

Questions for the Record from Senator Charles E. Grassley
Hearing on “Constitutional and Common Sense Steps to Reduce Gun Violence”
March 23, 2021

Mr. Chris Cheng

History Channel’s Top Shot Season 4 Champion
San Francisco, CA

1. During your testimony, you discussed the importance of firearms used for self-defense purposes during the 1992 Los Angeles riots, particularly in the Koreatown neighborhood, when local police forces were otherwise overwhelmed and unable to provide adequate protection from looting and rioting in that neighborhood. Have there been incidents during the COVID-19 pandemic and the civil unrest that took place during the summer of 2020 that mirrored the Los Angeles riots of 1992 in this way as they affected Asian Americans?

2. Thank you for speaking movingly about the need of vulnerable communities to be able to protect themselves. What legal measures do you think would be most helpful to enable any person who may be the target of violence to defend themselves?

November 18, 2022

Dear Ranking Member Grassley,

I am submitting the following responses to your questions related to my Senate testimony in the Committee hearing “Constitutional and Common Sense Steps to Reduce Gun Violence.”

To your first question, Asian Americans were negatively impacted by the civil unrest during the summer of 2020 that mirrored the civil unrest of the 1992 L.A. Riots when innocent Korean Americans had to use their personal firearms in self defense when law enforcement was unable to protect them.

In particular, the death of 84 year old Vicha Ratanapakdee was particularly heinous. Mr. Ratanapakdee was an innocent Thai American taking a walk around his San Francisco neighborhood during the pandemic. The video footage that exists of him being violently shoved to the ground and ultimately succumbing to his injuries is one of the most disturbing and upsetting attacks against Asian Americans. The attacker was allegedly motivated by racist, anti-Asian sentiment. I am a long-time San Francisco resident who believed that San Francisco was a safe place for minorities and people of color, but my viewpoint has greatly shifted over the past few years where San Francisco is now less safe.

There were numerous other attacks against Asian Americans during the summer of 2020 nationwide including San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York. The connection between the 1992 L.A. Riots and the summer of 2020 is there was negative sentiment and extreme violence against Asian Americans during both periods, and in each time period Asian Americans could not rely on law enforcement to protect them. It is a logical conclusion that the individual right to bear arms is a key way that Asian Americans can continue to defend ourselves when we are targeted because of the color of our skin.

Legal Measures

Two legal measures I think would be helpful in ensuring any American who wants to protect themselves is to remove all government fees, taxes and costs levied on the lawful sale of a constitutionally protected product at the point of sale, or so-called “sin taxes.”

I am struck by how the Second Amendment is the only civil right where the federal government allows the levying of fees and taxes to exercise a Constitutional right.

Another legal measure that would be helpful is to remove all “good moral character” clauses in conceal carry and/or firearms permits. The problem with this qualification is that it gives the government unrestricted subjective ability to deny a permit for any reason. One hypothetical situation is a permit could be denied for racial reasons if the decision-maker harbors negative sentiment against Asian Americans, LGBT Americans, White Americans, etc. But even then, the

permit denial wouldn't mention any explicit bigotry because the decision maker can simply determine an applicant is not of "good moral character" without much explanation.

I sincerely appreciate your time focusing your energy and attention on this incredibly important topic facing our country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Chris Cheng".

Chris Cheng

Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing
“Constitutional and Common Sense Steps to Reduce Gun Violence”
Questions for the Record
for Chris Cheng
Submitted March 30, 2021

1. Who, if anyone, did you consult with in preparing your testimony for the hearing, including your written testimony and answers to any questions for the record you received?

November 18, 2022

Dear Senator Whitehouse,

In response to your question related to my Senate testimony in the Committee hearing “Constitutional and Common Sense Steps to Reduce Gun Violence, I consulted with the National Shooting Sports Foundation in addition to Dianna Muller, Maj Toure; and Sarah Moe from Sapphire Strategies, LLC.

I sincerely appreciate your time focusing your energy and attention on this incredibly important topic facing our country.

Best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Chris Cheng".

Chris Cheng