AMENDMENT 2: 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.

According to Greek mythology, the Gods created Pandora as a gift **from** the gods… she was the first woman on earth. The god of craftsmanship created her from earth and water. Athena made sure she was draped in precious clothing, Aphrodite gave her beauty, Hermes gave her the power to express herself, and Zeus, the protector and ruler of mankind, gave her a **closed** box. With the box came the instructions to never open it. As a way to retaliate against Prometheus for stealing fire to be used by humans, Zeus arranged for Epimetheus, Prometheus’ brother, to marry Pandora, and off she went to live the married life…. with her sealed box in hand.

I am sure you must know what happened, because we all know what it means to “open Pandora’s box.” Mythology teaches us that Pandora’s curiosity got the better of her and she did open that box-Zeus knew she would-because she was “only human,” and with that gesture, she unleashed all of the evils in the world. No matter what side of the debate one might be on regarding the second Amendment and the right to bear arms, we can draw the parallel of opening Pandora’s box to unleashing the evils and destruction inherent in the use of arms.

The second Amendment to the US Constitution states “a well regulated Militia …and the right to a free people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.” We read those words in the modern world and we assign contemporary meaning to the phrase, but what did the framers intend?

As is with so much of the structure of our Constitution, the fathers of our country wanted to take every precaution to protect the citizens from having to deal with the tyranny of a Monarch’s rule, as it was in so many European kingdoms. The framers believed the constituents of our new country needed a way to protect themselves from the possibility of an overly forceful government. They believed the citizenry should have prepared militia at the ready. To be clear, let’s remember the meaning of the word militia. “Militia” is defined as a military force that is raised from the civil population to supplement (or possibly challenge) a regular army.” George Washington maintained, "Firearms stand next in importance to the Constitution itself. They are the American people's liberty teeth and keystone under independence ... From the hour the Pilgrims landed, to the present day, events, occurrences, and tendencies prove that to insure peace, security and happiness, the rifle and pistol are equally indispensable . . . The very atmosphere of firearms everywhere restrains evil interference - they deserve a place of honor with all that is good,” while Alexander Hamilton believed that, "The best we can hope for concerning the people at large is that they be properly armed."

In a letter to George Washington in 1796, Thomas Jefferson wrote, “One loves to possess arms, though they hope never to have occasion for them.” In a large way, we can see that having the right to bear arms is like possessing Pandora’s closed box. It is our responsibility, as citizens of the United States, to really think about the time and place and contemporary conditions that prevailed as our government was being formed and our Constitution was being framed and given life. Our founding fathers believed in freedom and liberty. They believed in the formation of a government that entitled all people to the same thing-life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and with that came the right to bear arms and to have a well-regulated militia. In this day and age, there may not be as much need for a well- regulated militia-or is there? … But is there also a need for our fellow citizens to use the second amendment as a means to justify possession of firearms for private use? If you ask me, answering that question is like “opening a can of worms” … or Pandora’s box!

Thank you all!