As we begin the year with hope for the preservation of the individual Second Amendment civil right of law-abiding American citizens to keep and bear arms, we've got to take a good, hard look at some underlying cultural and political realities and resolve to fight on.

Gun rights advocates have achieved some spectacular successes in the electoral and judicial spheres recently. The U.S. Supreme Court decisions in McDonald v. Chicago and District of Columbia v. Heller as well as the election of gun rights supporters to seats in the U.S. Congress and in state legislatures certainly give all of us solid reason for hope in the ultimate preservation of our gun rights.

In the 2008 Heller case, the Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional a Washington, D.C. ordinance preventing the acquisition of handguns. In last year's McDonald decision, the Supreme Court ruled that state and local laws prohibiting handgun possession contradict the U.S. Constitution. Both cases were decided in gun owners' favor by narrow, 5-4 majorities.

Consider statements by Supreme Court Associate Justice Stephen Breyer, who sided with the minority in Heller and McDonald, even penning the Heller dissent. He said on a television talk show that the Founding Fathers never intended guns to go unregulated and that history stands with the minority dissent in the Heller case.

It's obvious that gun prohibitionists will try to overturn the Heller and McDonald decisions. Gun owners have to work to ensure that a gun prohibitionist majority does not dominate the Supreme Court. There have got to be enough genuinely pro-gun U.S. Senators to make sure no more gun prohibitionists are confirmed to the Supreme Court.

Also in December 2010, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives proposed that it be given emergency authority for half a year to require about 8,500 firearms dealers along the border with Mexico “to alert authorities when they sell within five consecutive business days two or more semiautomatic rifles greater than .22 caliber with detachable magazines.”

In other words, anti-gun rights personnel here again are trying to find an excuse, or rationale, in this case alleged Mexican drug cartel arms smuggling, to impose more gun controls on lawful activity regarding the firearms trade.

The underlying issue is the ability of law-abiding citizens to exercise gun rights without fear of the rights being taken away by court action, bureaucratic activity or other government interference.

The struggle continues and CCRKBA is in the thick of it.
When terrorists threaten to commit violent acts right here within the United States, it’s time for us Americans to take note and be on our guard.

We Americans need guns for self-protection. We need not only the right, which right has been affirmed for us in two recent landmark U.S. Supreme Court decisions. We need to be prepared to protect ourselves and our fellow citizens.

Public officials and their supporters who speak and work to undermine this opportunity in reality oppose the personal and public safety of the American citizenry.

Recent news reports make this quite clear to anyone not blinded by political correctness.

According to these reports, an Al Qaeda-affiliated magazine is urging individual Islamists in the United States to attack and kill as many Americans as they can in public gatherings.

If we wish to preserve our right to keep and bear arms, we must be able to have guns in order to use firearms to protect ourselves and our fellow citizens.

Obviously, people who work in our Nation’s Capital or anywhere else must be able to have guns in order to stop terrorists in their tracks and prevent the massacre of innocent people.

For years, a Washington, D.C. ordinance prohibited the acquisition of handguns by private citizens. Fortunately, this was declared a violation of the individual Second Amendment civil right to keep and bear arms by the United States Supreme Court. This was two years ago in its landmark District of Columbia v. Heller decision.

Since then, however, politicians, augmented by elite establishment journalists, educators and clergy, have been dragging their feet in implementing the spirit of Heller.

Now, still, with a new anti-gun law in place, citizens find it next to impossible legally to obtain and use the handguns they need to protect themselves from the threat to life, freedom, democracy, and religion.

It’s time for anti-gun laws in the District of Columbia and throughout the United States to go by the boards so that law-abiding Americans can get, carry and use firearms to protect themselves, their families and their co-workers from terrorists, as well as, from other violent criminals.

In a report last month published by The Telegraph in the United Kingdom, regarding terrorism in the United States, Alex Spillius wrote that, “In unusually candid remarks, Michael Leiter, Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, said that the nation’s defenses probably would be breached by a home-grown radical, after a year-long period containing several failed or thwarted attacks that had seen the most intense terror activity since September 11, 2001.

Although we aim for perfection, perfection will not be achieved. Just like any other endeavor, we will not stop all the attacks,” he said.4

Those who work against gun rights in Washington, D.C. and throughout the United States should beware. If it so happens that people are murdered, are massacred, because politically correct elitists spoke and worked successfully to prevent citizens from getting, carrying, and using self-defense guns, the blood of the innocent will be on their hands.

CCRKBA has been, is, and will continue to be in the forefront of the battle to protect our traditional, individual Second Amendment civil right to keep and bear arms. We need it now at least as much as we’ve ever needed it.

An FBI employee is among the citizens and groups filing suit in federal court to overturn New Jersey state gun laws because they violate the United States Constitution.

Daniel Pizzacatasso, of Wayne, New Jersey, an FBI civilian employee, serves as the program coordinator for the New York imaging services unit.

In a recent lawsuit, plaintiffs seek a declaratory judgment that New Jersey law vesting uncontrolled discretion in the hands of state officials to grant or deny permit to carry firearm applications and to grant, deny, limit, or restrict permits to carry is facially invalid under the Second and Fourteenth Amendments. The complaint was filed in the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey by David Jensen and Robert Firriolo, attorneys for the plaintiffs.

Pizzacatasso also is a warrant officer with the United States Coast Guard. In his capacity as a warrant officer, he has the statutory power of arrest. At times in the past, Pizzacatasso has carried a handgun while performing his Coast Guard duties, but at the present time is not qualified to perform any such duties.

In October 2009, FBI authorities advised Pizzacatasso and other FBI employees that it had received information that a specified Islamic fundamentalist group planned criminal attacks against FBI employees and their family members in retaliation for the treatment of Muslims by the United States government. The FBI warned that the group might follow law enforcement officials home from work and attempt to kidnap or kill the employees or their family members.

Shortly thereafter, Pizzacatasso was dismayed to learn that an internet search for his name revealed both his home address and the fact that he was employed by the FBI.

Pizzacatasso desires to carry a handgun to protect himself and his family from the risk that terrorists or other criminals may target him because of his current or past activities with the FBI and the Coast Guard.

Separate and apart from any threat posed on account of his employment, Pizzacatasso would carry a functional handgun in public for self-defense, but refrains from doing so because he fears arrest, prosecution, fine, and imprisonment for lack of a permit to carry such a weapon.

Pizzacatasso applied for a permit to carry from Chief Donald Stouthamer of the Police Department for Wayne Township, New Jersey in February 2010. It was approved in May.

Pizzacatasso, pursuant to New Jersey law, the approved license application was sent to the Passaic County, New Jersey Superior Court. Judge Rudolph R. Grafton considered the application. He denied it last November on the ground that Pizzacatasso did not have a “justifiable need,” as required by New Jersey law, even though Pizzacatasso met all other requirements to obtain a permit to carry.

The suit argues that the New Jersey handgun permit laws are facially invalid under the Second and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States in that, and to the extent that, they vest state officials with the uncontrolled discretion to deny permits to carry, and require citizens to show a “justifiable need” and “urgent necessity” to obtain permits to carry.

The suit argues that the New Jersey statutes violate the Second and Fourteenth Amendments because the exercise of fundamental constitutional rights cannot be conditioned on “justifiable need” or “urgent necessity.”

It states that New Jersey law conditions the approval and issuance of a permit to carry on the existence of “justifiable need,” defined as “urgent necessity for self-protection,” as evidenced by specific threats or previous attacks which demonstrate a special danger to the applicant’s life that cannot be avoided by means other than by issuance of a permit to carry a handgun,” and that this contravenes plaintiffs’ enjoyment of their constitutional rights in fact.
As of the middle December, Amtrak passengers once again could transport firearms and ammunition under certain provisions. Prior to the September 11, 2001 Islamist terrorist attacks, passengers could check their guns on trains. With the reaction to the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon, there was a tightening of restrictions and an increase in regulations. Then, after the terrorist train bombings in Madrid, Spain in 2004, a total ban on the regular passenger transport of firearms and ammunition on board trains in the United States went into effect.

CCRKBA supported a legislative initiative by Sen. Roger Wicker (MS) to remove the restrictions so that passengers once again could transport firearms and ammunition on Amtrak. In 2009, Sen. Wicker led a bipartisan majority of 67 members in the Senate in support of an amendment lifting restrictions as an attachment to the transportation spending bill. The bill with the amendment then was included in a general bill to fund transportation. This was known and followed by all federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, but the existence of such a firearm must be declared. All ammunition carried must be securely packed within the container of the key or the combination for the lock to the container. The weight of the container may not exceed 50 lb/23 kg. Smaller locked, hard-sided containers containing smaller unloaded firearms such as handguns and starter pistols must be securely stored within a suitcase or other item of checked baggage; but the existence of such a firearm must be declared.

As with your US Senators and Congresspersons, the old saying applies: keep your friends close and your enemies closer. Even if they are not with you on the issues, they have the responsibility to keep you informed of movement on these issue(s). When you call or write your legislators and the citizenry is concerned. This is the time to contact your state legislators (Senators and Representatives/Assemblypersons/Delegates), introduce yourselves, and share with them the issues that are important to you (not the least of which is the right to keep and bear arms!). Ask them to keep you informed of their support of international agreements that curtail Americans’ Second Amendment rights expose the underhanded and blatant example of political hypocrisy, the headline ‘Obama Backs Gun Rights’ appeared over an article by Paul Bedard in U.S. News last November. “Gun owners rejoice,” wrote Bedard. “President Obama backs the Second Amendment. Period. And he does it in writing.”

Citizen Action Project

Most state legislatures will be going into session this month. Typically, state legislatures are part-time bodies. Because of their short session, things move faster at the state level. Republicans won more than 800 new state legislative seats nationwide, and now control both chambers in several states, while sharing control in several more. Theoretically, and we stress the theoretically, this should give gun owners some respite, and maybe even the opportunity to make significant gains.

State legislative bodies are usually less formal than Congress, at least as far as interaction between legislators and the citizenry is concerned. This is the time to contact your state legislators (Senators and Representatives/Assemblypersons/Delegates), introduce yourselves, and share with them the issues that are important to you (not the least of which is the right to keep and bear arms!). Ask them to keep you informed of movement on these issue(s).

Legislative office telephone numbers are available in the blue “Government” pages in your telephone directory, or on the internet at the state legislature web sites. E-mail addresses are usually available on the web site as well. As with your US Senators and Congresspersons, the old saying applies: keep your friends close and your enemies closer. Even if they are not with you on the issues, they have the responsibility to keep you informed as a constituent service.
Throughout history, America has been blessed with the patriotic services and commitment of individuals who, even though affected adversely by tragedy, have rendered through determination and dedication, great service to our country.

This is the case in the ongoing battle to promote an anti-gun agenda. The fact that opponents of Second Amendment rights are attempting to connect tough gun laws with a reduction in suicide, “we are tacitly acknowledging that part of the evil acts, with guns,” he stated. "Efforts to frame the gun control debate as a public health issue are failing. We need to instead concentrate on suicides, is an admission that calls for a prescription for disarmament.”

One of the articles, written by Garen Wintemute, Anthony Braga, and John R. Lott, Jr. wrote recently in the journal of the American Public Health Association, he speculated that Rendell may be trying to find a way to avoid providing any evidence that these or any other background checks reduce crime. Further, they conveniently overlook the only research that has been done on what the consequence framework to help lower courts determine the constitutionality of challenged gun control laws. "It's a huge change in our understanding of the amendment, but not necessarily a huge change in what kinds of gun control laws are constitutional,' says Duke University assistant law professor Joseph Blocher. "There's a lot to be fleshed out. The court in Heller almost hit the reset button on the Second Amendment. Now we need to figure out again what’s OK and what’s not OK.”

In Manila, Philippines last month, Justice Secretary Leila de Lima supported a proposal to allow judges to carry firearms to defend themselves amid rising cases of attacks targeting them, reported Edu Puryn in The Philippine Star. This developed as the Supreme Court continued with its program to prepare and train judges nationwide to defend themselves from possible attacks that could be related to their work.