

OPINION: 222 people on New Bedford's gun license waitlist – a clear violation of the constitution

In many ways, Coronavirus has eroded our constitutional rights to include your right to own a firearm. Currently, 222 people are on the gun license waitlist in New Bedford, and the next available appointment on December 22. In Swansea, a town with 1/6 the population of New Bedford, there are 200 people waiting for an appointment to get a gun license.

Since early this year, coronavirus has been used by the federal, state, and local government to restrict freedoms – in some cases rightfully so, but in other cases infringing on the constitution. In Massachusetts, State and local governments have used coronavirus as a reason to pause issuing gun licenses to include victims of domestic violence, police officers, and others that may have a significant need to own a firearm. These are the same government officials that have approved of Black Lives Matter protests as constitutionally protected – selectively deciding what part of the constitution is valid. You can stand side-by-side with thousands of people with or without masks for hours, but you can't socially distance yourself to a gun license.

Across the country, judges are freeing inmates in the name of coronavirus while leaving the victims vulnerable because of coronavirus. Take the case of Ibrahim Bouaichi in Virginia. **He was accused of raping Karla Dominguez last October.** On April 9, over the objections of the prosecutor, Circuit Court Judge Nolan Dawkins released Bouaichi on a \$25,000 bond because of the dangers of coronavirus. On July 29, Bouaichi shot and killed Dominguez outside her apartment. Coronavirus is used to

free criminals and also used to keep us defenseless against them.

Here in Massachusetts, 39-year old Shawn McClinton had two prior rape convictions and was being held for a third rape charge before he **was set free after the Massachusetts Bail Fund posted his \$15,000 bail**. He was released on July 15th and arrested and charged for a fourth rape with a knife three weeks later. In Massachusetts, judges and politicians seem more concerned about convicted criminals' rights than the victims of crime. They clearly are fine with keeping legally qualified citizens unarmed.

Police departments are starting to continue the gun license process again in Massachusetts, but it can take several months just to get the training and then another several months just to get an interview with your chief of police. This is due to a several month-long pause forced by state and local government. Unfortunately, our legislators spend more time freeing criminals and allowing protests than they do ensure citizens are allowed to own a gun – something constitutionally protected.

Fed up? **Contact your legislators** and remind them that coronavirus should not be used to keep us unprotected while they allow criminals to be put back into society. You can find your legislators here:
<https://malegislature.gov/search/findmylegislator>