

From: [J. Michael Orange](#)
To: [*CI-StPaul Contact-Council](#)
Cc: [Kathleen Doyle](#); [Edward C. Lorenz](#); [Bob Mokos](#)
Subject: Comments in Support of ORD 25-65 to Establish Regulations for Assault Weapons, Binary Triggers, Ghost Guns and Signage
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Attachments: [In Support of St Paul ORD 25-65 .docx](#)

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To: Mayor Carter and the members of the City Council of the City of St. Paul:

I write on behalf of Chapter 27 Veterans For Peace in support of Ord 25-65. Since 2018 (with the exception of 2020 due to COVID), our members, several of whom are St. Paul residents, have advocated at the Legislature for bills that would establish a state ban on the sale and transfer of assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. Approving Ord 25-65 would be consistent with our mission because it will express the will of the City Council and Mayor for the state to change its local government preemption law, and allow the City to at least ban these weapons of war from City Hall and other public facilities.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

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Michael Orange, Coordinator, Chapter 27 Veterans For Peace, Sane Gun Laws
orange_michael@msn.com, 952-905-1448, 10/28/2025

I write on behalf of Chapter 27 Veterans For Peace in support of Ord 25-65. Since 2018 (with the exception of 2020 due to COVID), our members, several of whom are St. Paul residents, have advocated at the Legislature for bills that would establish a state ban on the sale and transfer of assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. Approving Ord 25-65 would be consistent with our mission because it will express the will of the City Council and Mayor for the state to change its local government preemption law, and allow the City to at least ban these weapons of war from City Hall and other public facilities.

Our state gun regulations are insane. Minnesota law¹ allows schools, day care centers, and private establishments like churches and businesses to ban guns on their premises. This right is based on the ability of nongovernmental entities to control their property, but governments can't do the same to control and protect the public while using public property.

For example, last year I asked five security guards at the Capitol this question: "What would you do if I walked in with an AR-15 assault rifle slung over my shoulder and told you I have a Minnesota permit-to-carry license?" I got five different answers. One said he'd ask me to leave, and another said he'd do nothing. "If you have the permit, you are free to carry it here." The City of St. Paul should have the authority to prevent this insanity.

Responses to myths from the gun lobby: The following addresses some of the propaganda from the gun lobby:

- **First false argument: "The best defense against a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun:"** The gun lobby mantra is "the best defense against a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun." In fact, firearms are *not* an effective means of self-defense.² More permissive gun laws make people less safe. In the states with the weakest gun laws, gun deaths rose 46% from 2012 to 2020, compared with just a 7% increase in the states with the strongest

¹ Minn. Stat. § 624.714, subd. 17,

² "The epidemiology of self-defense gun use: Evidence from the National Crime Victimization Surveys 2007-2011," David Hemenway and Sara J. Solnick, *Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 2015, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0091743515001188>

gun laws over that same period.³ Additionally, recently released data from the Center for American Progress shows that firearm homicides fell much faster in 2023 in states with the strongest gun laws, while states with the weakest gun laws saw marginal, if any, improvements to public safety.⁴

- **Second false argument: Bans are ineffective, and guns make us safer:** Opponents to bans on assault weapon and high-capacity magazines argue that bans are ineffective. In fact, studies demonstrate the opposite. As the ten states with assault weapons bans have experienced, the frequency and severity of gun violence is dramatically reduced when it becomes illegal to buy or transfer such a weapon. Bans *are* effective, especially if they are part of a comprehensive set of common-sense gun control regulations (e.g., red flag; safe storage; and closed loopholes for background checks, gun show sales, and ghost guns).⁵ A 2024 study published by the Rockefeller Institute of Government concluded that the US suffered **109 public mass shootings** between 2000 and 2022, **compared to a total of 35 in 35** other similarly developed countries.⁶ Our health problems aren't 109 times greater than these 35 other similarly developed countries. Our epidemic of mass shootings is a direct result of our lax gun laws, and especially our unique availability of assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. Given that there are more guns in circulation than people in America, if more guns led to fewer violent crimes, America would be the safest place in the world.

³ Source: "Ten Years of Courage," Giffords Law Center to Prevent Violence, 12/13/2022, <https://giffords.org/report/ten-years-of-courage/>

⁴ "In 2023, Gun Violence Trended Down Across the Country," Center for American Progress, 1/31/2024, <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/in-2023-gun-violence-trended-down-across-the-country/>

⁵ States with restrictions on magazine size experience mass shootings at less than half the rate of states without restrictions (Source: Louis Klarevas, Andrew Conner, and David Hemenway, "The Effect of Large-Capacity Magazine Bans on High-Fatality Mass Shootings, 1990–2017," *American Journal of Public Health* 109, no. 12 (2019): 1754-61, <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2019.305311>). There are numerous studies that confirm that the federal assault weapons ban (1994-2004) was effective. Studies concluded that the risk of dying in a mass shooting was 70% lower than in the following decade after Congress killed the effort to extend it (Source: "Did the assault weapons ban of 1994 bring down mass shootings? Here's what the data tells us," Michael J. Klein, Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery, New York University, *The Conversation*, 6/8/22, <https://theconversation.com/did-the-assault-weapons-ban-of-1994-bring-down-mass-shootings-heres-what-the-data-tells-us-184430>). According to a study published in *Applied Economics Letters*, "[I]t was found that assault weapons bans in the states that approved them reduced the number of school shooting victims by 54.4%" (Source: "The effects of state and Federal gun control laws on school shootings," Mark Gius, *Applied Economics Letters*, 4/19/2027, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13504851.2017.1319555>). Similarly, a Johns Hopkins University study stated, "We found very encouraging effects. ... On a per capita basis, we see a 70% lower rate of individuals killed in mass shootings associated with state bans of [high-capacity magazines] (source: "Policies That Reduce Gun Violence: Restricting Large Capacity Magazines," Daniel Webster, Johns Hopkins University, 5/24, 2021, [https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2021/policies-that-reduce-gun-violence-restricting-large-capacity-magazines#:~:text=Our%20estimate%20was%20that%20laws,is%20licensing%20for%20firearm%20purchasers%20\).](https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2021/policies-that-reduce-gun-violence-restricting-large-capacity-magazines#:~:text=Our%20estimate%20was%20that%20laws,is%20licensing%20for%20firearm%20purchasers%20).)

⁶ Source: "Public Mass Shootings Around the World: Prevalence, Context, and Prevention," Jason R. Silva, 2/20/24, *Rockefeller Institute of Government*, <https://rockinst.org/blog/public-mass-shootings-around-the-world-prevalence-context-and-prevention/>

- **Third false argument: Assault weapons are protected by the Second Amendment because they are not “weapons of war.”** In order to argue that the Second Amendment protects assault weapons, opponents of banning them must show that they are substantively different than “modern military weapons,” i.e., they are not “weapons of war.” The history of the AR-15 contradicts that belief. The original ArmaLite AR-15, designed by Eugene Stoner and his team in 1956, 75 years ago, was a selective-fire, automatic rifle intended for military use. Later, the Colt Firearms Co. marketed it to the military as the M16 rifle. In 1964, Colt redesigned the AR-15 for civilian use as a semi-automatic version of the M16 (one round per trigger pull).

The only significant difference between military and civilian assault rifles is that military rifles are capable of automatic fire, while civilian rifles are restricted to semiautomatic fire. However, the primary value of firing on automatic is for suppressive fire on the battlefield to enable maneuvering. It has no value for legal uses by civilians (i.e., sport shooting, hunting, and self-defense). When firing either military or civilian ammunition, AR-15-style rifles are actually more powerful than the military’s standard M4 assault rifle that replaced the M16.⁷ What is more important is that this ammunition can tumble upon impact when it hits a human body and then fragment, which makes it horribly deadly.

I understand the intense attachment of gun owners to their guns, especially as essential for protection for themselves and their family. As a Marine in Vietnam during my year in a combat zone, my assault rifle or my .45 were always within my sight to protect myself and my fellow Marines. But St. Paul’s City Hall and its parks, libraries, and community centers are not in a war zone. These public spaces should have the same protection from these weapons of war as our schools, day care centers, businesses, and churches.

⁷ The muzzle velocity of an AR-15 is not significantly different than for an M16 for both 5.56 NATO rounds and .223 Remington; and it has a greater muzzle velocity than the M4—7% greater firing 5.56 NATO rounds and 4% greater firing .223 Remington rounds.