



Republican Party Platform All But Ignores the Second Amendment

The [Republican Party's 2024 platform](#), released on Monday, is missing any full-bodied support of the Second Amendment. The platform mentions it just once, at the No. 7 position among its 20 promises:

7. Defend our Constitution, our Bill of Rights, and our fundamental freedoms, including freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and the right to keep and bear arms.



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Period.

What a contrast with the GOP's 2016 platform on the Second Amendment:

We support firearm reciprocity legislation to recognize the right of law-abiding Americans to carry firearms to protect themselves and their families in all 50 states. We support constitutional carry statutes and salute the states that have passed them.

We oppose ill-conceived laws that would restrict magazine capacity or ban the sale of the most popular and common modern rifle. We also oppose any effort to deprive individuals of their right to keep and bear arms without due process of law. We condemn frivolous lawsuits against gun manufacturers and the current Administration's illegal harassment of firearm dealers. We oppose federal licensing or registration of law-abiding gun owners, registration of ammunition, and restoration of the ill-fated Clinton gun ban.

Trump in 2015

This was certainly in line with what Donald Trump said he believed in his 2015 book *Great Again: How to Fix Our Crippled America*:

The fact that the Founding Fathers made it the Second Amendment, second only to our First Amendment freedoms of speech, religion, the press, and the right of assembly and to petition the government, shows that they understood how important the right to bear arms would be for all Americans....

We all enjoy this fundamental right in order to defend ourselves and our families. The Founding Fathers knew it was essential to a free society and passed this amendment to make sure the government could never take it (or our arms) away. Throughout history, we've seen oppressive governments consolidate and ensure their control over those they govern by taking away the means necessary for citizens to defend themselves....

The Second Amendment was created to make sure Americans could protect themselves from



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tyranny. There is no way we will change it.

Trump in 2024

In its press release, the Republican National Committee (RNC) affirmed that the 2024 platform was totally Trump's doing. The apparent deviation from what Trump believed in 2015 is very concerning, as the platform "serves as a contract with the American voter that makes clear what we can and will deliver under a President Trump administration with the Republican Party leading the country for the next four years."

Second Amendment Not Prioritized

As noted above, the Second Amendment sits in seventh position, behind other pressing issues like securing the border and deporting illegals. Making the country the dominant energy producer in the world is next, followed by "turn[ing] the United States into a manufacturing superpower. Number Six: "Large tax cuts for workers and no tax on tips!"

In seventh place, the Second Amendment is likely to be ignored. There is no other mention of it among the 20 promises, and no agenda concerning rolling back present onerous unconstitutional infringements.

Instead, gun owners might learn to their dismay what *Reason* writer [Jacob Sullum suggests](#). Is Trump interested not in ideology, but in pragmatic solutions to problems the country faces, despite the fact that those solutions might be unconstitutional? As Sullum noted:

This cursory treatment of the Second Amendment is consistent with the reality that the current Republican Party wants whatever former President Donald Trump wants.

Despite his lip service to the right of armed self-defense, Trump has never been a true believer...

What Does Trump Really Believe?

In February 2018, following [the shooting](#) at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, Trump met with Vice President Mike Pence and leaders of both political parties. Deranged gunman Nikolas Cruz had used a semiautomatic rifle to murder 17 people and wound 17 others, and his murderous attack remains the deadliest mass shooting in a high school in U.S. history.

The topic of [that meeting](#) was whether a "red flag" law might have alerted authorities to Cruz's mental instability in time to prevent the attack.

Pence parroted the standard leftist argument favoring such unconstitutional infringements:

[Such laws might] give families and give local law enforcement additional tools if an individual is reported to be a potential danger to themselves or others.

Allow due process so no one's rights are trampled. But [have] the ability to go to court, obtain an order, and then collect not only the firearms but any weapons in the possession of that individual.

Trump responded: "Or, Mike, take the firearms first and then go to court.... Because a lot of times, by the time you go to court, it takes so long to go to court, to get the due process procedures. I like taking



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the guns early.”

He added:

Like in this crazy man’s case that just took place in Florida. He had a lot of firearms. They saw everything. To go to court would have taken a long time. So you could do exactly what you’re saying, but take the guns first, go through due process second.

More Evidence

Trump’s disregard for the U.S. Constitution’s Second Amendment was also apparent when he, by executive order, instituted a ban on bump stocks (which the Supreme Court just ruled was unconstitutional). He’s also spoken favorably of requiring background checks on all gun transfers (even between private individuals), raising the minimum age to purchase a firearm, and banning so-called assault weapons.

Perhaps his silence on these issues in the GOP’s political platform means he’ll be so busy working to implement the other promises that he won’t have time or the bandwidth to consider Second Amendment infringements. Or perhaps he is counting on the Supreme Court to eventually toss existing Second Amendment infringements in light of the recent *Bruen* ruling that his conservative appointees to the high court made in 2022, so he can focus his attention elsewhere.

One dares not think, as his Democratic detractors claim, that he is a tyrant after all, putting pragmatism ahead of his oath to the U.S. Constitution.

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