

# OPINION

## THE CHRONICLE

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### Our Mission

The Chronicle is dedicated to serving the residents of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County by giving voice to the voiceless, speaking truth to power, standing for integrity and encouraging open communication and lively debate throughout the community.

#### GUEST EDITORIAL

## Where is the sane, sensible, calm debate about guns?

Emotions and politics seem to be why we cannot, as a nation, have sane, sensible, rational, calm debate about guns.

Instead, we somehow lump mass killings, gang violence, domestic violence, target shooting, self-defense, home-defense, fear of a tyrannical government, the Second Amendment, interpretations of the Second Amendment, the sanctity of the Second Amendment as it was written, et al into one giant stew pot, season it with unfettered emotional hot sauce and smother it in a political cream sauce that masks the issues.

Second Amendment purists cling to the fact the words say nothing about any types of restrictions on the right to bear arms. While they do not—at least not out loud—argue about the age restrictions placed on handgun owners, they refuse to consider any other types of restrictions that might well put a dent in the number of people killed in mass shootings in America. And they point to the fact—and, indeed, it is fact—that people who want to kill large numbers of other people have many other means to do so aside from the high-capacity rounds weapons.

They reason that if we restrict the types of guns Americans can have because those guns are sometimes (often, is more accurate) used to slaughter dozens of human beings, and allow them only to be in the hands of those serving in the military, then we must also restrict commercial jet liners to military use. After all, it was large commercial jets that were commandeered by terrorists and flown into the Twin Towers and the Pentagon, resulting in thousands of deaths.

Yes, yes. Jets can be used to carry out terrorist acts and mass killings. But since 9/11, our country has implemented many safeguards and restrictions that significantly lessen the chances of another such incident.

One can also argue that automobiles and 18-wheelers can be used as weapons in mass killings. Indeed, especially if outfitted with car bombs or the right mix of ingredients within a trailer. Really, the list of everyday objects that can be used in carrying out killings is long. But does that—should that—preclude frank discussion about America's guns?

A reader pointed out recently that discussion seems to center on "military-style weapons" and there are misunderstandings about what constitutes such a weapon. Fair enough. He also points out that after-market devices are available that can, for example, convert an 8- or 9-shot capacity semiautomatic magazine into a twin-drum 100-round magazine. Perhaps a killer would buy a \$500 handgun and outfit it with a \$400 device that increases its capacity to kill. Perhaps rational discussion about America's gun laws and regulations should include whether such after-market devices should even be legal.

Ah, but there we go again, you say. Fueling the fire of those who want to burn the Second Amendment into thin air. And there we are, once again, standing on either side of a polarizing line.

Yes, we believe it is possible to protect Americans' Second Amendment rights while protecting many hundreds of Americans' lives who will yet become victims in mass shootings because we cannot or will not come to the table and discuss an issue, much less attempt to reach a logical compromise.

And why is that? Emotions. And politics. Far better, isn't it, that a Capitol Hill politician protect his chances of re-election than the lives of his fellow countrymen.

The Index-Journal of Greenwood, S.C.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Democrats applaud U.S. Supreme Court abortion decision

To the Editor:

The United States Supreme Court has reached a decision to repeal Texas's proposed bill that would require women's health clinics to adhere to stricter regulations, on the grounds that it would severely restrict women's access to health care. Congresswoman Alma Adams has called this ruling a "victory for women nationwide." The bill in question would have made it necessary for doctors to have admitting privileges at a hospital within 30 miles of the clinic and for the clinics themselves to have elaborate, expensive, hospital grade equipment. These requirements would have shut down an estimated 75 percent of Texas's women's health



clinics, which are already held to very high safety

standards. As a result, almost 1 million women in Texas would not live within 250 miles of an abortion clinic. The court majority argued that the bill would serve only to prevent women from accessing safe care, and Justice Ginsburg went as far as to say that it was "beyond rational belief that [the bill] could genuinely protect the health of women." The case was determined by a 5-3 majority, with Justice Kennedy, the only swing vote on abortion issues, joining liberal justices in the decision to repeal the bill. This shows that even with Republicans' refusal to appoint President Obama's selected replacement for the late Justice Scalia, Democrats can still win a majority on women's health issues. This case is also a significant one for women's health because it shows that the restriction of a woman's access to an abortion without probable cause is unconstitutional. Strict abortion regulations across the country and even in North Carolina may come under scrutiny in light of this ruling. The state's law that requires a woman to submit ultrasounds to the health department before an abortion can be performed is a step toward Texas-like abortion regulation, and if North Carolina legislators try to pass anything more extreme, they may be constitutionally unable to do so. The Forsyth County Democratic Party supports the right of all women to choose, and this includes supporting the clinics

that provide abortions and give women access to carry out their choice. The FCDP maintains that the limitation of a woman's right of access to health services and programs is unconstitutional and detrimental to women's health. The party hopes that the Supreme Court will continue to uphold women's health for the sake of women and girls across the country and in North Carolina.

Forsyth County Democratic Party  
 Winston-Salem

### Civil Rights Act turns 52 amid regression

To the Editor:

Democratic National Committee (DNC) Chair Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz joined DNC Vice Chair for Voter Protection and Expansion Donna Brazile and DNC Black Caucus Chair Virgie Rollins to issue the following joint statement:

"As Americans across the country prepared to celebrate our independence this past holiday weekend, we also celebrated the 52nd anniversary of the Civil Rights Act—landmark legislation that carried our nation one step closer to fully realizing the profound promise in our Declaration of Independence that we are all created equal. The law expanded voting rights, made discrimination based on



race, color, religion, sex, or national origin illegal, and protected the rights of all Americans to use public facilities, and to access public education.

The passage of the Civil Rights Act, which was called for by President John F. Kennedy and signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson, truly belongs to the great multitude of courageous civil rights leaders, activists, protesters, and warriors for justice who fought tirelessly through decades of oppression, racism, segregation, discrimination and mistreatment. These American men and women endured unthinkable adversity, sometimes even sacrificing their lives in the struggle, to forge a more perfect union.

"Although they carried our nation a long way, we can best honor their legacy by recognizing that we still have much farther to go. In too many states, conservative politicians are working to roll back the right to vote with restrictive voter ID laws, cutbacks in early voting and same-day registration, and reductions in poll locations, especially in minority dis-

tricts. Democrats are committed to standing strong against those who seek to win elected office by stripping certain groups of Americans their most basic right—the right to vote.

"The assault on voting rights is a reminder that the deep scars of our past have yet to fully heal, and the promise of true equality has yet to be fully attained. So we must remain vigilant in defending their progress, and rededicate ourselves to the cause of moving forward every day. In too many communities, hardworking families are still struggling to get ahead. And in far too many cases, names like Sandra Bland, Freddie Gray, Trayvon Martin, and others who hauntingly remind us that the struggle for economic and racial justice continues, and that we have a duty to continue to tell their stories.

"Democrats believe our people are our greatest strength, and we will continue to fight to expand opportunity for all Americans, regardless of their race, and to build an economy that works for everyone, not just those at the top. We must elect a Democrat as our next president to keep our nation's march of progress moving forward."

Democratic National Committee  
 Washington, D.C.

### HB 2 revisions fail to provide meaningful changes to law

To the Editor:

Governor McCrory and legislative Republicans just showed their true priorities, putting their divisive partisan social agenda ahead of North Carolina's economy.

The governor failed to ever push for meaningful changes to his discriminatory law, instead sacrificing thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars.

It's clear that middle class families need new leadership to put jobs and the economy first.

Kimberly Reynolds  
 N.C. Democratic Party  
 Executive Director  
 Raleigh

