



Chairman Durbin, Ranking Member Grassley, and distinguished members of the committee, my name is Philip T. Smith and I'm honored to testify today. As the President of a Firearms organization this is a needed National Conversation regarding Firearms, and I appreciate the opportunity to be part of it.

A little bit about myself, I was born and raised in Vallejo, California, and Graduated from the University of California Davis. I am married to my lovely wife Gwen Smith of 20+ years and have 3 kids. I am a proud member of Alpha Phi Alpha, Fraternity.

I am the president and founder of the National African American Gun Association. We are the largest Black firearms organization in the history of the United States and have grown to over 48,000 members with 120 chapters and members in every state. We are Pro-2A, Pro - Constitutional Carry, and a Pro-Black Firearms organization with no apologies.

We have grown tremendously in 7 years with a diverse base of folks joining, you name it and we have that person within our Organization. What is especially significant is the surge of Black Women joining. Yes, Black women are coming, and they are coming in large groups. Currently they are the fastest group of new gun owners in the United States. And, I am proud to say



they are the Backbone of the National African American Gun Association.

Never before have this many Black people in the United States had Guns. It is estimated that at least 14 million currently have firearms in their homes. What is happening is that our community has “Awoken”, and we are taking steps to protect ourselves legally.

Today at this Hearing, I am representing the millions of Black people in this country past and present that have been unable to seize the opportunity to protect themselves through the 2nd Amendment. I will be their voice, I will be their defender.

The history of Black Americans in this country is well documented with Slavery being a social and legal burden that we had to fight, but what isn't as well known is that there were Laws called the Black Codes starting in 1865 that prevented Black folks from owning any type of firearm in their possession. If a Black person was caught with a Gun they could be killed, no questions asked. The goal of these laws were to keep the Black community under control and defenseless. And that right to not be defenseless is what the Second Amendment is about.

Today in 2022, restricting American citizens from purchasing firearms has the same effect as the Black Codes of 1865. The end result is people, especially Black folks, are unable to secure a Gun which leaves them vulnerable. To me that is unacceptable and un-American.



The recent Supreme Court Decision of New York vs Bruen will now allow millions of gun owners whose rights were restricted to exercise those rights. As crime has a significantly larger impact on Black communities, it is even more important we have the ability to defend ourselves, exactly as the decision affirmed.

Focusing on banning rifles like the AR15s is an exercise in futility. It is in direct conflict with the 2nd Amendment, robs us of our right to use the best tools available to defend ourselves, and will only result in those who have access to the money and privilege of private security with the means to defend ourselves.

The misinformation about the AR15 is incredible with public figures making statements that have no truth or facts about the firearm. Let me de-mystify the firearm so we all can be on the same page. The AR15 is not a fully automatic machine gun like the M-16 used by the military. It is a semi-automatic rifle, in other words, you pull the trigger once and only one bullet will come out, just like a pistol or Shotgun.

Banning the AR15 will not have any impact on violence. Studies have already shown this from the previous ban. Bad people with bad intent will still have guns to cause harm to our most vulnerable Americans. You can't pass Laws to solve the human conditions of violence and evil. We must look at the root cause



of these shootings, and that requires tough and uncomfortable conversations within our Nation.

Thank you for allowing me to address this committee and this serious subject matter in our Country today.