SECOND OPINIONS

Know the facts

This is in reply to the letter by Dr. Kreider in the January issue of AAP News. Gun control is a polarizing issue for this country; I guess it shouldn't be any different for our organization. If you are going to debate, you need to know the facts:

1. The Second Amendment to the Constitution states: “A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.” What does this mean? I agree with former Chief Justice Warren Burger, who wrote, “The real purpose of the Second Amendment was to ensure that the ‘state arms’ – the militia – would be maintained for the defense of the state. . . . The very language of the Second Amendment refutes any argument that it was intended to guarantee every citizen an unfettered right to any kind of weapon he or she desires.”

2. I suspect that the National Rifle Association was the source for Dr. Kreider’s statement that “Guns are used far more often to prevent crimes of violence than in the commission of crimes.” Studies published in the New England Journal of Medicine have shown that:

• A gun in the home is 43 times more likely to kill a family member or friend than it is to be used to kill an intruder.
• The presence of a gun in the home increases the likelihood of homicide in that home almost threefold and of suicide fivefold.

3. Finally, Dr. Kreider states, “Households headed by women are often only able to defend themselves with handguns.” The FBI Supplementary Homicide Report stated that “In 1992, 73 females were victims of handgun homicide for every female who used a handgun in a justifiable homicide.”

If Dr. Kreider believes that the FBI and the New England Journal are sources of “misinformation . . . deliberately planted,” then Buffalo Springfield was right: Paranoia strikes deep!

H.E. Brainard, M.D., FAAP
Manistee, Mich.

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Sincerely,

Robert Allison, M.D., FAAP
Director
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