

October 2018

Dear Constituent

Thank you for contacting me about the Offensive Weapons Bill.

I think you might have misunderstood the situation. Overall I support this piece of legislation and will be voting for it as it introduces a number of important measures to ensure public safety and deters criminality. It is important to ensure more work is done to break the deadly cycle of violence that devastates the lives of individuals, families and communities.

I welcome the Serious Violence Strategy to help tackle recent increases in serious violent crime. This Government action supports a multi-stranded approach including robust law enforcement, early intervention and prevention.

A key element of the strategy is this Bill which contains a range of measures to update and strengthen the law on the sale of corrosive substances, bans the delivery of knives and corrosives substances bought online and delivered to residential addresses. It also bans the possession of weapons including zombie knives, knuckle dusters and death stars both in public and private.

However, I do not support the move for a blanket ban on 50 calibre rifles and have signed up to the amendment put by Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown. Firstly, this is not about legalising or making this type of weapon more readily available, as 50-cal rifles are already in use; indeed a number of shooting ranges in my constituency use these guns. Banning 50-cal rifles, along with a whole host of historical weapons, is clearly disproportionate when there is no reported problem to solve. Equally illogical is the argument that we should ban them because they are in military use. They use them because they are effective, a point equally understood by those that are licenced to fire them on rifle ranges in this country.

I am NOT doing this for any kind of political game playing. I support the Prime Minister in delivering her plan to leave the EU.

Ultimately this is a good piece of legislation, but Ministers need to be aware that the proposed measures around 50 calibre rifles is entirely the wrong approach.

Thank you for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Richard Benyon