



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on March 1, 2018

Anti-gun Democrats Introduce Clinton-style Assault Weapons Ban

House Representative David Cicilline (D-R.I.) [introduced a bill](#) last week similar to the Clinton-era Federal Assault Weapons Ban but with even greater restrictions. So far 163 of the 193 House Democrats have signed on in support of the bill. Cicilline's rant against semi-automatic rifles is familiar:



Assault weapons were made for one purpose. They are designed to kill as many people as possible in a short period of time. They do not belong in our communities.

I am proud to introduce the Assault Weapons Ban with the support of leaders in law enforcement. It's on all of us to end this carnage.

Of course, if semi-automatic firearms were actually able to commit crimes without human assistance, then the ban would make sense. Who would want self-firing weapons walking around the neighborhood unrestricted? But that appears not to matter to Cicilline — who sports a F-minus rating from the National Rifle Association (NRA) and a Freedom Index (FI) rating of 26 percent from *The New American*, and who was a founding member of Mayors Against Illegal Guns while he was the mayor of Providence.

Such illogic also appeared in the words of Rep. Ted Deutch (D-Fla.), representing several counties including Broward where the Valentine's Day massacre took place) — with an FI of just 17 percent — as he announced he was supporting Cicilline's bill:

Americans don't own tanks or missiles; so why should our streets be flooded with weapons of war made for the sole purpose of killing people?

Americans who own the estimated 10 million semi-automatic rifles would likely disagree, noting that most mass shootings take place in gun free zones by crazed killers likely under the influence of mood-altering drugs and using handguns instead of rifles to commit the crimes.

But Cicilline has the support of Chuck Wexler, Executive Director of the anti-gun Police Executive Research Forum:

Assault weapons have no legitimate purpose on the streets of America. Their sole purpose is to enable shooters to rapidly kill large numbers of people, so it is no surprise that these high-power firearms have become the weapon of choice for mass killers.

In his announcement, Cicilline cobbled together phony statistics to claim that "there have been almost 8,300 incidents of gun violence so far in 2018. More than 2,200 Americans have lost their lives. More than 500 children have been killed or injured." Cicilline provided no source for such outrageous claims, and so Alex Hollings, a former Marine, provided it for his readers at SOFREP, a blog dedicated to informing special operations veterans:



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It seems likely ... that his numbers come from organizations like GunViolenceArchive.org ... though a quick perusal of their cited instances changes the context of the claim. That figure includes accidents, suicides, and ... self-defense.

Cicilline's bill prohibits the "sale, transfer, production and importation" of semi-automatic rifles and pistols that can hold a detachable magazine, as well as semi-automatic rifles with a magazine that can hold more than 10 rounds" of ammunition. Also to be banned would be semi-automatic shotguns, and magazines capable of holding more than 10 rounds of ammunition. His bill lists *205 specific firearms* that would be prohibited, including the AK-47 and the AR-15.

The unlamented Clinton-era assault weapons ban ended in 2004 despite efforts of Democrats to resurrect it. The primary argument used against its resurrection was simply that it didn't work: There are no substantive, credible studies that show that gun violence was in any way reduced after passage of the law in 1994.

For example, as Wikipedia points out, in 2003, the Task Force on Community Preventive Services, an independent, non-federal task force, examined an assortment of firearms laws, including the AWB [Assault Weapons Ban], and found "insufficient evidence to determine the effectiveness of any of the firearms laws reviewed for preventing violence." A 2004 critical review of firearms research by a National Research Council committee said that an academic study of the assault weapon ban "did not reveal any clear impacts on gun violence outcomes." The committee noted that the study's authors said the guns were used criminally with relative rarity before the ban and that its maximum potential effect on gun violence outcomes would be very small.

Other studies arrived at the same conclusion, and the proposed resurrection of the Clinton-era ban failed. On April 17, 2013, its restoration failed on a Senate vote of 40 to 60.

The real question is: Why would Cicilline offer up such a bill during an election year? Every member of the House is up for reelection in November, and their support for such a bill is a red-flag warning to pro-Second Amendment voters of just who their ideological enemies are. Do the House members supporting this legislation have a death wish regarding their political careers?

Even if the bill reached the House floor for a vote, and even if every Democrat has that same death wish and voted for it, it would still be 25 votes short of passage. That means that 25 Republicans would have to risk their political fortunes to vote for it. And then the Senate would have to weigh in on it, followed by Trump's signature. What are the chances for all that to happen?

Cicilline and friends must have very short memories. Following passage of the Clinton assault weapons ban, voters in the midterm elections in 1994 removed 8 Democrat senators and 54 Democrat representatives from office.

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