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Attorney General Brown Defends Massachusetts' Gun Laws *States Have Authority to Restrict Assault Weapons, Large-Capacity Ammunition Magazines, Says Coalition of AGs*

BALTIMORE, MD (May 7, 2024) – Attorney General Anthony Brown today joined a multistate [amicus brief](#) filed in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit in support of Massachusetts, which is defending its common-sense gun safety laws against a Second Amendment challenge. The brief, joined by 18 other attorneys general, asks the court to uphold the state's decades-old ban on the sale and possession of assault weapons and large capacity ammunition magazines (LCMs), defined as ammunition magazines capable of holding more than 10 rounds of ammunition.

“Assault weapons are fast-firing weapons that cause severe bodily damage and have a high likelihood of mass death, especially when used with large-capacity magazines. As they have done for decades, states must be able to protect their communities and public health and well-being from life-shattering violence by passing common-sense weapons laws,” **said Attorney General Brown**. “I will continue to defend these measures that save lives and bring peace and safety to our communities.”

In the brief, the coalition of attorneys general argues that Massachusetts' statutes are constitutional because, among other things, assault weapons and LCMs are not weapons commonly used or suitable for self-defense. Assault weapons equipped with LCMs are the weapon of choice in mass shootings, defined as ones causing four or more fatalities.

The brief notes that states are well within their rights to impose laws to prevent these kinds of tragedies:

- **To encourage public safety, states can and do impose restrictions on dangerous weapons, accessories, and ammunition that pose a threat to communities:** States have widely adopted reasonable restrictions on the public carry, possession, and sale of many types of weapons, accessories, and forms of ammunition that are not suitable for self-defense and that undermine the public's safety. Semiautomatic assault weapons, such as AR-15 and AK-47-style rifles, fall into this category. They inflict catastrophic injuries

and are uniquely devastating in mass shootings. Common-sense assault weapons restrictions are intended to reduce these senseless injuries and deaths.

- **Assault weapons are not protected by the Second Amendment because they are not commonly used or suitable for self-defense.** Assault weapons were designed and engineered for military combat, and to create as many devastating injuries and deaths as quickly as possible.
- **Massachusetts' laws are consistent with a historical tradition of regulating and imposing restrictions on new and distinctively dangerous forms of weaponry:** States and the federal government have long had to adopt laws and regulations to cope with new weapons technologies that threaten public safety.

In submitting the brief, Attorney General Brown joins the attorneys general of California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington.

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