



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on April 9, 2018

Deerfield, Illinois, Passes “Assault Weapons” Ban Effective June 13

The unanimous approval by the Deerfield, Illinois, Village Board of Trustees of [a nearly complete ban](#) on all manner of loosely defined “assault weapons” last Monday night has made headline news. It has also generated at least two lawsuits complaining that the law, to become effective June 13, is unconstitutional under Illinois state law.



In addition, the ban has generated significant pushback from enraged citizens who are threatening to ignore the law if it becomes effective.

The *Chicago Tribune* explains the extent of the ban and its definition of an “assault weapon”:

In the Deerfield ordinance, the definition of an assault weapon includes, among others, semiautomatic rifles that have a fixed magazine with a capacity to accept more than 10 rounds of ammunition; shotguns with a revolving cylinder; and semiautomatic pistols and rifles that can accept large-capacity magazines and possess one of a list of other features. Among the dozens of specific models cited are the AR-15, AK-47 and Uzi, according to the ordinance.

The law, according to Mayor Harriet Rosenthal and the other trustees on the board, is intended to “increase the public’s sense of safety” notwithstanding “potential objections ... or the enforceability of such a ban.” In other words, the law is the worst kind of “feel good” legislation passed without regard for its potential unanticipated or unintended consequences. It was designed to placate an anti-gun student from Deerfield High School, one Ariella Kharasch who, after passage, told the trustees, “This is our fight. This is our generation’s fight, and we’re going to keep fighting. Thank you for being part of that.”

And then Kharasch added ominously, “If Highland Park, if Deerfield, if more towns say no to this type of weapon, maybe the state of Illinois says no. Maybe the federal government says no.”

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The chances that this nascent law is stillborn are between excellent and certain. The National Rifle Association (NRA) announced on Wednesday it would be financially and logistically supporting an Illinois-based pro-gun group, Guns Save Life, in its lawsuit to stop the law from going into effect. The next day the Second Amendment Foundation (SAF) announced it had already filed a lawsuit in the 19th Judicial Circuit Court in Lake County along with the Illinois State Rifle Association (ISRA). SAF’s Executive Vice President Alan Gottlieb explained:

We moved swiftly to challenge this gun ban because it flies in the face of state law. While the village is trying to disguise this as an amendment to an existing ordinance, it is, in fact, a new law that entirely bans possession of legally-owned semi-auto firearms, with no exception for guns previously owned, or any provision for self-defense.



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The new ordinance also provides for confiscation and destruction of such firearms and their original capacity magazines. What is particularly outrageous about this new law is that it levies fines of up to \$1,000 a day against anyone who refuses to turn in their gun and magazines or move them out of the village by the time the ordinance takes effect in June. This certainly puts the lie to claims by anti-gunners that “nobody is coming to take your guns.”

Locals pushed back as well. Joel Siegel, who lives in Lincolnwood, told residents that “there’s an ancient and honored American tradition called disobeying an unjust law.... I have urged [people] to listen to their consciences and if so moved not [to] obey this law.”

If that isn’t clear enough, Ray Starmann, founder and editor-in-chief of *US Defense Watch*, provided such clarity in an open letter he sent to the mayor and trustees:

Your actions are right out of a playbook that despots have used for centuries. It is called “disarm the population and then control them”....

A word of warning to the Deerfield Village Board of Trustees and the other local, state and federal government authorities.... Millions of gun owners in America will fight if necessary to preserve the Second Amendment....

Try and take that right away from us and watch Lexington and Concord 2.0s take place across the country.

Ray Starmann’s hyperbole aside, he has raised questions worth considering. What if those lawsuits fail and the Deerfield ordinance is allowed to stand? What would that small village’s culture look like if only police and criminals owned guns? Would Deerfield, Illinois — currently a quiet, low-crime village about 25 miles north of Chicago — become a magnet for criminals, knowing that its residents no longer had any means to defend themselves?

Just how would that law, if it were allowed to stand, be enforced? Let’s do some math: Deerfield’s population is just under 20,000 souls living in an estimated 6,420 households. If national averages apply, that means that there is likely at least one firearm in four out of every 10 households. The Deerfield Police Department has 40 total employees: officers, administrators, and secretaries. If tasked with confiscating weaponry from those who heard Starmann’s call and that of their own consciences, just how would that work out?

What would happen the first time a law-abiding gun owner decides to defend himself against a DPD officer seeking to confiscate his legally-owned firearms and one or both are killed in the confrontation? How willing would other members of the DPD be to go door-to-door (they are their neighbors, remember) seeking out those resisting the new ordinance?

Would the DPD call in the Lake County Sheriff’s Department? They have nearly 500 full-time officers (and 50 part-timers) but their territory is vastly larger. Deerfield occupies less than six square miles. Lake County encompasses 1,368 square miles. How likely would they be to respond to calls from the village to help with enforced confiscation of firearms there?

How would the mayor and the local DPD know where to look? Do they already know who owns the types of firearms affected by the ban? Would they just sort through the state registry of those holding FOID (Firearm Owners Identification cards that the state requires) and then proceed from there?

It’s one thing to pass a “feel good” law and think something substantial has been done in fighting criminal violence, reducing mass shootings, and keeping left-wing high-school students happy. It’s



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something else again to attempt to enforce such a draconian law in a country and in a culture that is growing increasingly wary of government overreach.

There is one more statistic to consider: The Three Percenters claim that only three percent of the population of the 13 colonies fought against British oppression. Three percent of 6,420 households in Deerfield is 192 households.

Do the mayor and the village's board of trustees really want to try to enforce their "feel good" law that they passed in order to "increase the public's sense of safety" on members of those households?

All good questions but, for the moment at least, theoretical ones. The courts will likely — hopefully — toss the ordinance into the trash bin of history well before it becomes law on June 13.

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