

THE CONCORD PRINCIPLE OF RESISTANCE: A FRAMEWORK FOR VIOLENT, DEFENSIVE RESISTANCE

A moral and civic framework to answer the question; when is violent, defensive, resistance against government power justified?

By Jeff A Pierson

Disclaimer: The Concord Principle of Resistance is a philosophical and civic framework. It is not legal advice, a call to violence, or a justification for unlawful conduct. Readers are responsible for understanding and obeying the laws of their jurisdiction. Any action taken in the name of resistance must be approached with moral seriousness, civic restraint, and full accountability under the law.

The principles outlined in CPoR are rooted in the unique American tradition of liberty, natural rights, and constitutional self-governance. As such, they may not be fully understood or applicable outside that cultural and historical context. The framework is designed to speak specifically to the American experience and the moral inheritance of its founding.

Jeff Pierson

CONTENTS

Introduction to the Concord Principle of Resistance	4
The Five Core Standards for Justified Violent Resistance	4
What Makes the Concord Principle of Resistance Unique	5
A Doctrine of Orderly Liberty.....	6
Beyond Protest and Philosophy: What Other Models Miss and CPoR Delivers	7
Foundations in Legal Self-Defense	8
Branca's Five Principles of Self-Defense.....	8
Incorporating Moral and Civic Boundaries.....	10
Contemporary Justifications for Resistance	10
Applying CPoR.....	12
Appendix: Questions and Answers	16
Does the proportion or scale of government action affect whether violent, defensive resistance is justified under CPoR?	16
Is CPoR a manifesto?	16
Will defensive resistance lead to jail or death?	16
Are there moral absolutes or other considerations before violent, defensive resistance is used?	17
Does CPoR apply only in America, or could it apply in other nations?	17
How does CPoR view martyrdom or self-sacrifice in resistance?	17
Is it ever moral to disobey a just law if the system enforcing it is unjust?	17
What happens if only some, but not all, CPoR standards are met?	18
How does CPoR relate to the Second Amendment?.....	18
Can someone lawfully prepare for violent, defensive resistance without intending to use it?	18
Is violent, defensive resistance ever justified against local (not federal) authorities?	18
Does the Constitution allow for revolution or resistance?	18
How should courts or juries assess a CPoR-based act of resistance?.....	19
Should CPoR be used to evaluate past protest movements like BLM, Bundy Ranch, or January 6?	19
Can religious conviction or prophetic belief justify violent, defensive resistance under CPoR?	19
What safeguards prevent people from misusing CPoR to justify political violence?	19
Does God permit violence in defense of truth and justice?	19

Can resisting government ever become rebellion against divine order?	20
What did the Founding Fathers believe about resisting tyranny?.....	20
How does CPoR differ from traditional civil disobedience or pacifism?.....	20
Can CPoR justify Assassination?	20
Appendix: Counterpoints and Responses	22
Counterpoint: Subjectivity and Misuse.....	22
Counterpoint 2: Undermines Rule of Law.....	22
Counterpoint 3: Violence Begets Violence	22
Counterpoint 4: Legal Consequences Are Still Real	23
Counterpoint 5: Democratic Systems Offer Peaceful Remedies.....	23
Counterpoint 6: Historical Romanticism	23
Appendix: Current, Founding Era, and Classical References Supporting the Concord Principle of Resistance.....	25
Citations.....	27

INTRODUCTION TO THE CONCORD PRINCIPLE OF RESISTANCE

The Concord Principle of Resistance (CPoR) is a civic and moral doctrine created to answer a singular and difficult question: When is violent, defensive resistance to government authority justified?

In a free republic founded on natural rights, this is not a theoretical inquiry, it is a necessary standard. CPoR offers a principled framework for determining when individuals or communities may morally and lawfully respond to state power with force, especially in those rare moments when peaceful remedies have failed and authority becomes aggression.

The principle takes its name from the Battle of Concord (1775) the first organized act of armed American resistance to British military power. That moment is not remembered as rebellion, but as a disciplined stand for self-government against unlawful coercion. CPoR seeks to recover that standard: a moral test for resistance that is rooted not in ideology or emotion, but in truth, justice, and constitutional restraint.

At its core, CPoR rests on five moral-legal thresholds adapted from attorney Andrew Branca's principles of lawful self-defense: Innocence, Imminence, Proportionality, Avoidance, and Reasonableness. Applied to civic life, these criteria serve as guardrails against both passive submission and reckless revolt. They ensure that any act of resistance, especially violent, defensive resistance or defensive violence, is reactive, limited, and morally intelligible to a just and informed public.

The Concord Principle does not glorify lawbreaking. It acknowledges that in rare and solemn moments, the law may be weaponized to suppress liberty, and that in such cases, resistance becomes not only permissible, but necessary. Yet even then, force must remain transparent, disciplined, and accountable, never vengeful, or opportunistic. Resistance must serve justice and does not replace it.

In an age marked by rising distrust, political extremism, and institutional overreach, the Concord Principle offers a vital moral compass: not a blueprint for revolution, but a doctrine of orderly liberty, grounded in natural law, historical precedent, and the duty to resist with clarity, courage, and restraint.

The Five Core Standards for Justified Violent Resistance

The Concord Principle of Resistance (CPoR) defines violent, defensive resistance as morally and legally justifiable only when all five core standards are satisfied. These standards, adapted from established self-defense law, are not guidelines for general protest, they are thresholds for the rare and solemn use of force against governing authority. Each must be met in full for violent, defensive resistance to be considered legitimate.

1. **Innocence** – Those resisting must not be the aggressors. They must not provoke, initiate, or escalate the conflict unlawfully. Violence is only justifiable in defense not retaliation or political offense.

Jeff Pierson

2. Imminence – The threat must be direct, real, and immediate. It cannot be hypothetical, anticipated, or rooted solely in historical grievance. Force is justified only when a clear and present danger to life, liberty, or essential rights is unfolding or about to unfold.
3. Proportionality – The level of force used must match the level of threat. Lethal force is only justified to counteract a threat of lethal or severe harm. Symbolic injury or institutional pressure cannot morally justify disproportionate violence.
4. Avoidance – All reasonable, lawful, and peaceful alternatives must have been attempted or actively denied. If legal redress is possible and available, violent, defensive resistance is not morally defensible. Escape, appeal, delay, or lawful protest must be exhausted.
5. Reasonableness – The decision to resist with force must not only feel justified to the individual it must be judged as reasonable and restrained by an impartial, informed observer. Emotional urgency, ideological certainty, or cultural grievance alone are not sufficient. The act must stand under scrutiny, not just passion.

While some acts of protest or disruption may meet parts of this standard, violent, defensive resistance is only morally and strategically justified under CPoR when all five conditions are fully met. Partial alignment may explain an individual's motive or a movement's frustration, but motive alone does not confer moral legitimacy. True justification for violence demands the highest moral discipline and the clearest defensive necessity.

What Makes the Concord Principle of Resistance Unique

The Concord Principle of Resistance (CPoR) is not a theory of rebellion. It is a disciplined moral doctrine that defines when resistance to government, including violent, defensive resistance is justified, lawful, and morally defensible. Rooted in natural law, the American founding, and legal self-defense theory, CPoR affirms that liberty is not granted by government, but preexists it and that the defense of liberty, when necessary, must be measured, moral, and public.

Unlike many revolutionary ideologies, particularly those on the political left, CPoR does not glorify force or treat violence as a tool for transformation. It upholds defensive resistance, not vengeance or ideological aggression. Force is only justified in response to real, unjust oppression only when peaceful remedies have been exhausted, and only when the threat to life, liberty, or property is immediate, unlawful, and grave. Every act of resistance must remain proportionate, answering harm without escalating it. CPoR is not a doctrine of disruption, it is a shield of last resort, wielded reluctantly, and only when justice leaves no other path.

CPoR draws directly from attorney Andrew Branca's five principles of lawful self-defense, adapted for civic action: Innocence, Imminence, Proportionality, Avoidance, and Reasonableness. It does not treat violence as inherently illegitimate but demands that every use of force meet all five standards. Motive

Jeff Pierson

alone is never enough; the moral legitimacy of resistance depends on the target, the method, and the circumstances.

What makes CPoR uniquely valuable is its insistence on transparency, restraint, and civic accountability. Legal action through lawsuits, petitions, exposure, and peaceful defiance is always the first and preferred mode of resistance. Violence is permitted only when the state has closed off lawful redress, weaponized the law against the people, and crossed the moral boundary from governance into coercion.

In this sense, CPoR is not anti-government. It is pro-constitutional, pro-accountability, and committed to orderly liberty. It reinforces the social contract by making clear that resistance is not a right to be abused, but a duty to be exercised with fear and trembling when justice demands it and no other path remains.

Governments that respect CPoR gain a principled citizenry one that will resist not out of rage, but from conscience. And citizens who adopt CPoR gain a moral compass that separates patriotic defense from sedition, legitimate dissent from opportunism, and justice from chaos. In an age of increasing polarization, that distinction is essential.

At its core, the Concord Principle reminds us that loyalty belongs not to an agency, party, or administration but to the Constitution, to the Republic, to the rule of law, and to one another. When those bonds are violated, resistance may become necessary, but it must always be grounded in truth, limited by morality, and justified before the judgment of history.

A Doctrine of Orderly Liberty

The Concord Principle of Resistance (CPoR) is not a license for anarchy, vigilantism, or ideological defiance. It is a doctrine of orderly liberty grounded in the belief that while government exists to secure rights, there are rare but critical moments when defending liberty may require disobeying the law. In such cases, resistance must be morally justified, civically restrained, and publicly accountable.

The Declaration of Independence affirms this moral threshold:

“When a long train of abuses and usurpations... evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government.”

Thomas Jefferson echoed the same truth:

“When injustice becomes law, resistance becomes duty.”

CPoR acknowledges that lawbreaking may become necessary to preserve liberty, but it insists that such acts must be governed by truth, transparency, and moral discipline. Resistance must never be impulsive, secretive, or driven by vengeance. It must be:

Jeff Pierson

- Measured – limited to what is strictly necessary to repel oppression.
- Documented – with clear reasoning and public explanation.
- Defensive – always in response to unlawful aggression, never as a first strike.
- Transparent – undertaken openly and with a willingness to bear the consequences.

In short, force is only justified when justice is no longer possible through lawful means and even then, it must reflect the character of the Republic it seeks to defend. Resistance that preserves liberty must also preserve honor, clarity, and the judgment of history.

Beyond Protest and Philosophy: What Other Models Miss and CPoR Delivers

The Concord Principle of Resistance (CPoR) draws from many respected traditions, but it also addresses critical gaps that other models leave unresolved. While each has contributed to the broader discourse on resistance, none provides a comprehensive, morally disciplined, and actionable framework for evaluating when force against authority is justified.

Just War Theory offers guidance for armed conflict between nation-states, but it does not equip individuals or communities to evaluate resistance against domestic tyranny or government overreach.

Gene Sharp's nonviolent resistance model is tactically effective and historically significant, yet it lacks a moral hierarchy or legal foundation rooted in natural rights, making it more strategic than principled.

Anarchist and militia movements often reject lawful order outright, operating from reaction and ideology rather than from civic restraint or legal coherence. Their methods are inconsistent with CPoR's standard of disciplined, defensive resistance.

Natural law theorists such as Aquinas and Locke provide essential philosophical groundwork for the right to resist unjust authority, but their writings were never translated into a practical doctrine fit for modern civic contexts or legal systems.

Civil disobedience, as practiced by Thoreau and Martin Luther King Jr., was morally courageous and symbolically powerful. However, it emphasized witness over defense, and it lacked a structured framework for sustained protection of liberty against entrenched institutional abuse.

Even modern legal remedies, such as lawsuits under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, allow individuals to challenge rights violations, but they function reactively and piecemeal, offering no cohesive moral or tactical standard for broader civic resistance.

CPoR fills this void. It unifies natural law, legal self-defense, moral philosophy, and civic responsibility into a single doctrine. It provides a clear, disciplined standard by which resistance, especially violent,

Jeff Pierson

defensive resistance can be morally judged, legally grounded, and strategically restrained. It is not protest for protest's sake, nor rebellion masked as principle. It is restorative defense, evaluated by truth, justified by necessity, and constrained by conscience.

Foundations in Legal Self-Defense

The development of CPoR began with a study of the legal principles of individual self-defense, particularly those articulated by attorney Andrew Branca. Branca's framework outlines five critical conditions for the justified use of force: innocence, imminence, proportionality, avoidance, and reasonableness. These standards provide a disciplined and objective lens through which personal defense can be judged. CPoR adopts this framework for community or political resistance, treating acts of civil defiance as a form of collective self-defense requiring the same level of ethical rigor and moral restraint.

BRANCA'S FIVE PRINCIPLES OF SELF-DEFENSE

Note: Attorney Andrew Branca has not participated in the development of the Concord Principle of Resistance (CPoR) and has not endorsed this doctrine. His self-defense framework is cited solely as a legal reference point, adapted for civic application by the author of this work.

Andrew Branca, a leading legal expert on self-defense law, outlines five core principles in his book *The Law of Self Defense*. These principles offer a legal and moral framework for evaluating defensive actions, including in cases of resistance to state or institutional overreach. When applied within the Concord Principle of Resistance (CPoR), they clarify when self-defense becomes justifiable in a civic or political context.

1. **Innocence:** The person claiming self-defense must not have provoked or initiated the conflict.
 - Branca's Boundary: Forfeited if the defender provokes the confrontation or escalates the situation intentionally.
 - Implication: You cannot start a conflict and then claim self-defense unless you first attempt to withdraw and communicate that withdrawal clearly.
2. **Imminence:** The threat faced must be immediate, not speculative or long-term.
 - Branca's Boundary: Not applicable to hypothetical, future, or non-specific threats.
 - Implication: The threat must be immediate and real. You cannot lawfully respond to a vague fear of future oppression or generalized danger.
3. **Proportionality:** The level of force used in defense must match the level of threat posed.
 - Branca's Boundary: Lost if the force used exceeds what is necessary to stop the threat.
 - Implication: Defensive force must match the level of danger. Using deadly force to stop non-lethal harassment would exceed this standard.

Jeff Pierson

4. **Avoidance:** If safely possible, the defender must attempt to avoid or de-escalate the situation.

- Branca's Boundary: Avoidance is required unless the jurisdiction has a Stand Your Ground law or if retreat would increase the threat to life or liberty. If escape is realistically and safely possible, failure to attempt it weakens any claim of justifiable resistance.
- Implication: If legal alternatives exist, they must be pursued. Only when escape is impossible or unsafe may resistance escalate.

5. **Reasonableness:** The defender's belief in the threat and their response must be that of a reasonable person in similar circumstances.

- Branca's Boundary: Reasonableness includes both a subjective belief (what the actor personally believed) and an objective standard (what a reasonable person would believe in that situation). A belief based on paranoia, misinformation, or irrational fear does not meet this test and undermines the legitimacy of any defensive act.
- Implication: Self-defense must not only be honestly believed, but also objectively justifiable. It must pass a test that a neutral third party would recognize as fair and necessary in the same context.

Incorporating Moral and Civic Boundaries

While legal standards provide structure, they do not fully address the moral and civic responsibilities that must govern any act of resistance. The Concord Principle of Resistance (CPoR) therefore introduces essential ethical boundaries, drawn from natural law, the American founding tradition, and the principle of ordered liberty.

CPoR affirms that even when the use of force may be legally defensible, it must also be morally justifiable, strategically disciplined, and defensive. Violence in the name of justice must never become injustice itself. Resistance must never descend into revenge, recklessness, or ideological excess. The goal is not to replace tyranny with chaos, or oppression with disorder but to preserve liberty through restraint, truth, and accountability.

CPoR exists to ensure that any use of force remains faithful to the very principles it seeks to defend so that those who resist injustice do not become its imitators.

Contemporary Justifications for Resistance

Examples of Government Actions That Might Justify Violent, Defensive resistance (If All CPoR Standards Are Met)

Government Action	Violated Law or Principle	Why It Could Justify Violent Resistance
Mandating medical procedures without informed consent or legal exemption	Bodily autonomy (natural right), 14th Amendment, state health codes	Constitutes a direct threat to bodily integrity and potentially life; refusal can lead to coercive enforcement, job loss, or legal penalties that result in loss of liberty or livelihood.
Unlawful imprisonment or targeting of individuals for protected speech	1st Amendment, 42 U.S.C. § 1983, due process	When peaceful dissent is criminalized, resulting in arrest, imprisonment, or surveillance, the state crosses into active suppression of liberty.
Warrantless surveillance used to detain, seize, or prosecute citizens	4th Amendment, FISA, due process	Surveillance without probable cause can escalate into asset seizure, prosecution, or imprisonment without lawful grounds constituting loss of liberty or property.
Confiscation or destruction of private property under unlegislated agency rules	Article I (legislative power), 10th Amendment, due process	Enforcement by regulatory bodies without legislative approval can result in raids, seizures, or fines that violate property rights with no legal recourse.

Important Note:

CPoR does not justify violence in response to abstract grievances, policy disagreements, or political frustration. violent, defensive resistance is only justified when all five CPoR standards are met Innocence, Imminence, Proportionality, Avoidance, and Reasonableness and only when peaceful,

Jeff Pierson

lawful remedies have been exhausted or denied, and a real threat to life, bodily integrity, liberty, or property is imminent.

Jeff Pierson

Applying CPoR

Violent, defensive resistance is rarely justified. While many events in U.S. History came close to justifying violent, defensive resistance, only four events meet all five CPoR standards:

1. **Battle of Concord (1775)**
2. **Oberlin-Wellington Rescue (1858)**
3. **Japanese American Relocation (1942)** – *violent defensive resistance was not used.*
4. **Battle of Athens, Tennessee (1946)**

The following assessments are not intended to endorse or condemn the individuals, causes, or political contexts involved. Rather, each event is examined solely through the lens of the Concord Principle of Resistance, with the goal of determining whether the use of defensive violence if applied or hypothetically considered could be morally and strategically justified. Evaluations are based strictly on CPoR's five standards: Innocence, Imminence, Proportionality, Avoidance, and Reasonableness.

Boston Massacre (1770)

The Boston Massacre represents a tragic escalation of civic unrest, but it does not fully meet the CPoR threshold for justified defensive force. While the colonists were broadly innocent subject to occupation, arbitrary enforcement, and denied political recourse the immediate confrontation was disorganized, reactive, and lacked proportional planning or moral clarity. The British soldiers, provoked by taunts and thrown objects, responded with live ammunition, killing five civilians. Though the broader colonial cause was just, the crowd did not meet the standard of Avoidance or Reasonableness in that moment. The violence was tragic but not structured defensive resistance.

Battle of Concord (1775)

The confrontation at Concord is the clearest historical example of fully justified violent, defensive resistance under CPoR. The colonists met all five standards: they were innocent (not the aggressors), faced an imminent threat (British troops marching to seize weapons and arrest leaders), responded proportionately (only firing after being attacked), had exhausted peaceful remedies (petitions and legal appeals), and acted with public reason and civic restraint. Their defense was organized, measured, and rooted in a clear moral purpose protecting life, liberty, and lawful autonomy. Concord is the standard by which all other acts of resistance should be judged.

Jeff Pierson

Oberlin-Wellington Rescue (1858)

The Oberlin-Wellington Rescue involved a group of abolitionists in Ohio who forcibly freed a captured runaway slave from federal custody, in open defiance of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. While the law permitted federal marshals to seize escaped slaves even in free states the moral injustice of slavery and the brutality of the law placed the rescuers on firm ethical grounds. The threat to liberty was direct and imminent: an innocent man was about to be returned to bondage. The action was restrained, non-lethal, and clearly defensive. The abolitionist movement had long pursued peaceful legal remedies and had been repeatedly denied by Congress and the courts. The rescue met all five CPoR standards, especially Reasonableness, as it was morally intelligible to an informed public, both then and now. Though unlawful under federal statute, the act was a morally coherent stand against a fundamentally illegitimate law.

Relocation of Japanese Americans (1942)

The forced relocation and internment of over 100,000 Japanese Americans during World War II represents a grave violation of constitutional rights particularly due process, equal protection, and property rights. Though justified at the time under national emergency powers, the Supreme Court's 1944 ruling in *Korematsu v. United States* upholding the policy has since been formally repudiated as a failure of justice. In hindsight, the internment was not only unconstitutional but morally indefensible driven more by racial prejudice and political hysteria than by military necessity.

Under the Concord Principle of Resistance, violent defensive force may have been morally justifiable in this context, particularly if individuals had resisted imminent detention or the forcible seizure of property. Innocence, Imminence, and Proportionality were arguably met; the threat was real, state-driven, and rooted in collective punishment rather than individual guilt. However, the standards of Avoidance and Reasonableness carry special weight here. violent, defensive resistance while defensible in theory would have almost certainly resulted in mass tragedy, fueling anti-Japanese sentiment and legitimizing further state retaliation. That it was not used reflects the extraordinary restraint of the Japanese American community under extreme injustice.

In moral retrospect, their nonviolent endurance became one of the strongest long-term indictments of the government's abuse of power. The lesson is not that violence was wrong in principle but that its absence, in this case, preserved a moral high ground that ultimately led to national reckoning, apology, and legal reform.

Battle of Athens, Tennessee (1946)

In the Battle of Athens, a group of World War II veterans in McMinn County, Tennessee, confronted a corrupt local regime that had rigged elections, threatened citizens, and violently suppressed political dissent for years. After repeated appeals to state officials and peaceful civic efforts failed, the veterans

Jeff Pierson

armed themselves on election day to stop the unlawful seizure of ballot boxes by sheriff's deputies. Their resistance was defensive: they sought only to restore lawful voting and protect the community from further abuse. They avoided excessive force, and the confrontation ended with no deaths and a peaceful transfer of power. The veterans' actions met all five CPoR standards in particular, Innocence, Imminence, and Reasonableness and were widely recognized as a legitimate defense of constitutional order. Far from insurrection, Athens was an act of civic restoration.

Ruby Ridge (1992)

The standoff at Ruby Ridge approaches full justification under CPoR. Randy Weaver and his family were targeted over questionable, minor; firearms charge and failed court appearance. Federal agents conducted armed surveillance and initiated a confrontation that led to the deaths of Weaver's wife and son. The family's initial resistance was defensive, rooted in a sincere belief that the government posed a direct threat. The use of deadly force by federal agents was disproportionate, and legal remedies had become inaccessible. The Weavers' actions met the standards of Innocence, Imminence, and Proportionality, and mostly Avoidance, although their disengagement from the legal system weakens the Reasonableness claim slightly. Still, it stands as a near-complete example of justified defensive posture.

Waco Siege (1993)

The Branch Davidian response to the ATF and FBI siege in Waco, Texas also nears the threshold for justified defensive force under CPoR. The initial federal raid was armed, unannounced, and resulted in deaths on both sides. Over the 51-day standoff, government agents employed psychological tactics, armored vehicles, and eventually force that led to the deaths of over 70 civilians, including children. The Davidians had reason to believe they were under lethal threat, had attempted limited negotiations, and were not the aggressors. While David Koresh's refusal to fully surrender complicates the Avoidance standard, the overall imbalance of power and eventual outcome strongly suggests the use of force by the community was defensively motivated and morally comprehensible.

January 6 Capitol Protest (2021)

The January 6 event fails to meet the core CPoR standards for violent resistance. While many participants believed they were acting to defend election integrity, the Imminence and Reasonableness standards were not met. The Capitol itself was not an imminent threat to life or liberty, peaceful legal channels had not been fully exhausted, and the breach of a government building lacked moral restraint and proportionality. The presence of violence, vandalism, and disorganized intent disqualified the event

Jeff Pierson

as a legitimate act of defensive force. While the broader public distrust may be worth examining, January 6 does not meet the Concord threshold.

2025 Riots in Los Angeles (Federal Buildings, ICE Protests)

The violent riots at federal buildings in Los Angeles during 2025, sparked by opposition to ICE raids, also fail to satisfy CPOr's criteria. While protestors claimed to defend vulnerable populations, the methods used arson, vandalism, and direct confrontation with federal officers were neither defensive nor proportionate. No direct threat to the protestors' own lives or liberty was imminent, and peaceful, legal channels remained open. The attacks were ideologically motivated and broadly destructive, failing the standards of Innocence, Avoidance, and Reasonableness. As such, the use of force in this context cannot be justified under the Concord framework.

Jeff Pierson

APPENDIX: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Does the proportion or scale of government action affect whether violent, defensive resistance is justified under CPoR?

Yes. Under the Concord Principle of Resistance, the scale and severity of government action directly influence how resistance is evaluated especially regarding Proportionality, Imminence, and Reasonableness. A minor abuse does not justify force, but widespread or coordinated violations of life, liberty, or property may elevate the threat to an imminent and defensive context. The greater the government's use of coercion, particularly if peaceful remedies are denied the more morally reasonable it becomes for citizens to resist. However, even in large-scale oppression, violent, defensive resistance is only justified if all five CPoR standards are fully met.

Is CPoR a manifesto?

No. The Concord Principle of Resistance (CPoR) is not a manifesto, it is a moral and legal framework, not a call to arms or an ideological declaration. A manifesto typically seeks to rally action around a political vision or revolution. CPoR does the opposite: it exists to restrain action unless strict ethical and civic standards are met. It provides a structure for evaluating whether violent, defensive resistance is ever justified, based on truth, justice, and proportional defense not ideology or passion. CPoR is not about incitement; it is about discipline, accountability, and lawful moral clarity.

Will defensive resistance lead to jail or death?

It often can and those who act under the Concord Principle of Resistance (CPoR) must be fully prepared to accept that risk. Defensive resistance, even when morally justified, does not guarantee legal protection in the moment. Governments especially unjust or overreaching ones may still arrest, imprison, or kill those who resist, regardless of the moral clarity of their cause. CPoR does not promise safety; it demands moral courage. It affirms that liberty sometimes requires individuals to sacrifice comfort, status, or even life itself in defense of higher principles. The willingness to face jail or death, openly and without vengeance, is part of what gives defensive resistance its legitimacy. It is not only what you fight against it is how you fight that defines whether you stand for justice or merely react to power.

Are citizens duty-bound or honor-bound to use defensive violent resistance?

Under the Concord Principle of Resistance (CPoR), citizens are not automatically obligated to use force, but they are morally bound to resist injustice when all peaceful means have failed. The use of violent, defensive resistance is not a command, it is a last-resort moral permission guided by duty and honor. If

Jeff Pierson

life, liberty, or property is under unlawful threat, and the government has closed all legal channels for redress, citizens are not merely allowed but may be duty-bound to act if they can do so in a way that is innocent, proportionate, and publicly accountable. Choosing not to resist in such moments is not always cowardice but choosing to resist rightly may be the highest form of civic honor. CPoR does not glorify violence, it dignifies the decision to act when justice demands it, and history will remember it.

Are there moral absolutes or other considerations before violent, defensive resistance is used?

Yes under the Concord Principle of Resistance (CPoR), violent, defensive resistance is only justified when it meets strict moral absolutes and additional serious considerations. First, the five CPoR standards Innocence, Imminence, Proportionality, Avoidance, and Reasonableness must all be satisfied. These are not guidelines; they are non-negotiable moral thresholds. But beyond those, other factors must be weighed: Will innocent lives be endangered? Will the action preserve liberty or provoke wider injustice? Is there a clear objective and moral restraint? CPoR demands not only that resistance be necessary and defensive, but that it be righteous in intent and sober in execution. The use of force is never simply a matter of cause it must be bound by conscience, focused on restoration, and worthy of future judgment. Any act of resistance that ignores these moral absolutes risks, becoming the very evil it seeks to oppose.

Does CPoR apply only in America, or could it apply in other nations?

While CPoR is rooted in the American tradition of liberty, its moral foundation natural law, defensive ethics, and civic accountability is universally intelligible. Any society that recognizes inherent rights, the rule of law, and consent-based governance could apply the CPoR framework. However, its structure and assumptions (e.g., access to courts, speech, self-defense rights) are particularly shaped by the U.S. constitutional experience.

How does CPoR view martyrdom or self-sacrifice in resistance?

Self-sacrifice is not a goal and CPoR not glorify martyrdom for its own sake, nor view dying in resistance as inherently noble.

Is it ever moral to disobey a just law if the system enforcing it is unjust?

Yes. A just law, when weaponized by an unjust regime, can become an instrument of oppression. CPoR holds that moral context matters: when enforcement becomes selective, discriminatory, or ideologically coercive, even a technically valid law may be resisted. However, such resistance must still follow the principles of Avoidance and Reasonableness violence is never justified simply because an institution is corrupt.

Jeff Pierson

What happens if only some, but not all, CPoR standards are met?

Partial alignment may explain a protestor's motive, but it does not grant moral legitimacy to violence. CPoR is clear: **all five standards** must be satisfied for defensive force to be justified morally. If only some are met, then peaceful resistance, legal redress, or civil disobedience may still be appropriate, but the use of force is not morally authorized.

How does CPoR relate to the Second Amendment?

The Second Amendment is based on the natural right to self-defense, including the defense of liberty against tyranny. CPoR offers the moral and civic structure that prevents that right from devolving into chaos. It affirms that arms may be justly used against state actors only when all peaceful means have been exhausted and all CPoR standards are met. In this way, the Second Amendment provides the capacity, and CPoR provides the conscience.

Can someone lawfully prepare for violent, defensive resistance without intending to use it?

Yes, if preparation is defensive, transparent, and legal. Owning firearms, training in civil defense, and forming lawful networks of mutual aid are not in themselves violations of CPoR. However, stockpiling weapons with the intent to provoke confrontation, intimidate others, or undermine lawful authority violates the Innocence and Reasonableness standards. Preparation is morally sound only when matched with restraint and accountability.

Is violent, defensive resistance ever justified against local (not federal) authorities?

Yes. CPoR applies to all forms of government authority federal, state, or local. If a county sheriff, city council, or school board engages in unlawful coercion that poses an imminent threat to liberty or life, defensive resistance may be justified. The same five standards apply regardless of the level of government. What matters is the nature of the threat, not its origin.

Does the Constitution allow for revolution or resistance?

The Constitution is silent on revolution, but the **Declaration of Independence** affirms the right and duty of the people to "alter or abolish" any government that becomes destructive to their rights. CPoR draws on this founding truth, but channels it through moral restraint. Resistance is not about abolishing government it's about restoring legitimate governance when all lawful paths have failed.

Jeff Pierson

How should courts or juries assess a CPoR-based act of resistance?

Courts should evaluate whether the resister met each of the five CPoR standards: Were they innocent? Was the threat imminent? Was their response proportionate? Did they attempt to avoid violence? And would a reasonable person in their situation believe force was necessary? These criteria offer a structured, morally coherent defense framework that is distinct from criminal intent or reckless conduct.

Should CPoR be used to evaluate past protest movements like BLM, Bundy Ranch, or January 6?

Yes. CPoR provides a nonpartisan, morally consistent standard that can and should be applied to all forms of civic resistance left, right, or otherwise. It separates justified defense from ideological violence. In most such cases, even where grievances were real, violent actions failed to meet all five CPoR standards especially Proportionality, Reasonableness, and Avoidance.

Can religious conviction or prophetic belief justify violent, defensive resistance under CPoR?

Not by themselves. CPoR respects conscience and spiritual authority, but it does not exempt anyone from the five public standards. A sincere belief must still be anchored in public facts, lawful exhaustion, and moral restraint. Private revelation, even if deeply held, does not replace objective justification for public violence.

What safeguards prevent people from misusing CPoR to justify political violence?

CPoR is not responsible for the actions of individuals or groups, however, the CPoR framework itself is a safeguard. By requiring that all five standards be met *not just personal belief, not just political frustration* CPoR makes it clear that most violence is not justifiable. It demands public explanation, restraint, and accountability. Any actor claiming CPoR legitimacy must prove that their actions meet objective civic standards, not just emotional or ideological ones.

Does God permit violence in defense of truth and justice?

Yes but only with grave caution. Scripture affirms that government is ordained to reward good and punish evil (Romans 13), but it also acknowledges that unjust rulers may become oppressors (Acts 5:29, Revelation 13). CPoR reflects the biblical principle that violence may be used to protect the innocent, defend the weak, and uphold justice but never out of pride, revenge, or rebellion for its own sake.

Jeff Pierson

Can resisting government ever become rebellion against divine order?

Yes if resistance is self-serving, reckless, or contrary to truth. Romans 13 warned against resisting legitimate authority. But when that authority becomes lawless when it suppresses the good, rewards the wicked, or violates God's law resistance becomes a defense of divine order, not a violation of it. CPoR exists to help believers discern the difference.

What did the Founding Fathers believe about resisting tyranny?

The Founders, particularly Jefferson, Madison, and Adams, believed that resistance to tyranny was a natural right and moral duty. The Declaration of Independence was not an endorsement of rebellion but a reasonable justification for defensive action after all peaceful remedies had been denied. CPoR stands in continuity with that tradition: resistance not for its own sake, but to preserve liberty and restore just government.

How does CPoR differ from traditional civil disobedience or pacifism?

Civil disobedience accepts punishment as part of protest and generally avoids confrontation. Pacifism renounces violence altogether. CPoR affirms both as valid paths but recognizes that when liberty is attacked, lives are at risk, and justice is denied, there comes a time when force may be necessary. CPoR does not abandon peace it defends it when peace is under siege.

Can CPoR justify Assassination?

No assassination is categorically rejected under CPoR. The deliberate targeting, harming, and killing of a government official or public figure, even in the name of resistance, fails multiple core standards of the Concord framework. Assassinations are not defensive.

First, assassination nearly always violates Proportionality. It is a lethal, premeditated, and irreversible act often carried out without immediate threat, without warning, and without restraint. It is not a defensive posture, but a calculated execution. Second, it violates Avoidance and Reasonableness, as it circumvents all lawful and civic avenues of redress, removes accountability, and fuels instability. Assassination is rarely transparent or constrained. It is secretive by nature, unilateral, and destructive to civic order.

Even when the target is a known tyrant or enforcer of injustice, assassination fails the moral test of CPoR because it replaces public defense with private retribution, and it invites escalation, chaos, and moral ambiguity. Resistance must serve justice, not vengeance. Force under CPoR must be defensive, proportionate, public, and ultimately restorative not strategic killing for political or ideological gain.

Jeff Pierson

In short, assassination is not and never will be a legitimate form of resistance under the Concord Principle. It is morally indefensible and strategically corrosive to the very ordered liberty CPoR exists to preserve.

Jeff Pierson

APPENDIX: COUNTERPOINTS AND RESPONSES

Counterpoint: Subjectivity and Misuse

Critique: Even with five standards, CPoR can be twisted by individuals or groups who falsely believe they are justified. One person's "imminent threat" may be another's conspiracy theory. The framework risks validating extremist violence under a veil of moral language.

Response: CPoR anticipates this danger, which is why it demands not personal conviction, but public justification. It requires that all five standards be met objectively, not just subjectively. Reasonableness acts as a filter: force must make moral and civic sense to a just and informed public, not just the resister. Anyone who invokes CPoR without transparency, restraint, and public accountability is not upholding the doctrine they are violating it.

Counterpoint 2: Undermines Rule of Law

Critique: By providing a moral framework for breaking the law, CPoR risks undermining democratic governance. It empowers individuals to decide when to defy authority potentially eroding institutional legitimacy.

Response: CPoR doesn't undermine the rule of law it seeks to preserve it when the state abandons it. The doctrine is built on the recognition that lawfulness and justice are not always the same. It affirms that legitimate government operates by consent and within limits. CPoR is not for political defiance, it's for defensive liberty when lawful redress has been destroyed. Far from an attack on order, it is a safeguard against tyranny masquerading as legality.

Counterpoint 3: Violence Begets Violence

Critique: Once violence is introduced, it often spirals beyond control. CPoR may intend to constrain it, but history shows that even principled force can trigger escalation, revenge, or breakdown of civic unity.

Response: CPoR recognizes this and that is why it treats violence as a last resort, not a first tool. Its purpose is to prevent chaos, not excuse it. Resistance is justified only when restraint has already been exhausted and when the danger of inaction exceeds the risk of escalation. Even then, force must be defensive, limited, and public. CPoR does not glorify violence it binds it. The alternative is not peace, but unresisted oppression.

Jeff Pierson

Counterpoint 4: Legal Consequences Are Still Real

Critique: Even if CPoR provides moral justification, the state may still prosecute resisters. Juries, judges, and media may not accept the doctrine. This makes it risky, reckless.

Response: CPoR does not promise safety because it calls for courage. It affirms that true resistance requires willingness to suffer for the truth. Legal persecution does not make moral resistance wrong. From the Founders to civil rights activists, those who stood against injustice often paid the price. CPoR helps resisters act with clarity, not impulsiveness, so that when they face judgment, they can stand not as rebels but as defenders of principle.

Counterpoint 5: Democratic Systems Offer Peaceful Remedies

Critique: In a republic with elections, courts, and speech, there's always a peaceful path. Violence, no matter how principled, undermines the very tools that distinguish democracy from tyranny.

Response: CPoR affirms the concern that democracy is not inherently protective of liberty and that is why Avoidance is one of its core standards. If peaceful remedies are available, the use of force is not justified. But as James Madison warned, democracy tends toward "turbulence and contention" and often collapses into violence or instability. Alexander Hamilton echoed this, cautioning that real liberty is never found in "the extremes of democracy." A system may preserve democratic appearance even as it abandons justice when courts become political weapons, elections are manipulated, or dissent is criminalized. In such moments, CPoR exists not to reject democracy but to preserve the Constitution, the Republic, and rule of law. It recognizes that consent, law, and liberty, not majority rule are the true foundations of a free society. When the structure of government becomes hostile to those ends, principled resistance becomes not a rejection of democracy, but a defense of its integrity.

Counterpoint 6: Historical Romanticism

Critique: Invoking Concord, Athens, or Oberlin may romanticize resistance. These were rare, exceptional events. Trying to apply them broadly invites comparison where none is deserved and today's consequences would be far more dangerous.

Response: CPoR does not romanticize its disciplines. It references these events not to inspire revolt, but to define the high bar for justification. These examples are rare precisely because the standard is so demanding. CPoR makes it harder, not easier, to claim moral grounds for violence. It doesn't invite modern imitation, it warns unless your cause matches the clarity, restraint, and necessity of Concord, you have no license to act.

The reality is that every form of government in human history regardless of structure or ideology has at some point violated the rights to life, liberty, or property. These violations, whether gradual or sudden,

Jeff Pierson

almost always lead to collapse, bloodshed, or prolonged suffering. The Concord Principle of Resistance (CPoR) exists to confront that historical pattern with a different path: one that limits violence strictly to defensive use, sets a high moral and civic bar for any act of resistance, and requires individuals to pass through legal and ethical firewalls before force is ever considered. In doing so, CPoR not only disciplines the resister it warns the ruler. It serves as a permanent, principled reminder that no government, no official, and no institution is above the law or exempt from judgment. When the authority loses accountability, it forfeits legitimacy. CPoR ensures that if force is ever used, it is not an act of ambition or rage but of last-resort justice, tethered to truth and grounded in duty.

Jeff Pierson

APPENDIX: CURRENT, FOUNDING ERA, AND CLASSICAL REFERENCES SUPPORTING THE CONCORD PRINCIPLE OF RESISTANCE

1. **Declaration of Independence (1776)** The Declaration of Independence provides the foundational legal and moral precedent for justified resistance in the American tradition. It asserts that when a government becomes destructive of the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, it is not only the right but the duty of the people to alter or abolish it. This principle affirms that lawful authority is conditional and that resistance is not sedition when it is rooted in justice, transparency, and the exhaustion of peaceful alternatives.
2. **James Madison – Federalist No. 10** Madison’s warning that democracies tend toward “turbulence and contention” reinforces CPoR’s skepticism of pure majority rule. His advocacy for a constitutional republic—structured by law, checks and balances, and protection of minority rights—validates CPoR’s insistence that resistance is only justified when those stabilizing systems fail and the threat to liberty becomes immediate and unavoidable.
3. **Alexander Hamilton – Federalist No. 78 and Writings** Hamilton’s assertion that real liberty is never found in the extremes of democracy reflects CPoR’s belief that popular will must be constrained by principle and law. His confidence in the judiciary as a bulwark against tyranny aligns with CPoR’s emphasis on exhausting all peaceful and legal remedies before considering resistance. When institutions cease to uphold rights, citizens retain the moral right to defend liberty.
4. **Thomas Jefferson – Various Writings** Jefferson’s view that “when injustice becomes law, resistance becomes duty” encapsulates the moral core of CPoR. He acknowledged that liberty sometimes demands sacrifice and that the government must remain subordinate to the people it serves. CPoR draws from Jefferson’s understanding that lawful resistance must be principled, restrained, and rooted in an ethical foundation.
5. **John Locke – Second Treatise of Government** Locke provides the classical justification for resistance against arbitrary power. He argued that any government which violates natural rights forfeits its legitimacy, and citizens may resist in defense of life, liberty, and property. CPoR builds directly on this foundation by requiring all five standards—Innocence, Imminence, Proportionality, Avoidance, and Reasonableness—before justifying force.
6. **St. Thomas Aquinas – Summa Theologica (II-II, Q.42)** Aquinas warned that resistance is only just when tyranny is real, peaceful redress has failed, and rebellion does not unleash greater evil. This framework parallels CPoR’s structure by affirming that resistance must be a last resort, exercised under strict ethical discipline, and always proportionate to the threat faced.

7. **Andrew Branca – Five Elements of Self-Defense** Branca’s legal framework for self-defense—Innocence, Imminence, Proportionality, Avoidance, and Reasonableness—forms the structural basis of CPoR. Adapted to the civic realm, these principles ensure that force is used only when morally warranted and legally grounded, preventing emotion, vengeance, or ideology from corrupting resistance.
8. **42 U.S.C. § 1983** Section 1983 provides a legal remedy against officials who violate constitutional rights under color of law. It embodies the principle that accountability is not optional. CPoR shares this ethos: resistance begins not with force, but with documented appeals and legal confrontation. Only when those fail is defensive force considered.
9. **Marbury v. Madison (1803)** This foundational decision established the principle of judicial review, declaring that laws contrary to the Constitution are null. CPoR uses this precedent to reinforce its standard: when law is corrupted beyond repair and becomes an instrument of oppression, the people retain the right to protect their liberty.
10. **Korematsu v. United States (1944) and Trump v. Hawaii (2018)** Korematsu upheld the forced internment of Japanese Americans, a decision later repudiated in Trump v. Hawaii. These cases show that legality does not equal justice. CPoR draws on this historical error to justify resistance when lawful channels are twisted into tools of systemic harm.
11. **United States v. Miller (1939) and District of Columbia v. Heller (2008)** These rulings affirm the individual right to keep and bear arms, especially for lawful defense. CPoR holds that this right extends to defending liberty itself—but only when all five moral and legal standards are met. Arms may be held lawfully but must be used sparingly and justly.
12. **West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette (1943)** This case affirmed that the government cannot compel belief or expression. It upholds the sanctity of conscience and supports CPoR’s Reasonableness standard: resistance must never be ideological aggression, but an intelligible defense of core rights under real threat.
13. **Ex parte Milligan (1866)** The Court ruled that military trials of civilians are unconstitutional when civilian courts are operational. This reinforces the CPoR doctrine that emergency powers do not nullify constitutional protections, and resistance is justified when civil authority is unlawfully suspended.
14. **The Civil Liberties Act of 1988** This formal apology and reparations for Japanese American internment acknowledged grave constitutional failure. It retroactively validated the idea that peaceful, lawful resistance may one day be vindicated—and highlights the importance of moral clarity when the law goes astray.

CITATIONS

Modern Legal Commentary

- Branca, Andrew. *The Law of Self Defense: Principles*. Law of Self Defense Press, 2021.

Foundational Texts and Philosophical Works

- Jefferson, Thomas. *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*. Edited by Julian P. Boyd. Princeton University Press, 1950–.
- Locke, John. *Two Treatises of Government*. Edited by Peter Laslett. Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Madison, James. *The Federalist No. 10*, in *The Federalist Papers*. Edited by Clinton Rossiter. New American Library, 1961.
- Hamilton, Alexander. *The Federalist No. 78*, in *The Federalist Papers*. Edited by Clinton Rossiter. New American Library, 1961.
- Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologica*, II–II, Question 42. Translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Benziger Bros., 1947.
- Cicero. *De Re Publica*. Translated by Clinton W. Keyes. Harvard University Press, 1928.

Legal References and Federal Statutes

- *Marbury v. Madison*, 5 U.S. (1 Cranch) 137 (1803).
- *Korematsu v. United States*, 323 U.S. 214 (1944).
- *Trump v. Hawaii*, 585 U.S. ____ (2018).
- *United States v. Miller*, 307 U.S. 174 (1939).
- *District of Columbia v. Heller*, 554 U.S. 570 (2008).
- *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624 (1943).
- *Ex parte Milligan*, 71 U.S. (4 Wall.) 2 (1866).
- U.S. Code, Title 42, § 1983. *Civil action for deprivation of rights*.
- *The Civil Liberties Act of 1988*, Public Law 100–383, 102 Stat. 903.

Historical Documents

Jeff Pierson

- *The Declaration of Independence*. July 4, 1776. In *The Founders' Constitution*. University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- *The Constitution of the United States*. 1787.