

The Second Amendment and Lauren Boebert



PHOTOS BY DAVE GIBSON

Dave Gibson
Rifle

My first experience with guns was as a teenager when pheasant hunting with friends in an Illinois cornfield. With no training or advice, when a bird was flushed, I swung my shotgun around as the two people between the pheasant and myself hit the dirt. Unbeknownst to them, the safety was on and I never fired a shot. Years later, another friend wanted to shoot a revolver at some tin cans on

the way to our annual fishing trip at Spinney Mountain Reservoir. I didn't hit any of the cans, but did manage to accidentally squeeze off a round at my side into the dirt. To everyone's benefit and my own well-being, I've avoided them ever since.

I always thought the right to bear arms meant it was okay to go sleeveless. I personally find guns suitable for hunting and self-defense but don't think automatic and semiautomatic assault weapons should be legal. *Bowling for Columbine* filmmaker

Defending their rights

Above, left; A wanted poster in the lobby of the Comfort Inn. Above, right; Boebert's mother Shawna poses in front of the Pledge of Allegiance while waitressing on one of the final days at Shooters Grill.

and gun legislation advocate Michael Moore quipped on MSNBC after the Uvalde, Texas, school massacre that "Guns don't kill people – Americans kill people."

Both sides of the gun issue can be debated up, down, and around until we're blue in the face, but Moore suggests that the root of the problem may be part of our culture and it's time to take a deeper look at ourselves. Republicans' solution to the mass shooting epidemic seems to be installing armed security at every school, church, grocery store, theater, shopping mall, workplace, and public gathering in the country. In other words – more guns. Financial considerations aside, we can't even fill the job openings we have now.

They contend that it is a mental health issue – of course it is, only deranged individuals commit such unspeakable acts, but who is going to accurately judge who is hell-bent on committing murder? Perhaps, the most convincing argument against effective gun control is that we need weapons of war to protect ourselves from our own government. Believe me, if the government were out to get you, they would, regardless of what type of gun you owned (see Waco, Texas). Civilized countries like Canada, Australia, and the U.K. get by quite nicely without automatic and semiautomatic weapons with homicide rates a small fraction of our own. Just because the army has tanks, it shouldn't mean you have to own one also.

When the Constitution was written, bullets and machine guns hadn't been invented. Picture a scenario where, for whatever reason, a revolution backed by the majority of citizens took place and society had been relieved of


military-grade assault weapons. Even deadlier instruments of war would flood the U.S. so fast it would make your head swim. Fortunately for our democracy, Washington fat cats believe in the Constitution (or their interpretations thereof) and aren't in favor of revolutions unless your name happens to be Donald Trump.

In politics and religion, demagoguery will always appeal to simple-minded fundamental literalists. Republicans object when they think their gun rights are threatened yet have no qualms about stripping women of their reproductive rights.

Colorado U.S. Representative Lauren Boebert is anti-abortion and among those in the camp that believes the Second Amendment to be absolute, opposing any reform to current gun laws. Boebert first appeared in the national spotlight in September of 2019 when she confronted presidential hopeful Beto O'Rourke about his stance on gun control at a town hall meeting in Aurora, Colorado. With a Glock pistol holstered on her hip, she addressed Beto's comments of a few days earlier about his proposed mandatory semiautomatic rifle buyback plan. He had stated, "Hell yes, we're going to take your AR-15 and AK-47." Boebert countered, "I'm here to say, Hell no, you're not."

Disenchanted with Democratic candidates espousing Second Amendment views opposite of hers, she began her own campaign for Colorado U.S. Representative in the 3rd Congressional District. Made up of 480,000 people mostly covering the western half of the state, 33% of the registered voters were Republican, 28% Democrat, and 39% Independent.

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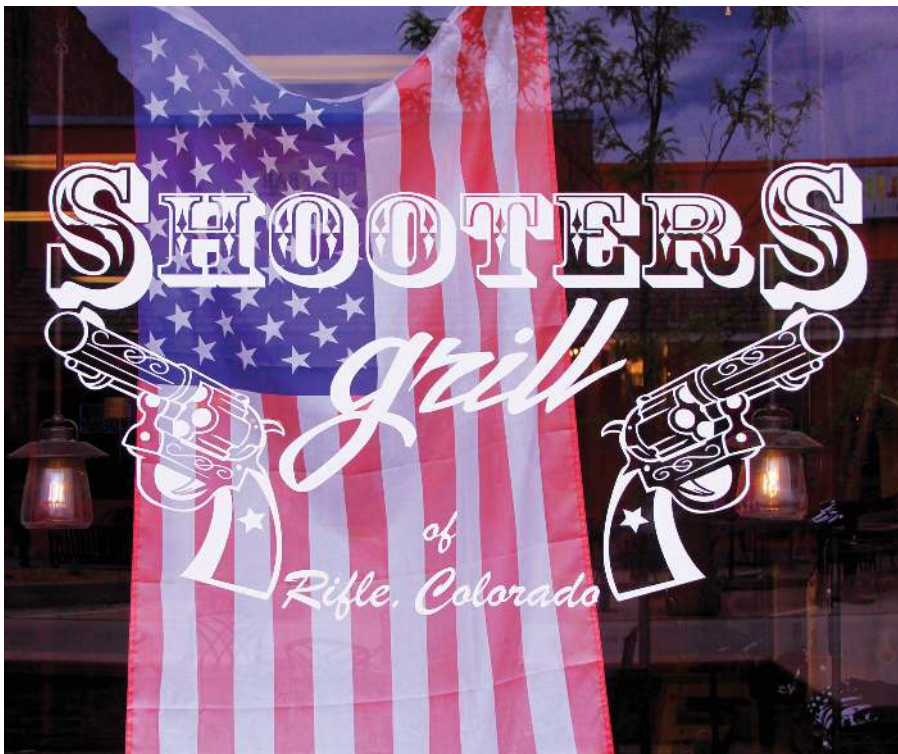
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In Rifle, Colorado

Top, left; One of the paintings decorating the inside of Shooters Grill. Top, right; A scary sentiment indeed. Bottom, right; Lauren Boebert's campaign poster. Another beside it read: This is Boebert Country. Bottom, left; The restaurant's logo and the American flag.

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Running as a Republican, her barebones campaign proposed limiting government regulation, expanding drilling and mining on federal lands, and protecting gun rights.

She defeated five-term incumbent Representative Scott Tipton in the primary by nine points. Her opponent was even endorsed by then-president Trump, but she was able to brand Tipton as part of "The Establishment" responsible for what she and a certain percentage of voters saw as heavy-handed coronavirus restrictions. Boebert went on to defeat Democrat Diane Mitsch Bush by a margin of 6% to gain her seat in Congress.

Almost immediately controversial, the morning of the January 6, 2021, Capitol Building insurrection she offered that the protestors were her people and later tweeted, "Today is 1776." Via Twitter, she divulged House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's location as the Capitol was being breached. Boebert also flippantly called Muslim Rep. Ilhan Omar a "jihad squad member from Minnesota." On March 1, 2022, she and Republican Rep. Marjorie Taylor Green of Georgia heckled President Joe Biden at his State of the Union Address.

With a humble work history beginning at McDonalds, before becoming a U.S. Congresswoman, Boebert and her husband Jason opened

the now defunct Smokehouse 1776 restaurant in Rifle, Colorado, and later Shooters Grill in 2013, also located there. The ironic name of the town she chose to conduct business is not lost and her waitstaff, as well as customers, are encouraged to wear their sidearms while at the establishment.

A notice on the door of Shooters Grill states, "Guns are welcome on premises. Please keep all firearms holstered unless need arises. In such case, judicious marksmanship is appreciated." More signage inside reads, "Due to the price on ammunition do not expect a warning shot"; "Smith & Wesson spoken here"; "Prayer is the best way to meet the lord - trespassing is faster"; and "Don't Tread on Me!"

Items on the menu include: Locked n' Loaded Nachos, Six Shooter Omelet, Daisy B.B. Burger, Shotgun Burrito, and for dessert, a Double Barrel Cookie.

I was surprised to learn that July 10, 2022, was to be the last day Shooters Grill would be in business. A waiter explained that their lease wasn't renewed because the new owner "didn't like guns." Lauren Boebert has already moved on to bigger things and the restaurant won't be reopened at another location. Even though she had done so thousands of times before, Boebert's mother Shawna graciously posed for a parting shot with her handgun.

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