

THE CARLSON CHRONICLE

Whatever happened to common sense?

So now what do the governing bodies of Idaho's private colleges--- Northwest Nazarene University, the College of Idaho and BYU-Idaho--- do? The Idaho Legislature, taking leave of all common sense, and abetted by a governor who approaches all issues from a purely ideological standpoint (One doesn't have to think when ideology has all the answers.), swallowed whole hog the latest gambit by the National Rifle Association to make the Second Amendment an absolute right as opposed to the qualified right the Supreme Court has ruled it is.

By over-whelming majorities they kissed the NRA's ring and passed legislation allowing students over 21 who have taken an eight-hour enhanced training course to carry concealed weapons on a public college campus.

Even the patron saint of the NRA, Justice Antonin Scalia, who wrote the majority opinion in the precedent-setting case (*District of Columbia v. Heller*) establishing the individual right to keep and bear arms in order to defend one's home or self, and separated that right from the Constitutional language appearing to tie the right to keeping and maintaining a militia, even the great Scalia wrote that it was a qualified right. He then went on to state that government could in the interest of public safety restrict carrying and bearing arms from high use public places such as courts and schools.

So the NRA pooh-bahs decide to push legislation that will further restrict the "qualifications" Justice Scalia says government can impose in the interest of public safety even when it runs counter to another sacred belief, that of local control. You see NRA executive director Wayne LaPierre, sincerely believes that had their been an armed and trained in proper firearm use one individual in the building when a Virginia Tech student went on a killing rampage that took 38 lives, the perpetrator would have been shot dead and many lives saved.

One can neither prove nor disprove it. All those in Idaho charged with the *in locus parentis* role of providing a safe learning environment in our public colleges and all those charged with providing police protection in those places believe otherwise.

Common sense says even with the qualifications written into the bill the mixture of immature young people, combined with alcohol or drugs and a dose of depression is a prescription for disaster. The fact that every college and university president and the Idaho State Board of Education as well as every jurisdictional police chief in college communities opposed this legislation meant nothing to the Idaho ideologues hell bent on kow-towing to the NRA's desires regardless of how stupid it might be when given the common sense test.

Now sit back and watch the number of challenges this legislation will generate. Somewhere in the ranks of students attending Idaho's private colleges there is probably a 24 year old ex-Marine who has taken the eight hour enhanced safety course even though he maintained an expert rating in both pistol and rifle while a Marine, has the permit to carry a concealed weapon and knows how to shoot to kill.

He sues that he is being discriminated against because his school does not afford him the same protection right that a public school does.

Equally disgusting was the manner in which the bill's Senate sponsor, Meridian State Senator Curt McKenzie, gave the NRA's lobbyist 41 minutes to testify and then shut off all dissenting testimony including that from college community police chiefs. When it came time to vote in the Senate only three Republican state senators showed they at least possessed common sense and understood this vote was all about trying to circumscribe Justice Scalia's "qualifying" the Second amendment right.

The three---Senators Shawn Keough (Sandpoint), John Goedde (Coeur d'Alene) and Dan Johnson(Lewiston)---joined with all seven Democrats in opposing the bill. Sit back now and watch Tea Party challengers to these three try to distort this common sense vote consistent with Justice Scalia as somehow being anti-Second amendment rights.

It will be a deliberate lie by those who try for political advantage by misportraying their sensible vote, but when the end justifies the means to these purists the truth is always an early casualty.

So, where does this drive to make the Second amendment an absolute unqualified right stop? Ask yourself that. And ask where is the common sense in all of this? Rest assured Governor Otter won't ask because if he did, he would veto this camel's nose under the tent attempt to circumvent even the NRA's patron saint who did retain some common sense as he wrote the majority view in the precedent-setting *District of Columbia v. Heller* case.