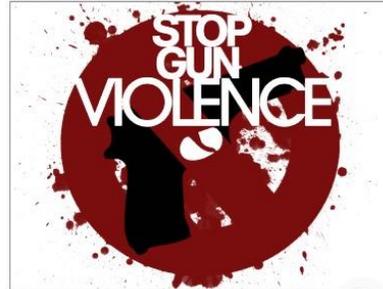


## NOTES FROM THE GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION COMMITTEE Martha Couretas

### From the headlines:

- FBI claims Michigan militia group tried to kidnap Governor Gretchen Whitmer
- Two brothers charged in Whitmer plot photographed with guns at Capitol
- State Democrats debut bills to ban firearms from Capitol
- Gun ban unlikely at Michigan Capitol, despite plot to storm it, take hostages



Recent news continuously reminds us of the lawlessness of a faction of gun owners in Michigan. The mediocre strength of Michigan gun laws and the constant introduction of legislation to further weaken those laws create an environment that emboldens self-styled militia factions. We must move sensible gun legislation forward by using our collective voices to stop illegal and dangerous bullying actions.

Chris Smith, J.D., Ph.D., Board President of Michigan Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence, summarized the present situation in Michigan:

*What impact does the presence of firearms in civilian hands have on the essential components of American democracy? Roadblocks imposed by armed civilians embody a rejection of “the rule of law,” a key component of democratic governing systems. Bringing firearms to confront one’s political opponents at a public demonstration increases safety risks. It also appears to employ threatening devices to stifle democracy’s essential elements of free expression and public debate. And in Michigan... this reminds us of the unanswered question about the purported benefits of permitting civilian-held weapons of war in the visitors’ galleries of the state legislature during legislative sessions.*

In this month of October, we are consumed with preparation for the November 3 election, working to support the candidates that match our values and our hopes for an equitable and safe United States. Our work is not done after the election. As Ruth Bader Ginsburg said, “Real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time.” We are not alone in this work. Reasonable people are working hard and cooperatively to help prevent death and injury by firearms.

Here are some of the newer initiatives that aim to moderate the wrong thinking concept that gun violence prevention means “taking away our guns.”

[READ MORE](#) about these initiatives.