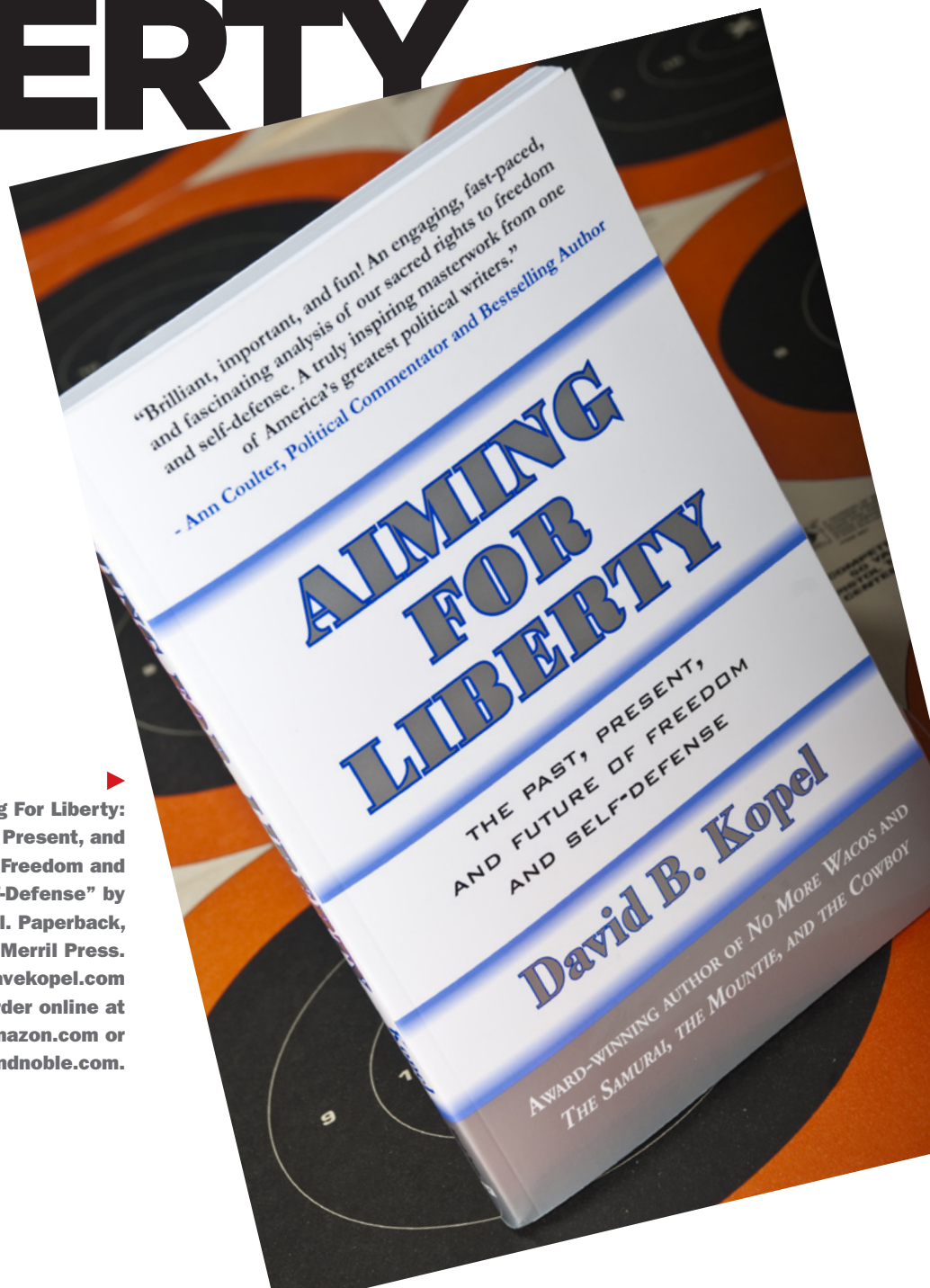


DAVE KOPEL: AIMING FOR LIBERTY



►
"Aiming For Liberty:
The Past, Present, and
Future of Freedom and
Self-Defense" by
David Kopel. Paperback,
182 pp., Merril Press.
Visit www.davekopel.com
or order online at
www.amazon.com or
www.barnesandnoble.com.

DAVE KOPEL HAS A NEW BOOK OUT.

This news, no doubt, will thrill many *America's 1st Freedom* readers. For the 10 years this publication has been providing NRA members and other freedom lovers with the latest in gun-rights news and commentary, Dave Kopel has been there. Even since the magazine's previous incarnation—*American Guardian*—Kopel has been at the forefront of the pro-gun debate with vital arguments for the protection of the Second Amendment.



Dave Kopel

by
BLAINE SMITH,
Associate Editor

As Kopel's daughter said when she was in the third grade, her father's job "is to tell people what he thinks." And judging by the mail our editorial staff receives daily from readers, what Kopel thinks and writes for these pages is an overwhelming favorite.

Take this sampling of "Mail Call" letters, from just the past year alone, commending Kopel's work:

- "Thank you, *America's 1st Freedom*, for printing the excellent Feb. 2010 article 'Showdown Over Chicago' by Dave Kopel. The article is so well written and easily understandable ..." (May 2010).

- "Dave Kopel's article in the September issue, 'What's the Difference Between a "Living Constitution" and a Dead Document?' is simply outstanding ... The same is true of his other article in the same issue, 'Will the Supreme Court Set Speech Free?' I always look forward to reading articles by Dave Kopel ..." (November 2009).

- "Dave Kopel's piece on Harold Koh ('Koh, No!') was most revealing and scary ..." (Sept. 2009).

In short, Kopel's ability to explain the issues of most importance to gun owners keeps readers coming back for more. And Kopel's ability to connect with the readers of *America's 1st Freedom* keeps him writing for these pages.

"The NRA is America's oldest and most effective civil rights organization," Kopel said. "And *America's 1st Freedom* is the magazine for NRA members who are especially interested and active in protecting our fundamental human rights. So writing for *1st Freedom* is a unique opportunity to share ideas with some of the most effective civil rights citizen-activists in the world."

Now, with his new book "Aiming For Liberty: The Past, Present, and Future of

Freedom and Self-Defense," Kopel has, in a single volume, collected, updated and expanded dozens of his select writings that have appeared in *America's 1st Freedom* and other journals over the past 25 years.

"I've been writing at a pretty intense pace for the last quarter-century," Kopel said, "so it was time to look at some of the essays I had written, revise them and put them together in an organized way that would express some broad themes."

Having first appeared not only in *America's 1st Freedom*, but also in *National Review*, *Reason*, *Liberty*, *Chronicles* and the *National Law Journal*, the essays presented in "Aiming For Liberty" are an indispensable primer on American freedom and self-defense—themes that Kopel finds are inextricably linked.

"The most fundamental human right of all is self-defense," Kopel said. "If you are defenseless, then none of your other rights can be secure. That's the lesson of what happened in the South at the end of Reconstruction when black people were disarmed and Jim Crow was imposed. That's the lesson of the Communist, Fascist, Islamist and National Socialist tyrannies of the last century and of the present.

"Arms are essential tools for self-defense," he added. "In particular, firearms are the only tool that can reliably allow a smaller person to defend herself at a distance from a group of larger attackers. A world without guns is a world in which the stronger have free rein to prey on the weaker."

Divided into chapters such as "Gun Control and Discrimination," "The Anti-Gun Agenda," "Religious Perspectives," "International Freedom," "Schools and Children," "Culture," "American Heroes" and one chapter on the landmark *District of Columbia v. Heller* Supreme Court case

—with each chapter consisting of three to seven essays—Kopel’s discussions of gun rights, culture, personal freedom and the historical and contemporary context of each cohere into a singular manifesto of American liberty.

“Aiming For Liberty” underscores the importance of the Second Amendment in protecting American freedoms and the threats these freedoms face today.

At the Independence Institute, a free market think tank where Kopel is research director, his work—like “Aiming for Liberty”—isn’t focused solely on pro-gun initiatives. Nevertheless, this work, like his new book, reinforces our firearm freedoms.

“Since 1992,” Kopel said, “I’ve enjoyed the opportunity to guide our senior fellows and other scholars (at the Independence Institute) who write on education, health care, tax policy, transportation and many other issues.

Over the years, I’ve seen how one type of liberty often supports another.

“For example,” he said, “if tax and regulatory policy doesn’t stifle the formation of small businesses, then more people can create small businesses, and the spirit of self-reliance, responsibility and creativity that makes a small business successful also promotes other aspects of individuals and families taking responsibility for their well-being—such as making the choice to own a firearm.”

The importance of Kopel’s writing isn’t found only in the legions of pro-gun and pro-freedom proponents he has educated and motivated; his writing also impacted the outcome of the *Heller* case.

“I wrote an *amicus* brief on behalf of the Independence Institute and a large coalition of law enforcement organizations and leaders. This included the International Law

Enforcement Educators and Trainers Association, half the district attorneys in California, and many more,” Kopel said. “The brief presented the empirical evidence that guns in the right hands substantially help public safety; that ordinary American citizens have proven that they are responsible firearms owners; that for many people, handguns are the best choice for self-defense; and that mainstream law enforcement strongly supports the Second Amendment.

“In addition, I helped coordinate many other *amicus* briefs,” he said. “Not by writing anything for those briefs, but by providing suggestions about how different *amici* could focus on particular issues which would not duplicate the work of other *amici*, and by providing advice about how arguments could be improved.”

Following oral arguments in the *Heller* case, Kopel produced for the pages of *America’s 1st Freedom* a stunning first-hand account of the oral arguments in one of the most important Supreme Court cases in recent history (“Ringside at the Supreme Court,” June 2008, p. 32).

In addition to his schedule of writing and leading research at the Independence Institute, Kopel also teaches advanced constitutional law at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law—where he has the unique perspective of seeing the *Heller* ruling, which he had a hand in winning, influence the next generation of policymakers and lawmakers.

“The Second Amendment is no longer being ignored in the law schools,” Kopel said. “Almost all American education, starting with middle school civics and American history, will now be presenting the Second Amendment as a standard right of ordinary Americans to own ordinary guns for self-defense and other legitimate purposes.

“This creates a virtuous cycle,” Kopel said. “As more and more young people develop an awareness of their constitutionally protected right to arms, the political center of gravity will continue to move in a pro-rights direction, and so courts and legislatures will become more confident

POINT OF VIEW:

KOPEL ON INTERNATIONAL THREATS TO SECOND AMENDMENT RIGHTS

With the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *District of Columbia v. Heller* that the Second Amendment protects an individual Right to Keep and Bear Arms, with many court observers anticipating incorporation of the Second Amendment against the states in *McDonald v. Chicago*, and with the Obama administration placing its anti-gun agenda on hold at this time, it seems gun rights in America are on a somewhat more firm footing these days.

Yet Dave Kopel warns that international anti-gun efforts could prove crushing to our Second Amendment rights.

“There are many different ways in which international law can be infiltrated into the American legal system, and hardly any of them require explicit congressional approval,” Kopel said. “The international gun prohibition organizations are working closely with their American counterparts in order to internationalize American law, and thereby subject the Second Amendment to the ‘norms’ invented by the United Nations and the rest of the international prohibition movement.

“More generally, as long as governments in other nations are getting away with denying human rights in those nations, those governments will find it politically advantageous to attack human rights in the United States,” he said. “The Mexican government’s current attack on American gun ownership is one example. The route to long-term security for our American rights is to stop the foreign attacks, rather than foolishly imagining that we will be able to fend off forever a relentless series of foreign attacks.”

in taking action to protect Second Amendment rights.”

Just as Kopel’s new book educates readers about the fundamentals of American liberties—with the Second Amendment standing as a pillar of these liberties—and as he educates readers monthly in the pages of *America’s 1st Freedom*, he is educating coming generations of these selfsame truths.

“My students—like more and more

law students to come—are learning constitutional law with the right to arms in its rightful place alongside our other fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of the press and the free exercise of religion,” Kopel said. “Over time, these younger lawyers will replace the remaining judges who have refused to respect Second Amendment rights.”

With individuals like Kopel

disseminating the truth about the Right to Keep and Bear Arms—be it in the courtroom, in the classroom, in *America’s 1st Freedom* or in books such as “Aiming For Liberty”—the battle for Second Amendment rights remains pitched in our favor. For where truth and liberty lie, the cause is never lost.

America’s 1st Freedom readers will no doubt delight in Kopel’s dispatches from the front lines. **TF**

IS DAVE KOPEL A BUSY MAN?

You could say that.

Kopel has written more than 10 books, including “The Samurai, the Mountie, and the Cowboy,” named 1992 Book of the Year by the American Society of Criminology, Division of International Criminology. His newspaper articles have appeared in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. Among his journal publications are articles in the Johns Hopkins School of Strategic and International Studies *SAIS Review*, *Michigan Law Review* and the *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*. He has been cited by eight state supreme courts and in more than 400 law review articles.

Aside from Kopel’s positions as research director at the Independence Institute and professor of law at the University of Denver, he is an associate policy analyst at the Cato Institute and a contributing editor for *Information Technology & Telecom News*, *Gun Week* and *Firearms & Outdoor Trade*. He’s been a media critic for the *Saturday Rocky Mountain News/Denver Post*, a regular panelist on Channel 12’s “Colorado Inside Out” and a blogger on the popular Volokh Conspiracy weblog. Kopel is also an NRA-certified Pistol and Personal Protection instructor.

—from the Independence Institute website and www.davekopel.com

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