



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on August 21, 2019

Representative Pete King Is First Republican to Co-sponsor “Assault Weapons” Ban

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On August 19, Representative Pete King (R-N.Y.) became the first Republican to join 202 Democrats in cosponsoring H.R. 1296, the Assault Weapons Ban of 2019. In so doing, King has the dubious distinction of joining ranks with the likes of Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.), Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.), Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.), and Ayanna Pressley (D-Mass.) — collectively known as “the Squad.”

[The text of H.R. 1296](#) states that its purpose is “To regulate assault weapons, to ensure that the right to keep and bear arms is not unlimited.”

The Second Amendment to the Constitution, which states that “the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed,” places no limitations on that right.

The bill’s definition of “assault weapons” is highly subjective. Most people would consider only fully automatic weapons to be classified as “assault weapons” (not that it matters from a constitutional standpoint, since the right to keep and bear arms includes *all* arms), but H.R. 1296 defines the following as a “semiautomatic assault weapon”:

“(D) A semiautomatic pistol that has the capacity to accept a detachable magazine and any one of the following:

“(i) A threaded barrel.

“(ii) A second pistol grip.

“(iii) A barrel shroud.

“(iv) The capacity to accept a detachable magazine at some location outside of the pistol grip.

“(v) A semiautomatic version of an automatic firearm.

“(vi) A manufactured weight of 50 ounces or more when unloaded.

“(vii) A stabilizing brace or similar component.

“(E) A semiautomatic pistol with a fixed magazine that has the capacity to accept more than 10 rounds.

The same definition is applied to:



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“(F) A semiautomatic shotgun that has any one of the following:

“(i) A folding, telescoping, or detachable stock.

“(ii) A pistol grip.

“(iii) A fixed magazine with the capacity to accept more than 5 rounds.

“(iv) The ability to accept a detachable magazine.

“(v) A forward grip.

“(vi) A grenade launcher.

As is to be expected, also included in the definition of “semiautomatic assault weapon” is essentially any popular semi-automatic rifle model one could think of.

“They are weapons of mass slaughter,” King told the *New York Daily News* regarding the weapons described in the bill. “I don’t see any need for them in everyday society.”

King is no stranger to readers of *The New American*. An article posted by this magazine in February explored King’s odd reference to the constitutionalist John Birch Society, with which *The New American* is affiliated.

When he was asked what was taking so long for the Democrat Party leadership to condemn comments made by Representative Ilhan Omar that were widely condemned as anti-Semitic, King offered a bizarre explanation: “And just like years ago, conservatives had to stand up to elements of the John Birch Society, it is important now that the Democratic leadership come forward and denounce this wing of the party and people from it who carry on with this sort of anti-Semitic language.”

Associating The John Birch Society with Omar’s comments was groundless, since the Society has always condemned anti-Semitism. *The New American* reached out to King’s office to get clarification on his comments but did not receive a response.

The article noted a certain irony in King’s statement, since in the past he supported the historically anti-Semitic terror group, the IRA, and therefore had much closer ties to anti-Semitism than almost anybody else in Congress.

King’s support of the IRA was found in the article, “[Pro-IRA Congressman Probes Terrorism](#),” published by *The New American* in 2011.

Photo: AP Images

Warren Mass has served The New American since its launch in 1985 in several capacities, including marketing, editing, and writing. Since retiring from the staff several years ago, he has been a regular contributor to the magazine. Warren writes from Texas and can be reached at wmass@thenewamerican.com.

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