

The Coming Conundrum

2019 0821

Thomas R. Cuba

Talk is talked. Bills are filed. Red flags, raised. Protests voiced. In the end, will we face a conundrum akin to the Riddle of the Two Shamans or worse, a Catch-22.

Looking at our possible futures, in one of them we see the potential for the government to go beyond outlawing auto-loading firearms. In that future, which has already been proposed, the government would initiate a mandatory 'buy-back' program. Such a law and program would make it illegal to possess or own an auto-loading firearm after the end of the buy-back period.

In such a future, today's owner of an auto-loading firearm will face the coming conundrum: Does the owner relinquish his firearm or does the owner obscure the fact that he has kept it?

The first option, to turn in the firearm, is a difficult choice. The responsible gun owner is typically also a person who respects the rule of law. The law was passed and signed, so is it to be respected? That same person, using that same philosophy, recognizes that the law is in violation of the Constitution. That same philosophy of freedom is the philosophy upon which America and the Constitution is built. Some, including the Founders, say that it is the duty of the responsible citizen to challenge that law and disobey it. Turning in the guns under an unconstitutional law might be seen as an act of acquiescence and subservience to that law. Turning in the guns is a capitulation to the lawmakers' error.

Unfortunately, refusing to turn in the firearm, while philosophically supportable as a choice, only serves to criminalize the owner, even if as a practical and perhaps temporary matter. The ramifications of the criminalization of the resisting citizen are potential incarceration and the probable loss of the right to vote. Losing the vote implies a lesser probability that new legislators can be elected who will repeal the law, thereby assuring its longevity.

There is no solution to this conundrum. To avoid facing it, The People must prevent the passage of such legislation in the first place.