

THE PERIODIC TABLE OF THE PRESIDENTS™

The Second Amendment

Introduction:

The Second Amendment protects the right to own and carry firearms. The text of the amendment refers to a “well regulated militia” and “the people.” This has led to much debate as to whether the Founders granted this freedom to all citizens, or just citizen-soldiers. The Supreme Court has decided that this right applies to most Americans. Gun control laws are the responsibility of the individual states.

The text of this amendment reads, “A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.”

Questions:

1. What right is protected under the Second Amendment?
2. What year was the Second Amendment ratified?
3. According to the text of the amendment, who has the right “to keep and bear arms”?
4. What is a militia?
5. What does “bear arms” mean?
6. What does “infringe” mean?
7. Explain the quote by George Washington, “A free people ought not only to be armed, but disciplined;...”
8. How might a “well regulated Militia” maintain freedom?
9. How do advocates of gun control use the Second Amendment to make their case?
10. Do you agree with the *D.C v. Heller* (2008) decision? Explain your answer.