

Biennial Meeting of States  
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Second Amendment Foundation  
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Mr. Chairman, I am Julianne Versnel and I represent the Second Amendment Foundation of the United States. We consider the rights of firearm's owners to be of primary and fundamental importance, in fact, a natural right. This is what our statement is oriented toward. Today, Mr. Chairman, I would like to briefly speak to this right as a woman.

Much of the policy discussion surrounding the Programme of Action has been concerned with so called "gender issues." These gender issues are to a great extent issues concerning women as victims. No one would deny that women are the victims of much of the untoward violence in today's world.

Mr. Chairman, as a woman I particularly identify and empathize with women as victims. In the context of this meeting and the Programme of Action, the question becomes how to best protect women from becoming victims. Let me offer what might be a strange sounding answer to many of you.

You do not protect women by disarming them or those who would protect them.

The agents of a state, be they police, military or other, can not be relied upon as the sole protectors of women in today's world. Indeed, it is a terrible fact, that those very protectors are, too many times, the perpetrators of violence against women.

It is far beyond the capacity of this short statement to adequately discuss this point. Again, this may seem a different perspective, but future POA policies or projects which have the effect of taking the means away from women to defend themselves against rape, murder, mutilation or sexual enslavement, should be avoided.

Mr. Chairman, I began by mentioning rights. In 1948 the UN adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 3 states that everyone has the right to life, liberty and the security of person. It is my view that inherent in the security of person is the fundamental right of every woman to protect herself. When phrased this way Mr. Chairman, the natural right to defense of self does not sound so strange.

As the Programme of Action is evaluated and implemented let us keep in mind this fundamental right.