September 17, 2013 : Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz Asks Firearms-Toting Customers To Ixnay On The L'il Frienday, Thereby Ensuring They Will Come Out In Force.

Author : michaelbloomer

September 17, 2013, Michael Matthew Bloomer

[caption id="attachment_8304" align="alignleft" width="120"]

DUCKKKKKKKK!!![/caption]

Tired of sharing a line for a ticket to *Planes* with an AR-15-accessorized fat bald accountant while your five-year old triplets try to touch the trigger? Apparently, in another context, so too is Starbucks' leader Howard Schultz. Today, he took more of less decisive action, requesting his overly enthusiastic gun-loving patrons to "no longer bring firearms into our stores or outdoor seating areas—even in states where 'open carry. is permitted—unless they are authorized law enforcement personnel."

Here's the text of the quite civil email that is certain to result in a virtual army of drooling gun-toting delusional paranoids appearing at a multitude of Starbucks no gun zones around the country. (Oh, and in case it's not obvious, the picture at right was *not* in Schultz's email):

> Tuesday, September 17, 2013 Posted by Howard Schultz, Starbucks chairman, president and chief executive officer
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> Dear Fellow Americans,
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> Few topics in America generate a more polarized and emotional debate than guns. In recent months, Starbucks stores and our
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> [caption id="attachment_8317" align="alignright" width="234"]
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> 'Please, ma'am, I believe *I'm* next.
> I'll have a skim milk caramel white chocolate and sprouts lite pumpkin macchiato latte with room for oregano, thyme, ketchup, and soy beans.
> Oh, and by the way,
> I'm not paying for it."[/caption]
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> partners (employees) who work in our stores have been thrust unwillingly into the middle of this debate. That’s why I am writing today with a respectful request that customers no longer bring firearms into our stores or outdoor seating areas.
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> From the beginning, our vision at Starbucks has been to create a “third place” between home and work where people can come together to enjoy the peace and pleasure of coffee and community. Our values have always centered on building community rather than

dividing people, and our stores exist to give every customer a safe and comfortable respite from the concerns of daily life.

We appreciate that there is a highly sensitive balance of rights and responsibilities surrounding America's gun laws, and we recognize the deep passion for and against the "open carry" laws adopted by many states. (In the United States, "open carry" is the term used for openly carrying a firearm in public.) For years we have listened carefully to input from our customers, partners, community leaders and voices on both sides of this complicated, highly charged issue.

Our company's longstanding approach to "open carry" has been to follow local laws: we permit it in states where allowed and we prohibit it in states where these laws don't exist. We have chosen this approach because we believe our store partners should not be put in the uncomfortable position of requiring customers to disarm or leave our stores. We believe that gun policy should be addressed by government and law enforcement—not by Starbucks and our store partners.

Recently, however, we've seen the "open carry" debate become increasingly uncivil and, in some cases, even threatening. Pro-gun activists have used our stores as a political stage for media events misleadingly called "Starbucks Appreciation Days" that disingenuously portray Starbucks as a champion of "open carry." To be clear: we do not want these events in our stores. Some anti-gun activists have also played a role in ratcheting up the rhetoric and friction, including soliciting and confronting our customers and partners.

For these reasons, today we are respectfully requesting that customers no longer bring firearms into our stores or outdoor seating areas—even in states where "open carry" is permitted—unless they are authorized law enforcement personnel.

I would like to clarify two points. First, this is a request and not an outright ban. Why? Because we want to give responsible gun owners the chance to respect our request—and also because enforcing a ban would potentially require our partners to confront armed customers, and that is not a role I am comfortable asking Starbucks partners to take on. Second, we know we cannot satisfy everyone. For those who oppose "open carry," we believe the legislative and policy-making process is the proper arena for this debate, not our stores. For those who champion "open carry," please respect that Starbucks stores are places where everyone should feel relaxed and comfortable. The presence of a weapon in our stores is unsettling and upsetting for many of our customers.

I am proud of our country and our heritage of civil discourse and debate. It is in this spirit that we make today's request. Whatever your view, I encourage you to be responsible and respectful of each other as citizens and neighbors.

Sincerely,

Howard Schultz