



Lawyer: Banning Assault Weapons A Feel-Good Gesture 'Unless You're Prepared to Confiscate'

By Christopher Goins January 10, 2013

George Washington Univ. Law Professor Alan Morrison.

(CNSNews.com) – The man who joined forces with Ralph Nader in the 1970s to virtually invent the consumer-interest lawsuit said Thursday that an outright ban on "assault weapons" might make some people feel better, but it would do nothing to curb violence at schools.

George Washington University Law Professor Alan Morrison says gun confiscation would be the way to go -- but even that would be ineffective.

“Now obviously, we all want to stop the killing in the schools. But how are we going to do that? Gun registration, if that happened – (is that) enough? After all, the killer’s mother had a registered gun. It was properly locked up. He was able to get hold of it and take it to the schools,” he said.

“So suppose we outlawed assault weapons? Harsh as it may seem, would it have deterred this person from going to the school if he could only fire six rounds at a time? I doubt it,” he continued.

“And if he killed 13 people instead of 26, would we have all felt any better at this horrendous matter?”

Morrison, who made his comments Wednesday at the libertarian Cato Institute in Washington, D.C., said banning assault weapons is just a gesture, unless you begin confiscating weapons.

“Unless you’re prepared to confiscate all of the assault weapons and prevent their sales in the future then it’s a gesture to ban assault weapons,” he said. “It probably will make people feel good but I don’t think it will solve that much in the way of elimination of wrongful violence.”

“We would surely eliminate some kinds of mass deaths. Whether the shooters who go into schools and attack unarmed children ... would not do it because they don’t have an assault weapon but they happen to have two or three loaded handguns with them -- I rather doubt,” he continued.

“But unless we're prepared to confiscate the existing assault weapons, it may make people feel good, and make it symbolic, to ban assault weapons. And I might vote for it but I really wouldn’t think it's going to make much difference in terms of saving lives -- which is what I’m really concerned about.”

A lawyer who has argued 20 cases before the U.S. Supreme Court and co-founded the Public Citizen Litigation Group with Nader in 1971, Morrison said the strongest argument for the right to bear arms is the fact that the Second Amendment is in the Bill of Rights.

“Why would it be in the Bill of Rights if it wasn’t a right?” he said. “Why would it not be in the Constitution if it had to do with militia, since after all there were two provisions in the Constitution that dealt directly with the militia?”

On Dec. 14, Adam Lanza killed 20 grade school students, six staff members and wounded two others at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., then killed himself in one of the worst school massacre in U.S. history