

# The Supreme Court Stands Up for the Right to Self-Defense

The Supreme Court's infamous 2007 decision [DC vs Heller](#) recognized that the Second Amendment established a right to bear arms in self-defense. But in the years since, the high court has hardly taken any gun rights cases further fleshing out this precedent—leaving loopholes states have exploited to restrict citizens' right to self-defense.

No more.

In a seismic [6-3 decision](#), the Supreme Court just struck down a New York scheme that heavily restricted citizens' right to carry a firearm in public for self-defense.

The New York policy in question was its “may issue” approach to concealed carry permit applications, which allow citizens to carry a concealed pistol on their person for self-defense. Many states have a permitting process—others have “constitutional carry”—but New York's was particularly extreme. Not only did it require a basic background check and gun safety certification like many states do, it allowed government officials to deny the application unless the applicant could “demonstrate a special need for self-protection distinguishable from that of the general community.”

That's right: It made a mockery of our rights and treated them as a privilege, only granting permits to celebrities or people who had explicitly been threatened. Living in a high-crime area or generally wanting to exercise your right to defend yourself wasn't good enough. This was essentially a way the state worked around the Second Amendment to heavily limit our ability to bear arms.

Thankfully, Justice Clarence Thomas just took a flamethrower

to this subjective, unjust system. The court's decision in [\*New York State Rifle & Pistol Association Inc. v. Bruen\*](#) strikes down the New York scheme and affirms that "the Second and Fourteenth Amendments protect an individual's right to carry a handgun for self-defense outside the home" without needing to accommodate the subjective whims of some bureaucrat.

"We know of no other constitutional right that an individual may exercise only after demonstrating to government officers some special need," Justice Thomas [writes](#). "That is not how the First Amendment works when it comes to unpopular speech or the free exercise of religion. It is not how the Sixth Amendment works when it comes to a defendant's right to confront the witnesses against him. And it is not how the Second Amendment works when it comes to public carry for self-defense."

"New York's proper-cause requirement violates the Fourteenth Amendment in that it prevents law-abiding citizens with ordinary self-defense needs from exercising their right to keep and bear arms," the majority opinion concludes.

This is a big win for liberty.

The right to life is an inherent human right, and the right to defend your own life from would-be violence is inherent to that right. This is exactly what the Second Amendment was meant to enshrine. It's great that the Supreme Court is at long last standing up for our inherent right to self-defense—and standing against petty bureaucrats who would leave us at their mercy.

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