

Gun Owners of America Stands Firm Against Bill No. 36-0144

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The Second Amendment is not vague, flexible, or open to interpretation. It declares in absolute terms: “the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.” Bill No. 36-0144, just voted favorably in the Committee on Homeland Security, Justice, and Public Safety, is a direct violation of this command. Despite reassurances from its sponsor, Senator Clifford Joseph Sr., this legislation is unconstitutional on its face.

Sen. Joseph Sr. claimed his bill does not “intend to infringe” on the rights of Virgin Islanders, but the Constitution is not about intentions—it is about limits on government power. The text of the Second Amendment does not grant lawmakers wiggle room. It does not say “shall not be infringed, unless the Legislature finds it convenient.” Bill No. 36-0144 imposes penalties on law-abiding citizens, confiscates legally owned firearms and accessories, and places new restrictions on rights that government has no authority to touch. Gun Owners of America has only one response: What part of ‘shall not be infringed’ is unclear?

As GOA’s Southeast Regional Director and a former law enforcement officer with 15 years of service, I have watched politicians across the country attempt this same charade—wrapping unconstitutional gun control in the rhetoric of “public safety.” Sen. Joseph Sr. calls his bill a “life-saving choice.” But the facts are unshakable: criminals do not obey gun laws. Disarming the law-abiding only empowers those who break the law. The proper role of government is not to burden citizens with unconstitutional restrictions, but to remove barriers that prevent Americans from exercising their God-given right to self-defense.

Even Governor Albert Bryan, Jr. has admitted that the Virgin Islands’ current gun policies have “totally failed.” That acknowledgment should end the debate. Yet lawmakers push forward with new restrictions—doubling down on failure instead of restoring the freedoms that would allow Virgin Islanders to protect themselves and their families.

The people of the Virgin Islands may live far from the mainland, but they are not second-class citizens. Their rights are every bit as sacred and protected as those of Americans in Florida, Texas, or anywhere else. The Constitution does not stop at the shoreline, and the Second Amendment does not bend to political convenience.

Gun Owners of America is clear: Bill No. 36-0144 is unconstitutional, indefensible, and non-negotiable. We will oppose it relentlessly, and we will not compromise. The right to keep and bear arms is absolute, and any attempt to infringe upon it must be defeated.

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