



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on February 28, 2014

Connecticut Gun Confrontation Brewing Over Registration

Speculation about how the state of Connecticut would respond to the thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, of gun owners who failed to register their firearms by December 31 ended when the state police sent out this [January 2, 2014 letter](#) to all those who registered late, but who in the process gave the state sufficient information to brand them as criminals: name, address, description of weapon or magazine, and date of ownership:



Dear Sir/Madam:

We are returning your application for assault weapon certificate and/or large capacity magazine declaration because it was not received or postmarked prior to January 1, 2014 as required by law.

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As a result, you have the following options for your assault weapon ...

1. Render the assault weapon permanently inoperable;
2. Sell the assault weapon to a licensed gun dealer;
3. Remove the assault weapon from the state, or ...
4. Relinquish the assault weapon to a police department or to the [state's] Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection....

Sincerely,

Lt. Eric Cooke, Commanding Officer, Special Licensing and Firearms Unit

This was the consequence promised by Mike Lawlor, an undersecretary of Connecticut's Office of Policy and Management, who said: "Like anything else, people who violate the law face consequences." What Lawlor didn't make clear is what those consequences might be for those who ignore the letter from Cooke. What happens then? Is the state ready to amp up pressure on recalcitrants? What if such pressure moves recalcitrants into the category of resisters? Is this a game of chicken that Connecticut is willing to play?

Mike Vanderboegh doesn't think so. A blogger at the conservative Sipsy Street Irregulars, Vanderboegh [outlined possible consequences](#) facing Connecticut State Police officers if they are called into action against the newly minted felons who were innocent on December 31 and became criminals in the eyes of the state the next day. Vanderboegh, the founder of the Three Percent movement (a reference to the three percent of the population who, he says, fought the British during the American War for Independence), carefully crafted a 16,000-word e-mail and sent it to every one of the 1,200 members of the Connecticut State Police and the Department of Emergency Services warning of the consequences they could face if they follow orders from superiors to begin confiscating weapons from owners by force. Wrote Vanderboegh:



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Though this letter is certainly intended to deal with an uncomfortable subject, it is not a threat to anyone. However, it is important for everyone to understand that while we promise not to take the first shot over principle, we make no such promise if attacked, whether by common criminals or by the designated representatives of a criminal government grown arrogant and tyrannical and acting out an unconstitutional agenda under color of law.

Vanderboegh quoted at length from [a speech he made](#) on the capitol steps in Hartford on April 20, 2013, noting specifically that according to *American Jurisprudence*, the encyclopedia of American law, “an unconstitutional law is void,” and if a government tries to enforce such a law, there will be pushback from citizens. At the time, Vanderboegh told his audience:

No one thought the authorities of your state would pass laws making criminals out of the previously law-abiding — but they did.

If they catch you violating their unconstitutional laws, they will ... send armed men to work their will ... and people — innocent of any crime save the one these tyrants created — will die resisting them.

Vanderboegh tried repeatedly to clarify his intent. His warning was to those mostly likely tasked to do the enforcing:

This is all hypothetical, of course, based upon the tyrants’ appetites for these hitherto law-abiding citizens’ liberty, property and lives as well as upon your own willingness to enforce their unconstitutional diktat....

The first thing you have to realize is that the people you will be targeting do not view you as the enemy. Indeed, you are NOT the enemy, unless you choose to be one....

Thus, my kindly advice to you ... is to not go down that road. You are not the enemy of the people of Connecticut, not yet ... in the absence of a definitive U.S. Supreme Court decision, do you really want to risk not being able to draw your pension over some politician’s insatiable appetite for power?

This is no veiled threat, no matter how Vanderboegh phrases it. If police officers start shooting, some, a few, citizens are likely to shoot back. The conflagration could then spiral out of control. And that is the real threat.

According to some news reports, perhaps as many as 100,000 citizens in Connecticut are “out of compliance” with the new law. If just three percent of those are determined enough to stand their ground against door-to-door searches or other strategies to confiscate weapons, how will that resistance be met? Could it escalate? Could it spread? Could it turn neutrals into partisans? These are all questions that the Vanderboegh letter fails to address, but the risks are real. The consequences predicted by Lawlor and now being warned of by letters to brand new self-confessed felons who are out of compliance could be beyond imagining. It’s time for de-escalation, not escalation. Vanderboegh would certainly agree with that.

Update (Feb. 28, 2014 @ 12:10 p.m. EST): In response to concerns that the letter from the Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection quoted above might be a hoax, The New American called the department to confirm the accuracy of the letter. Lt. Vance of the Connecticut State Police confirmed that the letter is accurate in every respect and was sent out with the date of January 2, 2014.



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