



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on May 27, 2021

Biden's ATF Nominee David Chipman to Ban All "Assault-type" Weapons

During a Senate confirmation hearing on Monday, Senator Ted Cruz (R-Texas) pressed Biden pick, David Chipman, who is poised to head the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), to explain his position on banning the popular semi-automatic AR-15 rifle. [Asked Cruz](#), "The AR-15 is one of if not the most popular rifles in America. It's not a machine gun, it's a rifle. Your public opinion is that you want to ban AR-15s. Is that correct?"

Chipman was crystal clear: "With respect to the AR-15, I support a ban."



He then expanded on his remark, calling the rifle "particularly lethal":

The AR-15 is a gun I was issued on ATF's S.W.A.T. team and it's a particularly lethal weapon, and regulating it as other particularly lethal weapons, I have advocated for.

This was the first among many lies, distortions, and prevarications that punctuated the nominee's responses to intense probing and questions by Republican senators. The lie: the firearm Chipman was issued was no doubt a fully automatic weapon, capable of firing many rounds rapidly with a single press of the trigger. This is a far cry from popular AR-15s now owned by an estimated 20 million law-abiding American citizens.

The second statement — that the AR-15 is a "particularly lethal weapon" — is even more chilling: it suggests that the mere ownership of the firearm provides sufficient proof that its owner is intent on committing mayhem and, it would follow, he should be banned for owning the weapon.

Chipman prevaricated, when asked by Senator Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) to define an "assault weapon": "An assault weapon would be ... what Congress defines it as," trying to avoid the question.

Cotton pressed Chipman: "Can you tell me what is an assault weapon? How would you define it if you were the head of the ATF?" Chipman finally came up with an answer: "any semi-automatic rifle capable of accepting a detachable magazine above the caliber of .22, which would include the .223 which is largely, you know, the AR-15 round."

Cotton leaped at his response: "I'm amazed ... that might be the definition of an assault weapon ... that would basically cover every single modern sporting rifle in America today!"

Cotton missed an opportunity: under Chipman's definition nearly every semi-automatic weapon — rifles *and* handguns — would be banned if the nominee had his way. That would include the 9mm, 40 caliber, and popular .45 calibers for which most handguns are chambered to accept.

Senator Cotton was just getting warmed up:



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On March 25, Politico reported that Hunter Biden, President Biden's son, applied for a handgun that was later thrown in the trash and had to be recovered by Secret Service agents in 2018. Politico reported that Hunter Biden completed this background check and answered "no" to the question of whether he was an unlawful user or addicted to any drug.

Hunter Biden has since published a book and gone on a nation-wide book tour conducting numerous interviews stating that he was, in fact, very much addicted to drugs at the same time that he purchased this firearm. This would mean that by his own admission Hunter Biden lied on that form, and by your earlier testimony, committed a serious felony.

Should Hunter Biden be prosecuted for breaking the law?

Chipman's effort to evade the question was revealing:

If I'm confirmed as ATF director, it will be my responsibility to enforce all federal laws without political favor. I do not know any factors in this particular case, but I am familiar with the press account of it.

His response was totally inadequate, and Cotton pressed Chipman again:

Can I get your commitment that if you are confirmed you will, in fact, look into this matter and refer it for prosecution if you find that Hunter Biden violated the law?

Chipman sidestepped the question once again:

I will ensure that all violations of law are investigated and referred to.

And then came the master stroke that topped the lengthening list of Chipman's double-speak prevarications:

I'm not sure that it has not been investigated.

For all intents and purposes, the confirmation was over and Chipman is history. Other senators peppered the nominee with questions about his comments that mocked new gun owners who have been setting records in acquiring firearms. Senator Mike Lee (R-Utah) summed them up: "It concerns me that you, as the nominee to be the director of the ATF, would have such a flippant and, if I may say so, utterly condescending attitude toward first-time gun owners in this country. Why would you choose to insult so many of your fellow Americans with a statement like this based on the fact that they purchased a gun?"

Other senators quizzed the nominee about his comments following the ATF's attack on the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas, in 1993. Chipman said: "Cult members used two .50 caliber [automatic weapons] to shoot down two Texas National Guard helicopters."

Again, the nominee waffled:

I could have done a better job describing them as being "forced down" because of the



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gunfire, as opposed to shot down, which might have left the impression that they were blown out of the sky, which they were not.

I regret that confusion.

Chipman was one of the chief investigators into the Waco incident and so had to know his statement was a canard. It was only under public pressure brought by the senators that he even came close to apologizing, calling it a “confusion” that he “regrets.”

Chipman lied when he was pressed by Senator John Cornyn (R-Texas): “Is a law-abiding gun owner a threat to public safety, in your view?”

Chipman revealed his anti-gun, and anti-gun owner, ideology:

Thank you for that question, senator. If the term “law-abiding” means someone has lawfully possessed a gun, there are often occasions that that person then goes on to commit a violent crime.

Wrong. Very few of the horrific mass shootings Americans have witnessed and suffered involve a rifle; the vast majority involve handguns. Semi-automatic rifles are almost never involved.

Aidan Johnston, spokesman for Gun Owners of America (GOA), summed up Chipman’s performance:

Today clearly showed that David Chipman is too radical to lead an agency that should not exist in the first place. The tyrannical gun control advocated by Chipman will be totally ineffective to stop criminals.

That “tyrannical gun control” refers to the bill offered by Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) in March. The proposed bill would ban more than 200 firearms, including the AR-15, the AK-47, and Uzi models.

But this bill has little chance of passage. Only 35 Senate Democrats have co-sponsored it, and it will take 60 votes for passage. A similar bill offered by anti-gun/anti-gun owner senators in 2013 received only 40 votes.

Chipman’s dismal performance could have lasting and favorable implications for worried gun owners. If he is confirmed, every gun owner in the country will know that the government has now officially declared war on his right to purchase, own, and use firearms, and they will remember come election time in November 2022. And they will continue to purchase them in record numbers.

If Chipman isn’t confirmed, the next in line to be nominated by Biden to head the ATF will face the same sharp questioning, providing Americans with still another opportunity to appreciate the lengths to which the Biden administration is prepared to go in its attempt to disarm them.

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