Mayor Michael Bloomberg of New York, who has not only been waging war against those rights but is even now badgering both of our presidential candidates to say what they would do to curb them. Fortunately, even while deploring this "unspeakable tragedy," as Romney has called the Aurora incident, both he and the president have the good sense to do nothing. "I don't happen to believe that America needs new gun laws," Romney has said. Even President Obama agrees. Though he is foolish enough to think that assault weapons should be banned, the White House has clearly indicated that it will propose no new gun legislation this year.

But since we know that the president would like to ban assault weapons, we must defeat him. If he wins, we will lose more on the election battlefield than our nation has lost in any battle, anytime, anywhere. But if he loses, we will win the greatest victory that freedom-loving Americans have ever seen.

For all of these reasons, we must now—more than ever-- resist the temptation to curb gun rights or give so much as an inch of ground to gun control fanatics. On the contrary, since the NRA has always led the fight against them, I sincerely hope that all freedom-loving Americans will open their hearts—and their credit cards—to our cause.”