

Opinion: Why does anyone need 100 rounds of ammo?

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Aug. 5, 2012, Sacramento Bee.*

We ought to be able to agree that no citizen has any need for 100-round magazines of the type that police say James E. Holmes used on the night of the movie theater massacre in Aurora, Colo.

But we can't.

Holmes' arsenal included a 100-round dual drum, a device that looks a little like mouse ears and affixes to an AR-15 semi-automatic assault rifle of the type Holmes had purchased. An Internet retailer currently offers a deal, selling them for \$139, a \$20 discount.

In the wake of the shooting that left 12 dead and 58 people wounded, Democrats are renewing calls for a federal assault weapons ban, and limits on the capacity of magazines.

Operating on the theory that elections have consequences, The Bee surveyed most candidates and incumbents seeking Sacramento Valley congressional seats, and asked two questions: Do they support reinstating the assault weapons ban, and would they vote to prohibit the sale of 100-round drums?

The answers generally fell along party lines. Some candidates offered equivocal answers. Rep. Tom McClintock, R-Elk Grove, failed to respond to calls and emails placed over a one-week period.

Rep. Dan Lungren, R-Gold River, and Ami Bera, a Democratic physician from Elk Grove, are in a tight campaign for the 7th Congressional District, which includes Elk Grove and much of

eastern Sacramento County.

“Dr. Bera supports the assault weapons ban and especially in light of the recent tragedy in Aurora,” his campaign spokesman Josh Wolf said. Wolf said Bera also would vote to ban 100-round magazines.

Lungren offers a nuanced view of gun law compared with other Republicans in the area, and has broken with the National Rifle Association in notable areas.

“If you need 100-round clips, there are lots of things I would call you, but ‘sportsman’ or ‘hunter’ is not one of them.” Lungren said in an interview. “What do you need 100 rounds for?”

He didn’t say if he would vote for a federal assault weapons ban, but noted that there is no appetite for gun control legislation in Washington. As California attorney general in the 1990s, he was responsible for enforcing the state’s assault weapons law, which caused a rift with pro-gun organizations.

“California has decided what we’re doing. That’s it,” Lungren said. “We should enforce the laws we have.”

Rep. John Garamendi, D-Walnut Grove, faces Colusa County Supervisor Kim Vann, a Republican, in the 3rd Congressional District, which includes Yolo, Glenn, Colusa and Yuba counties.

Vann’s campaign manager, Rob Stutzman, said Vann supports California’s law, including the assault weapons ban, but would oppose federal weapons legislation.

“She supports state regulation of firearms, not federal. She has a federalist view of state rights,” Stutzman said.

Garamendi voted for California’s first assault weapons ban when he was a state senator. He had represented Stockton in

1989 when a gunman using an assault weapon opened fire at an elementary school, killing five children.

“My support for such bans continues to this day,” Garamendi said in a statement.

Garamendi, like Rep. Doris Matsui, D-Sacramento, is among 113 co-sponsors of House legislation that seeks to ban magazines of more than 10 rounds.

Sen. Doug LaMalfa, R-Richvale, is running in the 1st Congressional District, which stretches from Auburn and Gridley to the Oregon border. He opposes laws that would ban assault weapons and continued sale of 100-round drums, his campaign manager, Dave Gilliard, said.

LaMalfa’s Democratic opponent, Jim Reed, a Redding attorney, opposes an assault weapons ban, but said he would support a ban on 100-round magazines.

McClintock is running in the 4th Congressional District, which includes Lincoln and Lake Tahoe, and runs south past Yosemite National Park. Although he did not respond to calls or emails, McClintock long has been a pro-gun vote.

Read the whole story