

Let's Outlaw Semiautomatics

So the NRA wants Oshkosh taxpayers to spend over \$1 million a year, to put armed security guards in all our Oshkosh schools. Just so they can continue to parade around with semiautomatic weapons. How pathetic!

I'm a gun owner – a bolt action .30-30 rifle that I've used for deer hunting. With a bolt action rifle – the kind used in the Winter biathlon – after you fire a round, you take your hand off the trigger, and lift and pull back the bolt. This ejects the empty shell and moves the next round into place. Then you slide the bolt back forward, chambering the round, and pull the bolt down, locking the chamber. Then you can aim and fire again.

The whole process takes maybe ten to twenty seconds. That means that if your first shot missed, the deer may be running off before you can take another shot. So you must aim carefully, to make the first shot count. But that's no problem. Any real hunter can consistently bring down a deer with a single killing shot into the ribcage. If you need to take five or six shots, you're not a hunter, you're a hack.

Back when I hunted regularly, there was some schmuck to the West of me with a semiautomatic. I would hear his shots in quick succession – boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom. No one has the breath control and recoil control to accurately aim a rifle six times in under five seconds. So he was just scattering lead in a general direction, hoping to get lucky, more likely to fatally wound than to quickly kill. He probably wasn't relying on bladder control, either. What a doofus.

No real hunter needs a semiautomatic, nor does a skilled target shooter. But a mass murderer does. If he can't get off a shot except once every 15 seconds, a determined charge by three or four adults will bring him down. He may kill a few, but not as many. So why do we allow the ownership of guns only needed for mass murder?

Yes, banning them penalizes a lot of law abiding citizens. It would have penalized Mrs. Lanza. But we already penalize law abiding citizens, by not allowing them to own fully automatic weapons, or hand grenades, or RPGs, or SAMs, or all kinds of other armaments. We already penalize law abiding citizens, by not allowing them to carry guns or knives or large shampoo bottles onto airplanes. We already restrict ourselves in all kinds of ways, in the name of safety. Why not this way as well?

And don't give me some Second Amendment nonsense. Was it really the framers' intent, back in 1789, to guarantee everyone have access to weapons that didn't even exist back then? And if so, if a semiautomatic weapon is guaranteed, why not a tank? After all, if tanks are outlawed, only outlaws will have tanks. If SAMs are outlawed, only outlaws will have SAMs. If nuclear bombs are outlawed, only outlaws will have nuclear bombs.

Except they don't. Only the Armed forces have tanks and SAMs and nuclear bombs. If a ban on semiautomatic weapons were equally enforced, semiautomatics would become similarly rare. Yes, there might still be a few "bad men", in the NRA's words, with semiautomatics. But not many. Besides, only the stupid bad men use a gun to rob you, when a computer is safer and more effective.

But I'm not worried about those few bad men. I'm worried about the many good men who once in a long while do incredibly stupid things. Giving up semiautomatic weapons is an incredibly minor sacrifice, in the name of safety. Let's make that sacrifice, and limit what evils the good men can do, to let more of our children grow up to be good if imperfect men as well.