



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on May 18, 2018

Boulder, Colorado, Passes “Assault Weapons” Ban Unanimously

On Tuesday, the Boulder, Colorado, city council voted unanimously to outlaw possession of “assault weapons,” magazines containing more than 10 rounds, and “bump stocks,” while raising to age 21 those allowed to purchase whatever is left. Yesterday, Mountain States Legal Foundation (MSLF) [filed a lawsuit](#) in federal court. Said MSLF attorney Cody Wisniewski, “This ban is tantamount to Boulder attempting to stop drunk driving by banning Subarus. It accomplishes nothing other than making criminals of law-abiding citizens. “



The ban, which took effect immediately, forbids the sale or possession of semi-automatic rifles that look like military weapons — sporting features such as a pistol grip, a folding or telescoping stock, or a barrel shroud — along with “bump stocks” and magazines holding more than 10 rounds.

The ban, passed over numerous objections, was justified by two members of the city council in an article published days before they voted for it. Council members Sam Weaver and Bob Yates wrote that they were going to vote for the ban 1) “because it reflects the values of a majority of our community”; 2) “because it will make us incrementally safer”; and 3) “because it’s the right thing to do.”

These excuses should sound awfully familiar to readers of this website. On April 9, we reported on the unanimous approval of a nearly identical ban on “assault weapons” by the village board of trustees of Deerfield, Illinois. That ban was justified by the mayor on the basis that it would “increase the public’s sense of safety.” In other words, both bans are feel-good legislation that have nothing to do with logic, history, or provable effectiveness, but have everything to do with virtue-signaling and promotion of an anti-gun ideology.

Just as in Boulder, Deerfield’s ban is facing court challenges on various bases, including violations of the Second, Fourth, Fifth, and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

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The Boulder city council expanded on its reasoning behind the unanimous vote on the ban, claiming that just because a rifle is semiautomatic rather than fully automatic is no reason not to ban them: “The automatic firing mechanism [of a fully automatic rifle] does not present a significant increase in the lethality of the M-16 [used by the U.S. military up until recently] when compared to the [semi-automatic] AR-15.” After all, claimed the rationale, “The military trains its personnel to use repeated single shots, which are more accurate.”

And “bump stocks” are banned because, said the council, they “increase the weapon’s rate of fire.”

So does rate of fire matter, or not?

Inconsistency aside, neither of these claims have anything to do with the reality of mass shootings.



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According to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) on the criminal use of firearms, handguns were used in 19 times as many murders than rifles were in 2016. Handguns killed nine times as many victims as rifles, shotguns, and other guns combined.

This was the same result from a study in 2004 commissioned by the Department of Justice during a discussion of extending the 1994 Clinton ban on "assault" weapons. The study found that the ban didn't lead to any measurable decrease in gun crime. As Adam Winkler, a professor at the UCLA Law School noted in 2015, gun crime is "overwhelmingly handgun crime."

But these facts, coupled with the lawsuit they knew would be coming, failed to deter the Boulder city council from passing the ban. As Jacob Sullum, senior editor at *Reason* magazine, noted:

Laws like this one are always more about scapegoating and virtue signaling than protecting public safety. The gesture in this case is especially empty, not only because the ordinance does not extend beyond Boulder's borders but because it probably will never take effect.

Under Colorado law, "A local government may not enact an ordinance, regulation, or other law that prohibits the sale, purchase, or possession of a firearm that a person may lawfully sell, purchase, or possess under state or federal law."

Just as in Deerfield, Illinois, anti-gun council members in Boulder are wasting their time and taxpayers' monies in enacting an unenforceable ban on firearms.

The sad thing is, they don't care because facts, history, state law, and logic never entered into the decision to punish the innocent in their attempt to enforce their anti-gun ideology on their citizens.

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