

# Donald Trump: The New Poster Boy For Gun Abolitionism

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(Jacobin, 2024)

Donald Trump survived an assassination attempt on 13 July 2024, then struck a defiant attitude, and is now being touted as a popular political hero, and a poster boy for The Second Amendment to the US Constitution, which legally entrenches the right of US citizens to own, carry, and/or use guns. I beg to differ. For me, the real upshot of the assassination attempt is that owning, carrying, and/or using guns is rationally unjustified and immoral, and that Trump is in fact the new poster boy for what I call *Gun Abolitionism*.

What do I mean by “Gun Abolitionism”? Elsewhere, I’ve formulated it as follows:

[N]ot only (i) owning, carrying, and/or using guns, but also (ii) The 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment to the US Constitution, and (iii) their necessary consequence, gun violence, are all rationally unjustified and immoral on broadly Kantian ethical grounds, and that therefore, (iv) *Gun Abolitionism* is rationally justified, morally right, and what we ought to do, by means of

(iva) repealing The 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment, and then (ivb) universally banning owning, carrying, and/or using guns. This argument is specific to the contemporary USA, but, just like arguments for the abolition of slavery, the argument for Gun Abolitionism smoothly generalizes to an argument for Gun Abolitionism everywhere and everywhen, and indeed also to universal Nuclear Weapons Abolitionism. (Hanna, 2024: p. 1)

Correspondingly, I've argued for Gun Abolitionism as follows:

1. Coercion is forcing people to do things, by using violence or the threat of violence.
2. Coercion is always rationally unjustified and immoral, because it treats people as mere instruments and mere things, and directly violates their human dignity.
3. The primary function of guns is coercion and its necessary consequence is gun violence.
4. Therefore, owning, carrying, and/or using guns ... is rationally unjustified and immoral.
5. But The 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment to the US Constitution entrenches the individual right to own, carry, and/or use guns....
6. Therefore, The 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment is rationally unjustified and immoral, and should be repealed (see also Stevens, 2018).
7. Moreover, *Gun Abolitionism* is rationally justified, morally right, and what we ought to do, by means of (7i) repealing The 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment, and then (7ii) universally banning owning, carrying, and/or using guns.

As I mentioned [above], this argument is of course specific to the contemporary USA, but, just like arguments for the abolition of slavery, the argument for Gun Abolitionism smoothly generalizes to an argument for Gun Abolitionism everywhere and everywhen, and also to universal Nuclear Weapons Abolitionism. (Hanna, 2024: pp. 5-6)

Had Trump's would-be assassin not been able to own, carry, and use a gun, then he would not have been able to take a pot-shot at Trump and kill one other innocent person. Now, Trump is a well-known enthusiastic supporter of The Second Amendment:

*No limits on guns; they save lives*

Q: Are there any circumstances that you think we should be limiting gun sales of any kind in America?

TRUMP: No. I am a 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment person. If we had guns in California on the other side where the bullets went in the different direction, you wouldn't have 14 or 15 people dead right now. If even in Paris, if they had guns on the other side, going in the opposite direction, you wouldn't have 130 people plus dead. So the answer is no.... (Fox Business, 2016)

*Make concealed-carry permits valid across all states*

TRUMP: I have a concealed-carry permit that allows me to carry a concealed weapon. I took the time and the effort to get that permit because the constitutional right to defend yourself doesn't stop at the end of your driveway. That doesn't apply just to me either. It applies to all our driveways or front doors.

That's why I'm very much in favor of making all concealed-carry permits valid in every state. Every state has its own driving test that residents have to pass before becoming licensed to drive. Those tests are different in many states, but once a state licenses you to drive, every other state recognizes that license as valid.

If we can do that for driving — which is a privilege, not a right — then surely we can do that for concealed carry, which is a right, not a privilege. That seems logical to me. (Trump, 2015)

Hence it's ironic that Trump would be the target of a shooter, and it's idiotic for people to applaud and idolize him for being the defiant victim of a rationally unjustified and immoral act and crime that he himself has politically enabled. There's no merit in being a defiant victim of violence that the victim has himself encouraged and fomented. Instead, people should regard Trump as the new poster boy for Gun Abolitionism. Or as Ben Burgis puts it, even understating the case:

If we're serious about diminishing the incidence of lone-wolf political violence in the United States, lecturing people to tone down the way they talk about figures like Donald Trump is unlikely to be an effective strategy. A more fruitful area to focus on is America's gun laws, which are bizarrely permissive by the standards of other advanced democracies. Nearly 342 million people live in this country, and we have about 393 million guns. If you want fewer political shootings, and fewer shootings in general, it's long past time to do something about that. (Jacobin, 2024)

## REFERENCES

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