



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on March 9, 2014

NRA Warns of Potential Breakdown of Law in Connecticut

The National Rifle Association's Institute for Legislative Action [published an update](#) March 8 about the controversy over Connecticut's new gun law. According to the NRA-ILA update, confusing answers to pointed questions about how the state will respond to gun owners who haven't registered their now-illegal "assault" weapons and magazines risk turning the rule of law in Connecticut into "tatters." The NRA tried to get straight answers from the Connecticut State Police (CSP) to rumors about the January 2, 2014 letter that was sent to gun owners applying too late to register their weapons:



Finally, after NRA personnel identified themselves as such and demanded to speak with high ranking officials, confronted these officials with the CSP's inconsistent answers, and insisted on knowing the truth, the CSP reversed course and admitted to NRA that the letter was authentic and that it had been sent to a number of individuals whose registration paperwork was received after the deadline.

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Nevertheless, the officials insisted it was not a warning of later confiscation but a "public service" to advise gun owners whose registrations were rejected of their options.

CSP's reported willingness to grant limited amnesty in some cases has added to the uncertainty as to how events may unfold:

Media reports also indicate that the CSP in some cases is willing to grant limited "amnesty" to persons who are believed to have completed the registration requirements prior to the deadline but whose paperwork was received late because of circumstances beyond the registrant's control.

We find none of this reassuring. Simply put, the rule of law has broken down in Connecticut and the [Gov. Dannel] Malloy administration's and CSP's credibility on this issue has been severely compromised.

In short, Connecticut's approach to this issue is a glaring example of arbitrary and capricious enforcement of what was bad public policy in the first place.

And of course, [calls for amnesty](#) for all gun owners now in violation of the state law have also added to the confusion.

Without a prompt and consistent response, Connecticut is in danger of alienating its citizens not only from the Malloy administration but from the security implied in the rule of law that restrains evil and allows for public order. If that confidence is breached, and the rule of law, in Connecticut or anywhere else, is compromised, the whole civilized fabric of society is threatened to unravel.



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The details of the January 2, 2014 letter were disclosed [here](#) along with the veiled threats made by Mike Vanderboegh in his long and carefully worded e-mail to every CSP official in the state. He quoted from a speech he made at the capitol in April 2013, when he told his audience:

If [state officials] 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 create — will die resisting them.

This was clearly a warning to members of the CSP that if they tried to enforce what Vanderboegh — and others — consider an unconstitutional law, there will be consequences:

Thus, my kindly advice to you [members of the CSP] ... is to not go down that road. You are not the enemy of the people of Connecticut, [at least] not yet.

The situation wasn't helped any with the continuing spread of a YouTube video of John Cinque back in April 2013 challenging state senators over their support of a law that would have done nothing to prevent the Sandy Hook shooting four months earlier. After getting a number of waffle responses from the bill's supporters, Cinque then said:

So I'm a thirty-year public servant, twenty-year fireman, OK? United States Navy veteran, upstanding citizen all my life with three children, and with the stroke of a pen from the ivory tower — with the gold top — you've decided to create me to be a felon, a Class D felon, for doing nothing absolutely wrong?

What are you going to do about those of us who will not comply with the law? I'm not speaking for anyone else here, but I'm telling you right now: I will not comply!

Adding tinder to the potential fire, District Judge Alfred Covello ruled on January 30 that all of Connecticut's new gun provisions are constitutional. The ruling was immediately appealed. The attorney filing the appeal said that there was plenty in his ruling "that we can work with," meaning that the final chapter in this story hasn't been written yet.

In the meantime, the whole fundamental structure of law, based on [Connecticut's Fundamental Orders](#) (adopted on January 14, 1639) that made Connecticut "The Constitution State"), is being called into question. From those orders comes the basis for all law:

For as much as it hath pleased Almighty God by the wise disposition of his divine providence so to order and dispose of things that we the Inhabitants and Residents of Windsor, Hartford and Wethersfield are now cohabiting and dwelling in and upon the River of Connectecotte and the lands thereunto adjoining; and well knowing where a people are gathered together the word of God requires that to *maintain the peace and union* of such a people there should be an orderly and decent Government established according to God, *to order and dispose of the affairs of the people* at all seasons as occasion shall require; do therefore associate and conjoin ourselves to be as one Public State or Commonwealth; and do for ourselves and our successors and such as shall be adjoined to us at any time hereafter, enter into Combination and Confederation together, to maintain and preserve the liberty and purity of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus which we now profess, as also, the discipline of the Churches, which according to the truth of the said Gospel is now practiced amongst us; as also *in our civil affairs to be guided and governed according to such Laws, Rules, Orders and Decrees as shall be made, ordered, and decreed* as followeth.... [Emphases added.]



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Without the fundamental understanding, acceptance, and belief that the rule of law will restrain evil and provide order, the laws don't matter. F. A. Hayek put the matter as follows [in his 1967 paper](#) "The Results of Human Action but Not of Human Design":

The whole conception, however, that law is only what a legislator has willed and that the existence of law presupposes a previous articulation of the will of a legislator is both factually false and cannot even be consistently put into practice.

Law is not only much older than legislation or even an organized state: the whole authority of the legislator and of the state derives from pre-existing conceptions of justice, and no system of articulated law can be applied except with a framework of generally recognized but often unarticulated rules of justice.

When legislators allow their zeal to create law that violates fundamental principles of justice, they sow the seeds of mass resistance to the injustice. On April 19, 1775, a single shot fired by an unknown participant — perhaps a British soldier, perhaps a rebel — ignited the tinder of the American War for Independence. And today, a single shot fired by someone in the Connecticut tinder box could spark a conflagration with unknown and inestimable consequences.

A graduate of Cornell University and a former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at www.LightFromTheRight.com, primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at badelman@thenewamerican.com.

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