

IN MY OPINION**Caroline Porter****Hand me my Uzi; I'm lookin' fer a rabbit**

I've never owned a gun and wouldn't have one in my home, simply because if I had, I'd probably be dead by now or would have killed someone. I do have a temper. I used to be able to beat up every boy in the neighborhood, but fortunately, my aggressive and violent nature has been put to good and constructive use in politics and writing.

I've often wondered what I would do if someone tried to mug or attack me.

Unfortunately, the first thing I would do is wet my pants, but hopefully I could simultaneously use a little physical force — yell at the top of my lungs, a good knee in the groin, or just talk really fast. At any rate, I'd go down fighting.

Once I told a former State's Attorney that I would never be one of these women who would put up with a stalker. When I read about these women who are terrorized for

years and end up dead, I am infuriated. With such a threat, my plan is, for the first time, to buy a gun and learn how to use it. Then I would invite my stalker over for tea. You can guess the rest.

So I'm not a quiet, wimpy little woman, but these people who want access to assault-style firearms are worse than stalkers. We have learned in the last few days that the Republican-controlled Congress refused to even schedule a vote to continue the weapons ban begun in 1994. The National Rifle Association, an irresponsible organization if there ever was one, is behind this screwball lack of action. They say it's all about "freedom." I might ask, "Whose?"

We aren't entirely free, you know. We do have laws that prohibit murder, assault, setting fires, stealing. No one goes around saying their freedoms are denied because of

these restrictions our society places on us. Frankly, I don't see any difference between these laws and a ban on semiautomatic assault weapons. The law defines them as any semiautomatic rifle with a detached magazine bearing at least two other military-style features from a list of five. The five are: 1) retractable stock (shortens rifle length), 2) pistol grip, 3) bayonet lug (for attaching a large knife), 4) flash suppressor (limits the flash to conceal the shooter, that's so the deer you are mowing down won't know who did it.) and 5) grenade launcher. Good grief!

There is simply no justification for the promotion of such lawlessness. Not surprising is the fact that law enforcement officials were happy with the ban and not happy now. As one policeman said on television yesterday, "We don't like to have to fight people with more powerful

weapons than we have."

And while we are bellowing about buying our goods in America to save American jobs, of the 19 named assault-style weapons now legal, many are made and designed in Germany, Israel and the former Soviet Union. One is described as "SWD M-10, M-11, M11-9 and M-12. Based on the design of the MAC-10, their full automatic cousin, these assault pistols are designed to fire many bullets over a wide area in seconds."

Gosh, those rabbits don't have a prayer.

None of us do, with this kind of Wild West mentality. But folks, this is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to hard-won laws and protections we have lost by this kind of inaction or executive order in the last four years.

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