



“... the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.”

## EXERCISING THE RIGHT

### Gun Rights Advocate Elected to Congress

While many conservatives might have been disappointed with the results of the 2020 election, particularly with the evidence of vote fraud, there was some good news for supporters of the Second Amendment. Fox News reported on December 26 about a man elected to Congress to represent a district in northeast Georgia who has a strong background on the key issue of gun rights.

Andrew Clyde won a seat in Congress on his first attempt running for public office, owing to his impressive background. Clyde first gained national prominence in 2013, when he sued the federal government for seizing almost \$1 million from his company’s bank account. Clyde sued the IRS for its civil asset forfeiture and won his case. His efforts led to a law being passed by Congress that prohibited the IRS from doing something like that ever again. Reflecting on that battle, Clyde told Fox News that “that entire ordeal really showed me that one person who is persistent and tenacious and just doesn’t give up can actually make a difference.”

Clyde is a Navy combat veteran who served in Iraq and had started a small gun shop in Athens, Georgia, that eventually grew into a successful enterprise. Then, in 2013, a federal law designed to identify potential criminal activity brought his business into the cross hairs of the federal government. The Bank Secrecy Act included a provision that required that financial institutions report deposits above \$10,000 to federal investigators, as well as deposits just below the \$10,000 threshold.

Clyde’s company had an insurance policy at the time that prohibited the business from holding more than \$10,000 in cash so it regularly deposited just under that amount. When the Feds saw this financial activity, they quickly rushed in and seized the money without any evidence of criminal wrongdoing.

After the dust had settled, the government concluded there was no wrongdoing but wanted to keep a large portion of the money anyway.

Clyde explained to Fox News, “I have three combat tours in Iraq and Kuwait.... I was probably never more scared in my life than when those IRS agents left my conference room on that day on April the 12th because I had no idea how to fight them.... I took them to court. And I beat them in court because they were wrong.”

Clyde was incensed at this injustice and exhausted all the legal options available to him to get his money back. He ended up spending over \$100,000 in legal costs to get his money back. Then he testified before Congress about his ordeal, and a law was eventually passed that prohibited this civil asset forfeiture tactic. President Trump signed the Clyde-Hirsch-Sowers RESPECT Act in 2020.

Clyde won his primary against eight other candidates and eventually secured the congressional seat in the general election. He told Fox News that “it was this battle with the Internal Revenue Service that resonated with the people in the district, and they saw me as a fighter, and I am.... I’m a fighter. And our campaign was ‘fight and win.’”

Clyde used this image as a fighter to run as an unabashed patriot whom Fox News described as “a pro-President Trump, pro-life, pro-border wall conservative who wants to dismantle the IRS and limit the power of the federal government.” His stance on the Second Amendment calls for the “complete elimination” of the federal background check system established in 1993.

Clyde explained that the lockdowns over the past year highlighted the fact that the federal system is not capable of dealing with today’s environment. Clyde told Fox News that his business, Clyde Armory, had to turn away large numbers of customers because the FBI background-check system backed up, so many people were unable to purchase firearms even though they would have passed the checks had they been run. Speaking of the background-check system, Clyde told Fox News that “it is completely broken.... It puts the federal government between the Constitution and the individual in a way that denies the person their individual constitutional right. That’s not right.”

Clyde didn’t discuss what could replace the system if it was removed, but he definitely seemed to have the right approach for evaluating any alternative systems. Clyde told Fox News, “You cannot have a law that eliminates a constitutional right with the intent of giving a little bit of perceived safety.” But Clyde didn’t stop there when it came to standing up for the Second Amendment. He also wants to eliminate taxes on guns and ammunitions, reasoning that “you can’t tax the right to vote. So how can you tax the right to keep and bear arms? You can’t.... If you can tax it, you can tax it out of existence. No constitutional right should ever be able to be taxed.”

Congressman Clyde will certainly be one to watch in the coming years, as there’s no denying his passion for the Second Amendment and his willingness to fight back. “I’m very committed to ... fighting for what’s right and winning for my district, and winning for this country against government overreach.... The primary focus is government overreach because I experienced it firsthand in a brutal way.”

### Split Second

The *Chicago Sun Times* reported on December 26 about a store robbery that was abruptly ended by an employee who was carrying concealed.

The incident occurred around 7:00 p.m. on the West Side of Chicago, when an armed suspect barged into a cellphone store, aimed his gun at employees, and ordered them to comply with his demands. The *Times* reported that a 29-year-old man working at the store pulled out his own handgun and shot the suspect in the chest. 911 was called, and authorities soon arrived, where they discovered the injured suspect. The wounded suspect was transported to a nearby medical facility, where he was pronounced dead.

Police are still investigating, but they did learn that the store employee was a licensed concealed-carry holder. Other known details indicate that the store employee acted lawfully. ■

— PATRICK KREY