

land's highest court declared that monopolies were illegal under the Magna Carta. But the Louisiana butchers didn't fare as well. In a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court declared that the 14th Amendment did not protect businessmen from regulatory abuse by their own states.

THE IMPLICATIONS were profound. In post-Civil War America, southern states were routinely violating the rights of recently freed slaves, enacting laws that subverted not only the right to earn a living, but freedom of speech, freedom of travel, and the right to possess firearms. The Slaughter-House decision gave states and localities wide berth to curtail freedoms, and it would be another century before the federal government put serious effort into ending state abuses.

In the second half of the 20th century, courts did begin to champion civil rights, but they did so by relying on other constitutional provisions. The "privileges or immunities" clause was allowed to remain dormant — along with the protections it should ex-

tend to economic freedom. Even today, courts often refuse to provide any but the most cursory protection for the rights of business owners. Instead, lawmakers are generally free to impose all but the most irrational limits on the freedom to buy, sell, trade, work, or create wealth.

The gun-rights case carries the potential for fundamental change. The attorneys for the gun owners argue that states and local governments should be required to respect the right to keep and bear arms because this is one of the "privileges or immunities" protected by the Constitution.

If the Court agrees, and overrules its 1873 decision, we could see a new level of protection for constitutional freedoms of all sorts: not just gun rights, but the right of business owners and entrepreneurs to be free of harassment and anti-competitive conduct by state governments. It is long past time that the 14th Amendment was given its true and full meaning — and that courts extended full protection to the right of all Americans to earn a living without unfair government interference.

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WHAT YOU HAVEN'T BEEN TOLD ABOUT GUN CONTROL

By SAM PAREDES

What do Nazi Germany, the former Soviet Union, communist China, and California have in common? Well, first: none of these places suffered from serious firearms' crime problems before the ruling elites took power. Second: each imposed gun registration anyway to serve the eventual purpose of taking guns away.

But you object: they can't do that in the Golden State; we have the Second Amendment. And — so? When have fanatical radicals ever given a rip about 200-(plus)-year-old parchments if they found them inexpedient in achieving their aims? Unfortunately those fanatical leftists are in charge of our state Legislature. They know their behinds were handed to them in 2008 when the U.S. Supreme Court

ruled (in *Heller v. D.C.*) that the Second Amendment protects an individual, personal right. They know that the same high court will soon rule on *McDonald v. Chicago* and is fully expected then to incorporate *Heller* to cover state and local governments' attempts to infringe Second Amendment rights. Yes, they know ... and they don't care!

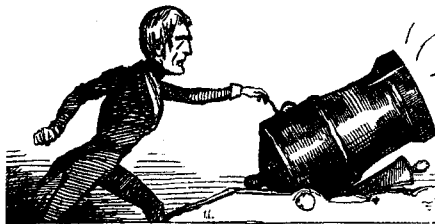
Assemblyman Mike Feuer (D-Los Angeles), author of AB 1810 (which calls for the registration of all rifles and shotguns) from now on and into the future, is one of these radicals. He is undaunted by the prospect of having a mere court of law clean his clock on his pet is-

sue yet again. He will push the issue in every direction, determined to get away with everything he can, then continue to pose as the fearless champion of left-wing salvation through depriving people of their ability to defend themselves. He knows that always plays well in certain circles where he can do well for himself.

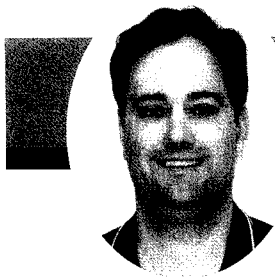
Gun crimes are down in California and the vast majority of those committed are connected to gang activities, so it doesn't make sense to institute long gun registration. (Canada, by the way, a country with a slightly lower population than California, is close to dumping its \$2 billion long gun registration program because it's proven useless in fighting or preventing crime.

The sole purpose of gun registration *per se* is to establish where the guns are when the chance comes to take them away.

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A Closer Look

The Incredible Shrinking Church

Christian Leaders relinquished both their social influence and the moral high ground to secularists.

MICHAEL S. FREDENBURG

We tried to defend the unborn child, the dignity of the family, but it was a holding action. We are awash in evil and the battle is still to be waged. We are right now in the most discouraging period of that long conflict. Humanly speaking, we can say we have lost all those battles.

— Dr. James Dobson March 3, 2009, in his farewell speech as president of Focus on the Family.

THOSE WHO have heard Dr. Dobson speak over the last couple of decades know that his last speech as head of Focus on the Family was much in line with many other speeches he has given in the past 20 years: not exactly filled with optimism. Still, Dr. Dobson's pessimism is understandable as he has been on the forefront of trying to protect and help children for most of his life, and his heart must be broken by the devastation he sees being visited on children by our society.

Anyone not living the life of an ostrich is familiar with at least some of the statistics documenting the decay in cultural values and rise of negative and destructive behavior among all sectors of the population, but by themselves the statistics cannot adequately convey the depths to which our culture has sunk. A 2006 New York magazine article, "The Cuddle Puddle of Stuyvesant High School," documents in some detail what those who work in high schools know to be true. It describes groups of teenagers getting together at lunch time to hook up for same sex, cuddling, and kissing as a precursor to more intimate after school activity. The article goes into much more detail and, sadly, what it

documents is not isolated to this one particular school. Indeed, it is estimated that now more than 600 homosexual "Support" clubs exist at high schools throughout the United States.

The explosion in homosexual experimentation is mirrored by the explosion in premarital heterosexual activity as reflected by the astronomical rates of sexually transmitted diseases (STD) among teenagers. A Centers for Disease Control study released March 11, 2008, found that one in four teenage girls have a sexually transmitted disease. The two common STDs infecting teenage girls are human papillomavirus, or HPV (18 percent), and chlamydia (4 percent), both of which have serious long-term health consequences.

Of course the assault on the value of life continues with publicly-funded abortion through all nine months now having been the law of the land for more than 35 years. On the other end of the spectrum of life, we see support growing in the general population for euthanasia with state-sanctioned euthanasia now legal in Washington and Oregon. Other states, including California, seem ripe for the passage of similar legislation.

The devastating impact of fatherless households on children and women is well-documented and has been particularly devastating in the black community. However, all communities and ethnicities are increasingly being affected by rising rates of out of wedlock births and absentee fathers. That the culture is in a negative downward spiral seems inarguable.

The deteriorating culture hurts everyone, but it disproportionately impacts children, women, and, especially, fatherless children. So where has the church been in all of this? Sadly the answer is, for the most part (despite over publicized examples to the contrary), that the church, particularly the evangelical church, has been

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