

**SEVENTY-EIGHTH NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH
SEPTEMBER 3-5, 1996**

Resolution No. 81: Enforcement of Criminal Laws

Origin: Illinois

Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security

WHEREAS, The seemingly uncontrollable increase of violent crimes in this nation during the past decade is a matter of grave concern to our citizens; and

WHEREAS, The Crime Bill enacted by the 104th Congress to ban so-called "assault weapons" and large capacity magazines was passed under the assumption that these weapons are the choice of criminals; and

WHEREAS, Such firearms are used in less than a fraction of one percent of all violent crimes; and

WHEREAS, Such regulatory laws are only obeyed by law-abiding citizens and are ignored by those who hold our criminal codes in disdain, with little or no effect in halting the increase in crime; and

WHEREAS, Logic indicates that effective deterrent of these crimes must come from strict enforcement of existing laws with certain and severe penalties for the criminal misuse of firearms; and

WHEREAS, The House of Representatives recently passed legislation to repeal this ban but the issue was not considered in the Senate; and

WHEREAS, The public has agreed from time immemorial that all serious crimes against society as a whole must be punished speedily and vigorously to discourage others from committing such crimes; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Salt Lake City, Utah, September, 3, 4, 5, 1996, That The American Legion reaffirms its long held stand that the efforts of government should be directed to the enforcement of existing laws rather than banning the possession of firearms by the millions of our citizens who desire them for traditionally legitimate purposes; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urges the nation's press, television and radio commentators and governmental agencies to cease seeking a panacea for this problem by the enactment of more laws; instead, the media should urge more effective enforcement of present laws directed against criminal actions, assure speedy trials unencumbered by technical defenses, forbid plea bargaining in violent crimes, impose safeguards against unwarranted probation and parole of convicted persons, and initiate long overdue reforms of our penal system so that it incarcerates enemies of society while rehabilitating young wrong-doers who are not yet hardened criminals.