

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo,
Governor of the State of New York
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

Shall not be infringed. These words, as you well know, are the ones that bar any government in the United States from taking away the People's firearms. Men far wiser than we enshrined them in the United States Constitution on December 15, 1791, and they have guaranteed our Republic ever since.

We all witnessed the horror of Newtown, and I understand the passions that the actions of a mentally disturbed mass murderer can stir up. Indeed, it's easy to seek a simple answer—to suggest that if guns magically “went away” such things would never happen. But, in a land where 270 million firearms are already in circulation, any ban merely disarms the law-abiding. As President Ronald Reagan so wisely noted, after being shot himself by a mentally deranged assailant, *“You won't get gun control by disarming law-abiding citizens. There's only one way to get real gun control: Disarm the thugs and the criminals, lock them up and if you don't actually throw away the key, at least lose it for a long time... It's a nasty truth, but those who seek to inflict harm are not fazed by gun controllers. I happen to know this from personal experience.”*

Unfortunately, the New York SAFE Act does not faze criminals. All it does is infringe the Constitutional rights of the law-abiding citizens of New York. However, those rights are not the government's to infringe. We, the People, told the government we would be keeping our right to bear arms way back in 1791. And, for the record, we didn't do this to, as you recently suggested, “shoot a deer.” As James Madison—the visionary who wrote the United States Constitution—said, *“The Constitution preserves the advantage of being armed which Americans possess over the people of almost every other nation...(where) the governments are afraid to trust the people with arms.”* Why did we keep this right? Because, as Madison's fellow delegate to the Constitutional Convention George Mason told us, “to disarm the people was the best and most effectual way to enslave them.”

The U.S. Constitution is clear. The imperative that we all do our part in taking up arms to defend New York and the United States, found in Article XII of the New York State Constitution, is clear, too. And, the magnificent words of the **New York State Civil Rights Law, Article II, Section 4** are clear as well: ***“A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms cannot be infringed.”***

Governor Cuomo, we are good people. We are law-abiding people. We own our firearms, including our modern rifles, for individual reasons. Many of us do, as you suggested, “hunt deer” and other game. Others of us work in dangerous neighborhoods, or fear that those who would harm our families may one day violate the sanctity of our homes. Still others feel they have an obligation to live up to the words of Article XII of the State Constitution: *“The defense and protection of the state and of the United States is an obligation of all persons within the state.”*

The New York SAFE Act, however, has made many of our good neighbors, who, like us, own firearms, into potential felons. We haven't changed our behavior, but our state government has criminalized our rights under the Constitution and the New York Civil Rights Law. We are reasonable people, but this is not reasonable.

Mr. Cuomo, we are asking you and the Legislature to do the right thing. Repeal the law you passed at midnight with virtually no debate. Address the real problems with mental illness. You have an opportunity to set things right.

As a free people, we will not give up our freedoms. We expect you, as our elected employee, to understand that.

Sincerely,

Name

Street Address

City, State ZIP