

person who is convicted of a felony does not have to have been violent. A person is a felon if he or she commits an offense that causes him or her to be sentenced for a year or more to the penitentiary. That could be bad checks, any of a number of crimes that have no violence whatsoever. If self-defense is recognized as a basic right in this country, and it is, if firearms are recognized as a legitimate means of self-defense, and they are, the mere fact that a person has been convicted of a felony should not deprive that person of the right to defend him or herself. If, in a set of circumstances, where a person who is a felon has his or her life jeopardized and a firearm available, that person should be able to use it as much as anybody else because to be convicted of a felony does not stop you from being a person with the right to self-defense. Another point, most of the killings with firearms are committed by noncriminals, felon or otherwise. Most of the killings with firearms are committed by people who are not criminals. So the only kind of effective gun control legislation would be to ban the ownership of guns by everybody, every kind of gun. And if you did that, people say that criminals are the ones who would wind up with the guns. They are not the ones who commit most of the murders or other noncriminal homicides with firearms. So if you took the guns from the so-called law abiding people, then you would reduce dramatically the number of people killed with firearms. So the argument given against controlling guns is that you take them out of the hands of the law abiding and put them in the hands of criminals who will get them anyway. Well, the criminals are not the ones who kill most of the people with firearms. For those who know different calibers of weapons, a .22 is a small caliber. If you are shot in the proper place with that .22 with one bullet, you are as dead as if somebody hit you with 15 rounds from an Uzi or 10 rounds from an AK47. So trying to distinguish between the types of firearms, I think, serves no purpose. It deals with the emotional aspect of it, the political aspect of it but it doesn't get down to the root issue which is guns are implements that kill, whether they're .22s or Howitzers. So ban them all or ban none of them. And until a change in attitude toward violence occurs in this society, the talk that is going on thus far with reference to firearms clouds the issue and does not offer a solution. Finally, I would say let the court decide what it is the people have put into the Constitution. Whether they were wise or stupid, they have a right to be that under the Constitution and the Constitution gives them the right to put a stupid, ill-considered amendment to that document. The right...