

Obama: Constitution 'Constrains' Me

April 4, 2013



By [Ben Shapiro](#)

[Subscribe to Ben Shapiro RSS](#)

In his pursuit of overarching gun control legislation in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook massacre, President Barack Obama has been dogged. He's been relentless. He's been demagogic, too, whether flanking himself with schoolchildren (the implication being that his political opponents don't care about dead kids) or suggesting that if just one life can be saved by his legislation, we ought to buy into it wholeheartedly (a proposition that would justify almost any sort of government overreach).

But on Wednesday, President Obama took his gun control push a step further: He admitted that only the Constitution stands between him and full gun confiscation.

Rejecting concerns that new background checks might be a prelude to gun seizures, Obama suggested that worries about gun seizures were empty, and were only designed to feed "into fears about government. You hear some of these folks: 'I need a gun to protect myself from the government. We can't do background checks because the government's going to come take my guns away.' The government's us. These officials are elected by you. ... I am constrained as they are constrained by the system that our founders put in place."

This is deeply frightening language. The notion that government tyranny is impossible in an elective republic is insanity of the first order. Hitler was elected chancellor. Mussolini manipulated his way into power through constitutional means. Hamas was elected in the Gaza Strip. Mohammed Morsi and his thuggish Muslim Brotherhood were elected in Egypt. If rights are dependent on votes — if we only have a right to bear arms because a majority of the population elects politicians who say we have a right to bear arms — then we have no rights at all.

The point of rights is to guarantee them against government. That is why the founders stated that rights descend not from government — not from "us," as Obama would have it — but from God or nature. And in truth, Obama feels the same way about rights he thinks are universal, including the so-called right to same-sex marriage or the right to abortion. Reverse Obama's argument by stating that radical feminists worry about a complete ban on abortion, but that feeds into fears about government, which after all, is only "us." Would Obama agree with this? Or would he say that true rights cannot be violated, even by a majority vote?

Government is not us. Government is a group of people elected by us, who then use their own judgment. If government were us, we would be a pure democracy. And even if we were a pure democracy, that would not give us the right to violate the rights of others. The logic Obama uses with regard to gun control is the root of fascism and oppression. Liberalism is reliant on the concept of rights that supersede popular whim. And the greatest right — the right that protects all other rights, especially when popular whims turn against human liberties — is the right to bear arms.

If Americans weren't afraid of government violation of rights before Obama spoke about guns this week, they should be now. This is a president who cannot understand or willfully ignores the notion of tyrannical government. And if he refuses to see that possibility, then American rights are very much in jeopardy.

Featured Video



Iowa Fright: Obama Says If Michelle Lived There, She'd 'Probably Want a Gun, Too'



First Lady 'Trippin' Out' Over Harrison Ford



Chen: China Can't Expect a 'Savior' for Reform, There Must Be a 'Grassroots Movement'