

# **The Tribune Democrat**

## **Readers' Forum**

Monday, August 28, 2006

### **Gun-limit proposal would help save lives**

I was disturbed to see The Tribune-Democrat grossly distort the meaning of the Second Amendment in its Aug. 18 editorial, "Sneak attack on gun owners."

Citing a Thomas Jefferson quote for which there is no source infers that the Founders supported an insurrectionist ideology that would permit private citizens to overthrow government by force when they determined it had become oppressive.

In truth, an individual-right interpretation of the Second Amendment lost out in the great constitutional debates.

The final amendment guaranteed a right to keep and bear arms only in connection with service in a "well regulated militia." Government regulation of these militias was extensive—officials kept track of who had firearms, inspected weapons and required citizens to report to muster or face stiff penalties.

The Founders also did not hesitate to quash armed rebellions. Treason was a crime that was clearly defined in the Constitution as punishable by death. Residents of Pennsylvania played a major role in the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794, an uprising that was put down by President Washington with the assistance of more than 12,000 militiamen.

The one-handgun-a-month bill is a modest proposal aimed at preventing traffickers from acquiring large amounts of firepower in a single purchase. While this might serve as a minor inconvenience to some law-abiding gun owners, it is also a measure that would keep illegal guns off Pennsylvania's streets and save lives.

In perpetuating the confiscation myth and fueling anti-government paranoia, you are doing nothing to encourage real debate on important legislation.

**JOSH HORWITZ**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
COALITION TO STOP GUN VIOLENCE  
WASHINGTON, D.C.