

Rationale behind BAN AND BUY BACK

JEFforliti jeforliti@comcast.net

It is widely recognized that the United States is the most heavily armed nation in the world, having more firearms than people. It can also be stated that the mass shooters in our recent history are the most well-equipped mass shooters in the world bearing superior weapons of mass destruction and wearing the latest in protective gear.

In 1994, a federal ban on assault weapons went into effect significantly lowering mass shooting incidents and resulting deaths. In 2004, this ban was allowed to expire giving free rein to firearm manufacturers and sellers, both legal and illegal.

Prior to the federal ban, in 1990, 74,000 military style weapons were manufactured. In 2013, 2.3 million were made. It is estimated that currently there are five to ten million of these weapons in our homes, businesses and neighborhoods.

The gun culture in our nation has become an attractive narrative for millions of Americans. From the 1960's to the late 1990's the focus for the gun industry was hunting. By 2019, only 10% of its ads were on hunting. The two main goals of the industry are more guns and freer access to them.

Prime motivators in recent years have been fear of urban crime and mass shootings, machismo (be a man, have a gun handy) and personal safety (in a crisis, get a gun).

If the current trend continues, soon it will be legal to carry a hidden firearm without a permit in half the states.

Recent federal gun legislation is a step in the right direction but our leaders failed to re-instate a federal ban on assault weapons. Lacking a federal ban does not prevent states to enact their own. Currently six states have such a ban. Buy-back efforts are more challenging to do but are necessary if we are to free our nation of the AR-15 scourge.

Assault weapons have one purpose, military. These weapons have no place in a civil society. There is no age which is the right age for civilians to purchase or possess assault weapons. Assault weapons are not designed for hunting. Neither are they necessary for target practice –other less deadly weapons are available for that.

The purpose of BAN AND BUY BACK is to challenge the gun industry narrative and replace it with a non-violent narrative. Removing assault weapons from our society is a cause that both sides of our divided nation could unite on.

Our Bishops, together or individually, could provide a corrective narrative, showing how the gun culture led with their narrative and how it needs to be corrected.