

SAF Blasts Louisiana Newspaper Over Civil Rights

Written by Robert ID2003

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The Baton Rouge Advocate newspaper's editorial board needs to take a deep breath and reconsider its willingness to abandon a civil right so easily, merely on the grounds that an "extraordinary situation" might arise, the Second Amendment Foundation (SAF) said today in a sharply-worded letter to the newspaper.

On Monday, the newspaper editorialized against a move to stop the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) from imposing a gun ban at an evacuation site outside Baker, LA. The ban was part of the rules FEMA set down for displaced Hurricane Katrina victims who are moving into the temporary housing facility. However, FEMA attorneys began re-evaluating the rules following inquiries by Gun Week, a newspaper owned by SAF. When SAF learned of the ban, it threatened legal action.

"It seems rather easy for the newspaper to suggest that a civil right be surrendered in the interest of a little security," wrote SAF founder Alan Gottlieb. "I wonder under what so-called 'extraordinary situation' might the Advocate editors just as quickly argue that citizens give up their right to free speech, or a free press.

"The right to keep and bear arms is an individual civil right," Gottlieb said, "protected by the U.S. Constitution and Louisiana's state constitution, and recognized as an individual right by the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans. Evidently, the Advocate editors stubbornly disagree, but the Bill of Rights is an all-or-nothing proposition not subject to the whims of a newspaper.

"Neither SAF, nor any other gun rights organization, advocates unsafe or irresponsible use of firearms," Gottlieb stated. "But we will not stand by while a Washington D.C. bureaucracy, or any local government entity, presumes to have the authority to suspend a constitutional right. The New Orleans case, in which we were joined by the National Rifle Association, shows we're serious about protecting citizens against illegal search and seizure, and violations of due process. This isn't just about firearms, it's about civil rights, and if a newspaper doesn't understand that, the editors need a refresher course in Journalism.

"Frankly," Gottlieb concluded, "I'm astonished that a newspaper, which owes its very existence to the First Amendment, is so quick to consider the Second Amendment expendable. It is disappointing that the press constantly fails to see the correlation. If you so easily dismiss one

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constitutional right, you might as well dismiss them all."

The Second Amendment Foundation is the nation's oldest and largest tax-exempt education, research, publishing and legal action group focusing on the Constitutional right and heritage to privately own and possess firearms. Founded in 1974, The Foundation has grown to more than 600,000 members and supporters and conducts many programs designed to better inform the public about the consequences of gun control. SAF has previously funded successful firearms-related suits against the cities of Los Angeles; New Haven, CT; and San Francisco on behalf of American gun owners, a lawsuit against the cities suing gun makers & an amicus brief & fund for the Emerson case holding the Second Amendment as an individual right.

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