

# Roots in Ripon

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*Chuck Roots*

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## A Look at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment

Once again, our nation has been rocked and shocked by the utterly senseless killing of concert attendees at a live country and western shindig last weekend. Such villainy should cause every American to pause and ask how it is that our nation has arrived at a point where wanton killing is reluctantly embraced as the norm.

A brief, succinct answer would be centered around the devaluing of life – human life in particular. Make no mistake! We have become numb to the gruesome reality of a million babies aborted in the United States every year. You can bet we have lost the key ingredient in valuing human life. That key ingredient is that God is the Creator of all life.

If we fall into the trap of excluding God from our appreciation of life, then we will, by default, have a view of life that is less than the view that God holds. Thus, we proceed on the slippery slope of man's degenerating opinion of life, and our inability to see some life as worthy, and other life as unworthy, or even unnecessary or inconvenient.

If there is one conclusion that is easily drawn from the most cursory of analyses concerning the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, it is that God is supreme, and all human life is precious. The authors of the Constitution intended it to be clear from the outset, despite the practice of slavery at the time of the formation of the nation.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment is a lightning rod issue, causing debate from kitchen tables to the Supreme Court, running the emotional gamut often with a ferocious intensity.

So, why did the Founding Fathers make this 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment? Quite simply, to put into the hands of these new American citizens in the 1780s the awesome responsibility of governing themselves by creating a government that was answerable to "We the People", and not the other way around.

Those British subjects who inhabited the New World known as America, felt the ever-oppressive hand of the entrenched monarchy thousands of miles across the Atlantic, treating these colonists as vassals who were not worthy of plotting the course of their own lives without the heavy-handed dictatorial rule of a king or queen. It was considered an absurdity to allow people to self-govern. Such umbrage! Such cheekiness!

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If this new nation was to survive to rule itself, free from the dictates of British oversight and control, then all Americans would need to be able to band together to resist by force, if necessary, the unwelcomed imposition of an overbearing government, whether it came from across the sea, or was home-grown right here in America.

What exactly does the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment say? "*A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.*"

What is "a well regulated militia"? There are three definitions in the dictionary. 1. It is "*an army composed of ordinary citizens rather than professional soldiers.*" 2. It is "*a military force that is not part of a regular army and is subject to call for service in an emergency.*" 3. It is "*the whole body of physically fit civilians eligible by law for military service.*"

Now, the militia is meant to be used in order to secure that the State (Nation, if you will) is kept free from enemies, both foreign and domestic. A people desiring to be free must be willing to defend that freedom. Why? Because, as history has abundantly proven, there is always someone, or some other nation that wants to take away your freedom.

So, how do we keep this free State free, safe and secure? By giving the people of that State the right to keep and bear arms. Simply put, as a freedom-loving American, I have every right, as provided by the Constitution and through common sense, to keep and bear arms. If there are bad people seeking to enslave me by removing the primary means to fight back against a tyrant or tyrannical government, then I will fight them.

Finally, what does "shall not be infringed" mean? Once again, the dictionary definition of infringe makes it pretty clear. Infringe means "*to transgress or exceed the limits of; to violate; to defeat, or invalidate; to encroach on someone or something.*"

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment says nothing about people having the right to own a gun for hunting or sport shooting. It is all about defending yourself and your family in concert with other Americans who may feel they are threatened, or are in reality threatened, by using a weapon to protect life and liberty.

And isn't it interesting that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment does not mention guns, but instead mentions "arms"? Guns, in one fashion or another, have been around this old world for 700 years.

Next week I will continue on this topic and how the argument for further gun control is nothing more than smoke and mirrors. The real issue is not the physical presence of guns and the specious arguments calling for stricter laws. The issue is evil in the hearts of some people who want to kill other people by whatever means possible.