



Now The Cato Institute Is In Favor Of Some Gun Control

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In its September/October policy report, the Cato Institute (as written by its chairman Robert Levy) makes the case for "compromise" on gun control. It's a very odd stance for the normally libertarian think tank, given that a compromise on what should and shouldn't be banned by the government seems to fly in the face of the libertarian idea.

Levy's case is essentially an academic case for the same things we hear Democratic politicians argue for on a near constant basis. He begins by probing why we have a strict adherence to the Second Amendment, and using those to probe into key issues in the gun control movement, looking for compromise. In finding some places where we could maybe work out some sort of control, while still giving concessions to gun rights advocates, he closes with this.

It's doubtful that new gun controls — imposed mostly on persons who are not part of the problem — will be effective. Accordingly, they should expire automatically after a reasonable test period. If they work, they can be reenacted. The Second Amendment doesn't bar sensible regulations, but it demands rigor from our lawmakers and the courts in legislating and reviewing gun control measures.

What Levy is saying here, in short, is that we should trust our legislative branch to be able to be reasonable about this. Set a law that expires after a short period, and then trust them to look critically at the law's effect and decide whether or not to re-enact the law.

The reality of the situation is that Congress can pass this law, either one of the major party candidates will sign it, and in two years it will be tucked away into a spending bill or passed again with no discussion and no changes. With rare exception, when something is passed into law in this country, the legislative branch gets really lazy and doesn't think much about repealing it or not renewing it. Chances are, they'll add to it.

That's how it starts in this country, and it's not just guns. Liberals want something, the conservatives don't. So, a compromise is made that ultimately gives few, if any, concessions to

the conservative side, and it becomes something that you can't undo. It's part of the government now. It's made the government bigger.

The policy report is just strange, coming from Cato. I'd expect it from less reputable places, but they are one place I know puts good thought into their ideas. This idea, however, completely ignores what we know about how Congress acts. It's absurd.