



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on January 18, 2016

Second Amendment Momentum Builds; More Law Officers Urge Gun Ownership

An increasing number of law enforcement officials are publicly encouraging citizens to take personal responsibility for their own safety.

Florida Sheriff Grady Judd (shown) was blunt in speaking to criminals considering invading any citizen's home in Polk County: "If you are foolish enough to break into someone's home, you can expect to be shot."



In speaking to his constituents, he was equally blunt: "It's more important to have a gun in your hand than a cop on the phone."

Brevard County, Florida, Sheriff Wayne Ivey told *Florida Today* that his constituents must be "that first line of defense" against the criminal element in his jurisdiction, while Marion County, Florida Sheriff Chris Blair told the *Tampa Tribune*, "If you're certified to carry a gun, I would like to encourage you to do so."

Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke was equally supportive of his constituents exercising their Second Amendment rights: "I want as many law-abiding citizens to arm themselves in this county as we can get so that I have the partner that I need to beat back this sort of violence."

Detroit Police Chief James Craig has publicly promoted an armed citizenry, while a California police chief is backing having teachers in his district carry firearms while at work. A Maryland sheriff is pushing his state's legislators to make it easier for his citizens to obtain a handgun permit.

None of which surprises Alan Gottlieb who, as founder of the Second Amendment Foundation, has been a leader in returning common sense to the whole issue of guns and self-defense. Chairman of the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms, a board member of the American Conservative Union, and author of 19 books on the issue of gun rights, Gottlieb said:

Historically, sheriffs have been very pro-gun. But they've stepped out of the box and they're now publicly making it known that firearms are good for self-defense....

There's no doubt [that] it's consumer-driven to a large extent. Because they're elected, [sheriffs] have to make their constituents happy.

We've seen a record number of firearms sold. And people come in to get permits to carry, and [sheriffs] want to be customer-friendly, and you want to make it easier [to get a permit], or you might not get re-elected.

Concealed carry permits have exploded in recent years, from 4.6 million in 2007 to 12.8 million in 2015, according to John Lott's Crime Prevention Research Center. And that reflects a change in the culture as measured by Gallup. In August, 2000 Gallup reported that just one-third of those polled felt safer with a gun in the home. That percentage rose to 42 percent in 2004, 47 percent in 2006 and 63 percent in



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2014.

It's also reflected in a remarkable admission by a bona-fide anti-gun liberal that he and his friends might have been wrong about their frontal attack on guns after all. Nicholas Kristof has all the credentials, educational degrees, and elite connections to be speaking for more than just himself. Graduating Phi Beta Kappa from Harvard, where he studied government and worked on the *Harvard Crimson* newspaper, Kristof studied law at Magdalen College, Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar. He now serves as a member of the board of overseers of Harvard University and is a member of the board of trustees of the Association of American Rhodes Scholars. He also writes a regular column for the establishment's unofficial mouthpiece, the *New York Times*.

In his Sunday Review column, Kristof admitted:

We liberals are sometimes glib about equating guns and danger. In fact, it's complicated: the number of guns in America has increased by more than 50 percent since 1993 and in that same period the gun homicide rate in the United States has dropped in half.

Kristof referred to a study published on Rep. Nancy Pelosi's website back in 2004 which claimed that Clinton's assault weapons ban (passed in 1994) had little measurable effect on crime. Wrote the authors of that study, Christopher Koper, Daniel Woods, and Jeffrey Robb:

We cannot clearly credit the ban with any of the nation's recent drop in gun violence ... it is thus premature to make definitive assessments of the ban's impact on gun violence...

The ban's impact on gun violence is likely to be small at best, and perhaps too small for reliable measurement.

The Clinton gun ban was not renewed in 2004 and no major federal firearms restrictions have been passed into law since then. Instead, major court rulings have expanded and clarified citizens' rights under the Second Amendment. Kristof wrote in dismay:

So why does nothing get done [concerning more gun controls]? One reason is that [we] liberals often inadvertently antagonize gun owners and empower the National Rifle Association by coming across as supercilious, condescending and spectacularly uniformed about the guns [we] propose to regulate.

His column was not a request for forgiveness or a public recantation of past errors. Instead it was a call for a different approach: Take away Second Amendment rights without due process when someone is the target of a restraining order. Wrote Kristof:

More than 10 percent of murders in the United States, for example, are by intimate partners. The riskiest moment is often after a violent breakup when a woman has won a restraining order against her ex.

Prohibiting the subjects of those restraining orders from possessing a gun reduces these murders by 10 percent, one study found.

So, the war against the Second Amendment continues — but if Kristof is correct, from a different direction. In the meantime, the cultural shift in favor of those precious rights has all but guaranteed that the present anti-gun approach will continue to fail.

Photo of Sheriff Grady Judd: AP Images

A graduate of an Ivy League school and a former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The



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New American magazine and blogs frequently at LightFromTheRight.com, primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at badelman@thenewamerican.com.



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