



## The Second Amendment Is Essential Act

Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-WA)

***The Second Amendment Is Essential Act* will classify, by law, the firearms industry as a “critical infrastructure sector” and those it employs as “essential workers”** by amending the *Homeland Security Act of 2002* and the *USA Patriot Act of 2001*. The changes define any business or employees who, manufacture, or deal firearms and ammunition as a critical infrastructure for the purposes of federal guidance to States during an emergency.

The Founders were clear in their drafting of the Second Amendment that the right to bear arms is necessary to the security of a free State. In other words, **the Second Amendment is essential** to our system of government.

Unfortunately, Governors across the country, including Jay Inslee, have used the COVID-19 pandemic as justification to disregard the founders’ intent to preserve this right, **excluding those in the firearms industry from “essential worker” designations.**

While “essential worker” designations have been arbitrarily decided and enforced from the outset, forcibly shuttering the doors of those who enable Americans to exercise their second amendment rights is obviously the result of a **radical anti-gun agenda.**

The Homeland Security Act of 2002 directed the Administrator of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to establish guidelines for States regarding who should constitute “critical infrastructure workers” in the event of a natural disaster, act of terrorism, or other man-made disaster. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, **we have often referred to these individuals as “essential workers.”**

Similarly, the USA Patriot Act defined “critical infrastructure” as “systems and assets, whether physical or virtual, so vital to the United States that the **incapacity or destruction of such systems and assets would have a debilitating impact** on security, national economic security, national public health or safety, or any combination of those matters.” There is no question: the firearms industry is vital to the security of the American people.

Americans’ rights, including the right to keep and bear arms, are no less essential during a state of emergency. In fact, **the right to defend one’s self and one’s home is most essential during a state of emergency.** Furthermore, states of emergency merit heightened vigilance to protect against unnecessary and unconstitutional government outreach.

In 2020, gun sales increased by 64% as Americans sought to exercise their Second Amendment right so they could have peace of mind during a turbulent time. Firearms manufacturers and dealers should not be forced by government to close in a time when demand for their products is through the roof. This legislation will ensure that the Second Amendment can be freely enjoyed by Americans when they need it most: in times of crisis.

The National Shooting Sports Foundation, the National Rifle Association, and the Gun Owners of America support this legislation.