

I have proposed resolution R63-2004 urging President Bush and Congress to extend the federal ban on assault weapons and also urging Gov. Blagojevich and the Illinois State Legislature to create a strong ban on assault weapons. If Congress fails to act, the federal ban will expire on September 13, 2004.

I am not proposing that Woodridge enact it's own assault weapons ban but rather that Congress gets its act together to extend the already existing federal ban and, as an alternative, Illinois enact a strong statewide ban. Such a federal or state ban would be much more effective than a patchwork of municipal bans.

The federal assault weapons ban prohibits the manufacture, transfer, or possession of certain semi-automatic assault weapons and the transfer or possession of large capacity ammunition feeding devices (those holding more than 10 rounds of ammunition). The law specifically bans 19 named models of weapons and any semi-automatic firearm with two or more assault weapons features with the ability to accept a detachable magazine.

Assault weapon features include:

- the ability to accept a detachable ammunition magazine, allowing for a higher rate and duration of fire, as well as faster reloading
- forward handgrips, barrel shrouds, and magazines protruding in front of the trigger, allowing the shooter to hold the firearm with two hands for greater control during rapid fire (when the muzzle of the gun can quickly get too hot to hold)
- thumbhole stocks and pistol grips on rifles and shotguns, facilitating spray fire from the hip and permitting increased control of the firearm
- folding or telescoping grips for concealability and mobility in combat, or
- muzzle brakes / compensators which help reduce recoil and muzzle movement caused by rapid fire.

These features clearly distinguish assault weapons from standard sporting firearms. In short, assault weapons are well designed to perform the military function of killing large numbers of people by making spray firing easier.

Fully automatic machine guns (that are already banned) continue to fire as long as the trigger is depressed. Semi-automatic weapons fire one round and instantly load the next round with each pull of the trigger which enables you to fire as rapidly as you can twitch your finger.

Shotguns, handguns, rifles and semi-automatic firearms without assault weapon features are not affected by the federal ban.

Does the federal assault weapons ban work? Yes. Let's look at some numbers. In 1993 (before the ban went into effect), there were 39,595 people killed by firearms in the United States. In 2001 (while the ban was in effect), there were 29,573 people killed by firearms in the United State. A difference of 10,022 lives saved or a 25% reduction in gun deaths. Now this includes all firearms so let's look at just deaths caused by assault weapons.

In 1993 (before the ban), assault weapons killed 3,246 people in the United States. All things being the same, you would think that there would be a similar 25% reduction in assault weapons deaths. But things were not equal – because the federal ban on assault weapons was enacted in 1994. So in 2001 (after the ban), assault weapons still killed 680 people. But that is a difference of 2,566 lives saved or a 79% reduction in assault weapons deaths. 25% reduction vs. 79% reduction. Why the difference? The federal ban on assault weapons.

Assault weapons kill a disproportionately high number of police officers. Despite comprising only 1% of the approximately 200,000,000 firearms in America, assault weapons were used in 20% of cop killings from 1998 to 2001 (that's 42 out of 211 officers killed or 1 in every 5 officers killed). And that was while the ban was in effect. This number is sure to rise if assault weapons are made legal again. When I look at my 54 sworn police officers, some of whom are here tonight, I want to be able to tell them I am doing everything in my power to keep them safe while they are keeping us safe. To do any less would be a dereliction of my duty as a Trustee.

One thing to keep in mind is that no law is 100% effective and no law receives 100% compliance. However, that does not mean that we throw all those laws away. My test for whether a law should remain on the books is whether the benefit of the law outweighs the burden of the law – what do we get against what do we give up.

We, as citizens, give up certain rights on many different occasions.

For example, I give up my right to drive my Police Interceptor 100 MPH down the side street because that is dangerous to the residents walking on the sidewalk or kids playing in front yards.

I give up my right to burn leaves on my property because the smoke may cause breathing problems or aggravate the asthma of my neighbors.

I give up my right to play my stereo loud at all hours of the night because that would destroy my neighbor's quiet enjoyment of their property.

With the Patriot Act, I give up some of my privacy in an effort to help law enforcement agent catch terrorists.

And I will give up my right to own a semi-automatic assault weapon because in doing so, it makes it a little harder for a criminal or terrorist to obtain one.

There is no more important issue to me that keeping Woodridge residents safe and Woodridge police officers safe. 27% of our budget next year, over \$7 million, is spent on the police department in an effort to keep our residents safe. Millions more are spent for smooth and safe streets, safe water, safe buildings. It is our duty to keep our Village safe

and we are clearly safer without assault weapons on our streets and it is our duty to not just talk about it, we must do something about it.

Since Woodridge is able to enact our own assault weapons ban if we desire, and this issue directly affects our residents, it is perfectly reasonable for the Village to petition our leaders in Springfield and Washington to enact a state ban or extend the federal ban on assault weapons because either of those bans would be more effective than just a municipal ban. This resolution is not an abuse of power, it is an exercise in good judgment.

I want fewer assault weapons on our streets, not more. I want to make it harder for criminals and terrorists to obtain assault weapons, not easier.

I believe that most citizens who put the safety and well being of others before themselves would gladly give up the right to own a semi automatic assault weapon if that would make the community a safer place.

I call upon my colleagues to approve the resolution.