

EBCP POSITION PAPER on GUN CONTROL

As we try to respond constructively to the national debate on firearms and violence, we cannot dispute the right granted by the Second Amendment to our Constitution, whatever its original intent. In fact, we support that right. We further believe that any freedom or right entails certain obligations to community. We live in a society of citizens, related and responsible to each other. That is the very essence of the Constitution's opening: "We, the People" Citizens' rights must be upheld, but rights also imply, even demand, responsibility if we are to live in community. Rights in a free society are privileges, lived out in relationship with one another.

All citizens have the right to own and operate motor vehicles, assuming they are properly licensed to do so, and have registered their cars and trucks. But in that right rests the demand that we do not drive at absurd speeds, text while driving, or even park wherever we want. We have the right to own pets, but not the right to allow them to trespass on the property or safety of neighbors. We have the right to acquire property and treasure, but yield the right to keep it all for ourselves, in order to provide for the common good through taxation. These examples and many more, point to what we believe to be the foundation of a free society: a community of law and justice. We treasure the rights of every citizen as a privilege to be lived out responsibly with other citizens.

Therefore, members of East Bay Citizens for Peace join the vast majority of Americans, including gun owners, who call for mandatory background checks and for restricting to military use alone all forms of assault weapons. We are further opposed to the militarization of some of our police departments. As we register our vehicles, and even our pets, we must register our firearms. We call for national research into gun violence and support a minimum age of 21 for the purchase of firearms. In 2018 more students have been killed in our schools by guns than have members of our armed forces in conflict overseas! We have long talked easily of citizens' rights. Can we not also assert and uphold those rights by undertaking our responsibility as citizens?