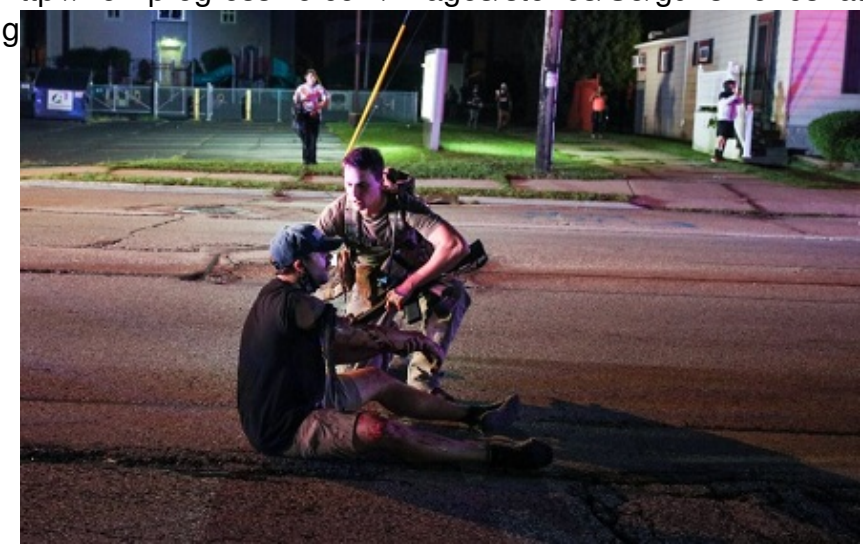
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***Gun advocates push for looser restrictions, bipartisan bills on police reform move forward, federal recovery money starts rolling in.***

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MADISON - In a begrudging or perverse sort of way, you have to give some credit to Wisconsin worshipers of the Second Amendment for their determination to keep this country's status as the gun capital of the world.

Enough is never enough for those who appear to value gun ownership more than human lives.

No amount of firearms violence deters them from their mission. Mass shootings are almost a daily occurrence. And the response of the gun lobby is to press for more protections – not for the public, but for the gun industry and gun owners.

Wisconsin has concealed carry and open carry laws on the books.  A Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice wrote in a dissenting opinion last week that we should have drunken carry , too. Fortunately, Justice Rebecca Bradley was the only one of seven justices to take the position that a state law making it illegal to carry a gun while drunk is unconstitutional.

Even the Battle Creek, Michigan Bombers minor league baseball team, which ran a “Second Amendment Education Night” promotion encouraging fans to bring their guns to a game, didn’t allow those who packed pistols to drink alcohol.

In Wisconsin, three people were killed and three others seriously injured in a Kenosha tavern shooting on April 18. On May 1, three people, including the gunman, were shot to death and another critically wounded in an Oneida casino in Green Bay. The Oneida shooting was the third mass shooting in Wisconsin this year, the first being on April 7 in Milwaukee, where four people were shot, two of whom died, following an argument outside of a gas station.

Three days after the Kenosha killings, a bill was introduced in the state Senate to make Wisconsin a Second Amendment sanctuary state, to prohibit the state government from “confiscating firearms, firearm accessories and ammunition that are legally owned and made in Wisconsin, and prohibit state public funds and state employees from assisting in the confiscation of legally owned, Second Amendment protected firearms, firearm accessories, and ammunition”

Three days after the Oneida shooting, an identical bill was introduced in the Assembly.

The lead Senate author, State Sen. Mary Felzkowski (R-Tomahawk) said: “Our Constitution is set in stone. You don’t get to pick and choose which sections you adhere to and respect based off of a political agenda, and this bill makes that crystal clear.”



It doesn’t make sense to argue both that the right to keep and bear arms is absolute and protected by the Constitution and that those rights require further legislative protection. But gun

advocates never let the facts get in the way of their fiery rhetoric.

These bills, and similar actions in a number of other states, are in response to President Joe Biden issuing a half-dozen executive orders on guns. Biden's actions are weak tea compared to the way they are portrayed. His executive actions include a ban so-called "ghost guns" that are made from parts and can't be traced and a proposed red flag law to allow family members or law enforcement to petition for a court order temporarily barring people in crisis from accessing firearms if they present a danger to themselves or others.

Public polling has consistently shown strong support, sometimes as high as 80% in Wisconsin for reasonable gun legislation, including background checks on all gun purchasers. But the chances of any meaningful changes are worse than slim to none; they are just none. The pro-gun Republican majority in the Legislature doesn't have to be responsive on that issue or any other because of gerrymandering that guarantees them their majority in both houses.

"After 2020, a year in which we hit record-breaking levels of gun violence, the Legislature should be passing laws to protect Wisconsin citizens, not the profits of the gun industry," said Jeri Bonavia, executive director of the Wisconsin Anti-Violence Effort.

The GOP-sponsored gun sanctuary bills will not become law, although the Legislature may pass them. They are guaranteed veto bait for Gov. Tony Evers. They are political grandstanding, with no real impact except to rile up the gun lovers.

Our state's divided government is the only thing standing in the way of more pro-gun lunacy. After the 2022 election if Republicans regain total control of state government, it's Katy bar the door.

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by Bill Christofferson, Wisconsin Examiner
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