



Allegheny County Sportsmen's League Legislative Committee Report

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ALLEGHENY COUNTY SPORTSMEN LEAGUE ON THE INTERNET <http://www.acslpa.org>

Contacts: Legislative Committee Chairman, **Kim Stolfer** (412.221.3346) - activist@fvi.net

Legislative Committee Vice-Chairman, **Mike Christeson** - acslvchair@yahoo.com

HB 1845 Advances in Senate Judiciary Committee

This past Tuesday, June 10, the Pennsylvania Senate Judiciary committee considered house Bill 1845 along with several amendments. This is the bill that came from the house wherein gunowners defeated the concept of mandatory reporting of lost or stolen firearms as offered by Representative Levdansky. In the house a series of amendments were offered in addition to Representative Levdansky's amendment that corrected a number of laws of Pennsylvania law. Some of the corrections included in this bill are that Pennsylvania citizens will be allowed to carry a concealed firearm in state parks, prohibits gun confiscations during an emergency like what occurred down in Louisiana during the Katrina storm, and provides for an emergency concealed carry permit for domestic abuse victims.

Through a series of meetings with Senators over the past month the Allegheny County Sportsmen's League legislative committee was able to explain and reinforce why these changes were necessary. Senator Jane Orié was of particular help in this area! The Pennsylvania coalition against domestic violence otherwise known as PCADV has been lobbying for months in opposition to the emergency concealed carry permit for victims of domestic abuse. The PCADV has repeatedly tried to impart the notion that citizens cannot defend themselves with firearms, especially women, by using discredited and biased studies, like the tired Kellerman Study, that have been rebuked by peer review throughout academia.

While some in the Senate wanted to remove Metcalfe's amendment that provided for emergency concealed carry permit for victims of domestic abuse we stood fast in support of this concept. We confronted everything the PCADV threw at us with fact and reason and on June 10 we were rewarded by the Senate Judiciary Committee rejecting the attempt to remove the Metcalfe amendment from this legislation. This bill now moves to the Appropriations Committee and then will go directly to the floor for a full Senate vote.

The Senate Judiciary Members who voted PRO-GUN are:

Senator Boscola Senator Stout Senator Browne
Senator Earll Senator Gordner Senator Orié
Senator Piccola Senator Rafferty Senator Scarnati

Senator White

The Senate Judiciary Committee Members who voted AGAINST Gun Owners are:

Senator Greenleaf Senator Costa
Senator Fontana Senator Stack

Breaking news:

The incident in Dickson city where gun owners were accosted police officers acting outside the law where their firearms were seized and one citizen was actually arrested for simply exercising their rights as resulted in a federal civil rights lawsuit being filed.

It is important to note that no charges were filed and that all of this action was promulgated by one citizen calling the police acting on a prejudice against seeing firearms in thinking that someone was going to do something wrong. Instead of the police acting appropriately in informing the citizen that this was legal they chose the path of confrontation and denial of civil liberties in contravention of the law. This is not the first time for the Dickson city police department to be involved in something like this but it just may be a defining moment for their actions to come to the attention of the public and the courts. The Dickson city police department and the officers involved in this lawsuit not only violated civil rights but they broke Pennsylvania crime law which cannot be condoned in any fashion or for any reason.

More to come as developments occur!

South Fayette Township considers gun ordinance

One citizen complaining of hearing firearm shots resulted in South Fayette Township of Allegheny County attempting to craft and create a firearms ordinance. The Allegheny County Sportsmen's league legislative committee testified at this workshop hearing this past Monday on June 9. It was readily apparent that Council was unaware of the depth and breadth of Pennsylvania law in this area and that their wardens had a number of unintentional flaws that could provide for unnecessary conflict with citizens.

It is apparent that more work needs to be done in this area by Council and the legislative committee of the Allegheny County

Sportsmen's league will monitor the situation closely to ensure that citizen's rights are protected.

FBI 'UCR' preliminary data shows violent crime rate continuing to drop

If the FBI's projections hold the rate of total violent crime (murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault) and murder will show that between 1991 and 2006 the violent crime rate and murder have dropped respectively 38 and 42%. Further if these projections hold the violent crime rate in 2007 will be at the lowest point since 1974 (a 33 year low) with murder the lowest since 1965 (a 42 year low).

Further undercutting any of the statements and claims of the anti-gun groups that there is a need for more gun control as well as the potential insinuation that the expansion of concealed carry firearms laws have contributed mightily to the drop in violent crime.

When one examines the crime rate in Pennsylvania the results are startling! For instance the murder rate rock Pennsylvania is for per 100,000 individuals and yet in Philadelphia is 19 per 100,000 individuals. Keep in mind that these rates for the rest of Pennsylvania include the cities of Pittsburgh, York, Reading, Erie and all the other urban areas except for Philadelphia. Were want to take out these cities the murder rate would be that much lower.

It is time for the legislators and representatives of the people to refocus the efforts of the justice system into punishing those that are most likely to commit crimes!

Supremes Agree To Review Second Gun Case Appeal

by Joseph P. Tartaro, Executive Editor

A few weeks after hearing oral arguments in the historic District of Columbia v. Heller Second Amendment case, the US Supreme Court granted certiorari in a second gun-related case which is likely to be argued early in the court's next session, which begins the first Monday in October.

The court's ruling on the Heller case is expected to be issued by the end of June.

The new case is not so much a Second Amendment case as it is a test of the parameters for enforcement of the Lautenberg amendment barring arms for people convicted or pleading guilty to misdemeanor domestic abuse charges.

It is the case of a Marion County, WV, man, Randy Hayes of Mannington, a contractor convicted of a felony gun possession charge under Lautenberg.

According to The Charleston Daily Mail, Hayes' case goes back to 1994, when he pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor battery offense after a dispute with his wife. Ten years later, an argument over their son occurred over the phone between the now-divorced parents and she asked police to go to his home.

When they searched Hayes home, an old Winchester rifle given to him by his father was found under a bed. Hayes didn't know it, but a 1996 amendment to federal gun laws made it illegal for him to possess the gun because of his prior misdemeanor offense.

Attorney Tony Giatras was hired two days before Hayes was expected to plead guilty in federal court.

"We halted the entire process in March 2005," Giatras said. "Because he only pleaded guilty in 1994 to battery, not domestic battery but the federal court interpreted it as domestic battery because it was against a family member."

"In 1994 and in 1995, he was legally able to have a gun," Giatras said. "The 1996 law was applied to him retroactively, but he didn't even know it."

The case went to the 4th US Circuit Court of Appeals in October 2006 and the court reversed the earlier decision, and the Justice Department appealed.

Giatras said the case is important because it will further define the right to own a gun and also addresses the issue of laws affecting citizens retroactively. In the end, it could provide justice not just for Randy Hayes, but others who have been caught this way, Giatras said. [The New GUN WEEK, June 15, 2008](#)

Pennsylvania Open Carry Incident Ignites Outrage, Possible Lawsuit

by Dave Workman, Senior Editor

Open carry activists across the country, and especially in Pennsylvania, were outraged over a May 9 incident involving several armed citizens who were dining at a family restaurant in suburban Dickson City, outside Scranton, and the incident may lead to a lawsuit. (See related story on this page.)

A few days later, about 30 of them descended on the Dickson City council meeting to testify against what they called "police state style roundups of g-owners" when they were essentially doing nothing wrong.

However, Dickson Police Chief William Stadnitski told Gun Week that his officers erred on the side of caution when responding to what apparently was the agency's first-ever 911 call about "people brandishing guns" at an Olde Country Buffet at the height of the dinner hour.

"There was no ill will on our part," the chief said. "I'd rather err on the side of caution here."

The incident involved Rich Banks, founder of Pennsylvania Open Carry, an off-shoot of [OpenCarry.org](#), an activist nationwide gun rights forum and loosely-knit organization that promotes legal open carry of defensive sidearms. Banks was at the family eatery with about two dozen friends and their families—including at least a dozen adults who were armed—when the Dickson police received at least four telephone complaints about "armed men."

At one point, Banks found himself in handcuffs in the back seat of a patrol car, one of his two guns was confiscated, and in the aftermath, he was talking to attorneys about filing a lawsuit. The gun was seized apparently in a misunderstanding about state law and because the serial number did not show up in some sort of registry, but Banks said there is no requirement that a handgun be formally registered in the Keystone State. Two days after the incident, Stadnitski insisted that Banks could retrieve his gun, a 9mm Taurus revolver that he was wearing in an ankle holster. His other gun, a .45-caliber Springfield Model 1911, was returned.

Registration 'myth'

Mike Stollenwerk, one of the nation's leading open carry advocates, said that this incident underscores the need to "bust this registration myth."

"There is a myth among police officers that there is gun registration in Pennsylvania," Stollenwerk observed. "Some police agencies believe you have to keep proof of ownership."

The incident began unfolding at about 6:30 p.m. Banks and Stadnitski agree on that point. Initially, two Dickson officers responded, and soon they were asking everyone for identification. Banks said he advised both officers that carry permits are not required for open carry, and also that there is no requirement in the state law to provide a driver's license as identification in a non-driving related situation.

Banks said the officers began lecturing the group about open carry, even after acknowledging that the practice is legal.

Stadnitski told Gun Week that in his 37 years in law enforcement, the last 32 as police chief, he has never seen a private citizen openly carrying a handgun outside of a hunting situation.

Tensions rose more when Banks' wife began trying to video the events, and was threatened by a female police officer with arrest if she did not turn off the camera. This was after Banks, who is neither an attorney nor judge, insisted to the officer that it is not against the law to video record an event that happens in public, even if it involves a police officer.

Stadnitski contended that Banks gave the officers "a hard time." Banks insisted he was merely trying to explain the law to the police. It was not until after he had been placed under arrest that he told the officers he had a second gun, the Taurus, and a concealed carry permit. He said that while he was detained in the patrol car, at least eight officers arrived from the area, including Scranton and Blakely police. He also noticed they were spending lots of time on their cell phones, and Stadnitski confirmed that the officers conferred with a district attorney during the situation.

When the police refused to return his revolver after they released him from custody, he demanded a receipt. It was written on a piece of blank paper and signed by the female officer. Stadnitski said that is standard and that the department keeps "formal" receipt forms at the police station.

Gunowner backlash

In the wake of the incident, Stadnitski said his department was flooded with angry e-mails and telephone calls.

"I believe in the Second Amendment," he insisted.

That declaration may not be enough Stadnitski, who has headed the Dickson department since 1976, is perhaps the latest and certainly not the last police administrator to become aware of the growing open carry movement across the country. He runs a department with 22 commissioned officers, perhaps typical of suburban police agencies, and even some county sheriff's departments. They are learning that while the practice of open carry may be anachronistic, it is not illegal in many, if not most, states.

Stollenwerk has taken something of a hard line attitude about the reaction by police who, for many years, have grown accustomed to being the only people in public to openly carry sidearms. In some instances, there have been philosophical clashes between police and armed citizens. In Washington state, activist Lonnie Wilson has been proactive about open carry,

contacting various police departments large and small, and after some effort has gotten many departments to issue training bulletins to their officers, reminding them that in the Evergreen State, packing a gun on one's hip is not grounds for arrest.

Open carry has been upheld by the state appeals courts in Washington. But the education process involving police can be slow. Meanwhile, Stollenwerk wishes cooler heads would prevail.

"You don't detain people and threaten to arrest them simply because they are openly carrying," he said.

Stollenwerk and his partner at OpenCarry.org have called upon the Lackawanna County, PA, district attorney to order police to return Banks' revolver without requiring him to provide proof of ownership. They also want the two officers who initially responded to the call to be suspended and prosecuted "for violations of civil rights under federal and Pennsylvania law." [*The New GUN WEEK*, June 15, 2008](#)

PA Lawmaker Backs Open Carry

While Keystone State gun rights activists were angered by the police reaction to open carry in Dickson City, one Pennsylvania lawmaker came out openly in support of the activists' position.

According to The Scranton Times Tribune, state Rep. Ed Staback (DOlyphant) told the newspaper that while he can understand how some people may be concerned about open carry, he supports the practice and notes that the law allows it.

"It's the law today. ... And it's been that way forever in the state and has not been a problem to date," the newspaper quoted Staback. "But I think if it was me personally, and I needed to carry a gun, I think I would apply for a concealed- weapon permit."

Gun Week has seen the officer's report on the incident.

Staback told The Times Tribune that he did not blame other customers for calling police when they saw several openly armed private citizens dining in the Olde Country Buffet restaurant May 9.

A Dickson officer wrote in that report that she contacted one of the women who made a 911 call to police about the open carry group. According to that report, the caller said that "she and her mother were eating dinner when they observed two males with guns on their sides.

"She stated," the report said, "that she was 'offended' by this that 'one male was at the buffet table with just a nylon strap over his gun and there were kids running around and some of them pointed at it'. She felt as though it was strange and thought about all the 'crazy' people in the news lately. She also stated that her mother's glances were noticed by one male who stated to her 'don't worry honey you are in the safest place in Dickson City right now.' Which the caller stated really upset her mother and they left the restaurant before finishing their meals because they felt that this was not right and were scared."

Staback, who chairs the House Game and Fisheries Committee, has a pro-gun record that includes being named Legislator of the Year by the National Association of Firearms Retailers. He does not support any proposal to change the current state law.

"They have every right to carry a weapon, a handgun," he told the newspaper, "and I will defend that right to do that. And I think the support wouldn't be in General Assembly, where that change would need to be made. ... I think it would be extremely, extremely difficult."

However, Staback did say that he does not care for the notion that some open carry advocates might stage such incidents as dining at family restaurants while openly armed, to "raise public awareness about gun rights," the newspaper reported.

"Sometimes, it's better you let a sleeping dog lie," he told the newspaper. "I don't know what point you prove by conducting such meetings, and you could end up putting a focus on an issue that isn't being focused on." *The New GUN WEEK, June 15, 2008*

English (UK) Anti-Gun Leader Stabbed to Death

The grandson of prominent anti-gun campaigner Pat Regan has been arrested on suspicion of stabbing her to death.

Mrs Regan, 53, was discovered at the property on Marlborough Grange in the Hyde Park area of Leeds on Sunday.

The mother-of-six started campaigning against gun crime when her son Danny was shot dead in 2002.

The 20-year-old man was being held on suspicion of murder, police said. It is thought he had been arrested earlier in the day over another stabbing.

A 45-year-old railway worker was treated in hospital for a stab wound to his arm after challenging a man for trespassing at Leeds station on Sunday morning, British Transport Police said

Mrs Regan set up a Leeds branch of Mothers Against Guns after her son Danny, 25, was shot at his home in Haydock, near St Helens, Merseyside in December 2002. His killer has not been found.

She had met government officials to discuss how to tackle the problems of guns and gang-related crime.

Dee Edwards, co-founder of campaign group Mothers Against Murder and Manslaughter, said Mrs Regan would visit schools and give talks about the dangers and consequences of getting involved in crime.

She said: "She made such a big difference to so many people's lives. This is an absolute tragedy for so many people."

Mrs Edwards said she had known Mrs Regan for about six years and described her as the "most incredible woman".

"It's just the most dreadful news for everyone. She's just an amazing woman," she added.

'No grudges'

Mrs Regan's friend Sylvester Johnson, 74, said: "She didn't want any young people to get caught up in the trouble that her son got caught up in.

"She was very brave and I don't know of anyone who would have a grudge against her."

In February, Mrs Regan was involved with the launch of a DVD warning about the dangers of gun and knife gang culture.

Speaking at the time, she said: "Things are reaching a critical point. Kids are dying before us, but we shouldn't have to bury our own children."

In the same month, Mrs Regan was at the then Prime Minister Tony Blair's side at a Downing Street summit on tackling problems relating to gang-related crime.

Her campaigning work was also praised by Princess Anne during a visit to the city earlier this year.

Labour minister Hilary Benn, who is the MP for Leeds Central and knew Pat Regan, said he was upset by the news of her death.

"I'm shocked, and greatly saddened to hear of Pat's death," he said.

"She made a huge impression on me and on many people that she met. She was determined to do all that she could so that other mothers didn't go through the experience that she went through when her son, Danny, was killed."

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/west_yorkshire/7430668.stm

Interior Sets June 30 Deadline For Nat'l Park CCW Comment

by Dave Workman, Senior Editor

Through the end of this month, legally-armed private citizens have the chance to influence a change in Department of Interior regulations aimed at allowing them to carry concealed firearms for personal protection in national parks and national wildlife refuges.

A public comment period ends June 30 on a proposal that would, if enacted, dramatically change the way firearms have been regulated on those park and refuge lands for at least the past 25 years.

Gun Week readers can offer comments by logging onto the federal rulemaking portal at: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

Comments mail also be mailed to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: 1024-AD70; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Dr., Suite 222; Arlington, VA 22203.

Those living in the Washington, DC, or northern Virginia areas can actually hand-deliver their comments by stopping at 4401 North Fairfax Dr., Suite 222, Arlington, VA 22203.

Interior Department spokesperson Chris Paolino said that all public comments will be considered and a final decision "hopefully" might come by the end of this year, but that depends upon the volume of comments, pro and con, that are offered.

Anti-gun organizations have joined forces with some national park groups to oppose the change, while the National Rifle Association, Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms (CCRKBA) and local grassroots organizations including the Virginia Citizens Defense League (VCDL) are supporting the change.

Under the proposed rule change, parks and wildlife refuges would regulate firearms with respect to-state authority, just as the US Forest Service and

Bureau of Land Management are now regulating firearms on national forest and BLM lands. For example, it is now legal to carry a concealed handgun according to state statute on national forest lands.

In announcing the proposed change, the Interior Department stressed that this is an update to reflect changes in concealed

carry laws that have occurred in the states since 1981 and 1983, when the current federal rules were adopted.

"Since the Federal regulations have remained unchanged during this time," the Interior Department explained, "the provisions fail to distinguish between firearms used by the general public for recreational purposes and the concealed and loaded weapons a limited number of citizens may now carry pursuant to state authorities."

Millions carry guns

By some estimates, as many as four to five million Americans now possess licenses to carry concealed handguns, not only in their home states, but in other states that recognize their permits. A number of those citizens are also licensed to carry in states under permits issued by those states to non-residents.

The current park regulation banning firearms "restricts fundamental freedoms without yielding the benefits the regulations were promulgated to achieve," the Interior Department explained.

NRA has been working on this quietly for several years, and their effort was more far reaching than that mounted by the VCDL. While VCDL focused on national park carry, the NRA's effort also included the change in national wildlife refuges, and that could be a significant difference, because if this proposal is approved following the public comment period, it will open up far more federal land to concealed carry.

"It's a good first half-step," said VCDL's Philip Van Cleave. "We would like to see it improved to a whole step by simply letting state law determine if, and how (open/ concealed/both), a person can carry."

The NRA insisted that this proposal has nothing to do with hunting or opening up the parks to recreational shooting, although critics of the proposal have been portraying the issue that way.

The anti-gun National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) has been highly vocal in its opposition, claiming that the rule change will increase poaching, and also threaten the safety of park visitors. Joe Waldron, CCRKBA special projects director, called such arguments bogus.

"Criminals have always ignored the law and carried firearms wherever it pleased them," Waldron told Gun Week. "It's about time the NPS leveled the playing field and allowed law-abiding citizens to protect themselves. Forty- eight states allow licensed individuals to carry concealed firearms for self- protection. That right should not stop at a National Park boundary"

The NPCA argues on its website that "The idea that people need guns in the parks for their safety doesn't make sense. Units of the National Park System are some of the safest places in the world. According to the National Park Service, the probability of becoming a victim of a violent crime in a national park is 1 in 708,333, which is less likely than being struck by lightning during one's lifetime. The existing firearms safety and anti-poaching regulation helps ensure that parks remain safe destinations for families."

However, supporters of the rule change argue that this crime ratio does not tell the whole story about national park crime. According to park service data, in the years between 2002 and 2007, there were 63 homicides in national parks, 240 rapes or attempted rapes, 309 robberies, 37 kidnappings and 1,277

aggravated assaults. Proponents of the change say these figures may seem insignificant compared to the number of people visiting the parks annually, but they are definitely significant to the individual victims of those crimes.

Gunowners speak

While the public will be commenting on the proposal officially through the end of June, gun rights activists have already expressed strong support for the plan to Gun Week.

"This would be a significant step forward if we can accomplish it," said Tempe, AZ, gunowner Geoff Beneze.

"The proposal recognizes the need for self defense and the validity of state CCW licenses," stated Christopher Meissen from West Plains, MO. "I live in the midst of five national parks, and feral meth heads, not Bambi poachers, are the real concern there."

Larry Towers of Grants Pass, OR, noted, "This seems to return a modicum of freedom that has been removed from the law abiding citizens that actually own these lands."

From Redmond, WA—a state with three popular national parks—James Watkins told Gun Week, "In Alaska, where I lived for years, I regularly carried firearms for wildlife protection...The one time I encountered an aggressive brown bear, I was more interested in vacating the area than shooting the bear, but I did have a self-defense option if plan A failed. Here in Washington state, we have a resurgent bear population and an exploding cougar population—both are concerns for hikers, cyclists, campers, etc.

"Dangerous humans can be a bigger safety issue," Watkins added. "Our national parks attract meth cooks, pot farmers, bootleggers, smugglers, crackpot militia wannabes, and outright wackos...I've been accosted in a wilderness area, have discovered marijuana plots, etc. A close friend of mine actually used a pistol to defend himself against a hatchet wielding maniac in bush Alaska...Decent people—good citizens who pass the training and character checks for a CPL—should be able to defend themselves against the depredations of physically stronger attackers."

"National parks and wildlife refuges, along with every other area of society, should not be able to restrict my rights to self-defense," contended Michael Gilmet of Rineyville, KY. "This proposal would merely cause government agents to recognize those rights."

Boxford, MA, resident David H. Daniels added that "It is paramount for every individual who desires, to be able to defend themselves should dangerous animals appear. Authorizing licensed individuals to carry handguns for protection in no way causes danger to other humans or to the animals that are not indicating dangerous activity."

George Rimmel of Oak Ridge, TN added, "It is a step toward eliminating the victim disarmament zones." [*The New GUN WEEK*](#), June 1, 2008

Brady Campaign Wants To Stop Pro-Second Amendment Judges

A campaign to prevent confirmation of federal judicial nominees based solely on their interpretation of the Second Amendment has been launched by the anti-gun Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, and one of its funding sources,

CREDO Mobile, a left-wing group that funds dozens of left-leaning organizations.

In a fund raising e-mail, the Brady Campaign and CREDO argue that conservative judicial nominees with pro- Second Amendment philosophies should be rejected by anti-gun Sen. Patrick Leahy's (D-VT) Senate Judiciary Committee. They use the case of *District of Columbia v. Heller* as the leading reason why pro-gun judges are not welcome on the federal bench.

"The Heller case is a reminder of the importance of an impartial federal judiciary to preserve hard-fought legislative victories on gun control," a CREDO advisory stated. "In the waning days of the Bush presidency, we must be vigilant to stop the confirmation of judges who will enforce an extremist reading of the Second Amendment and jeopardize the safety of our communities."

The campaign drew a blistering response from Alan Gottlieb, founder of the Second Amendment Foundation (SAF).

"If there were ever any question that the zealots at the Brady Campaign are determined to crush individual freedom and liberty in this nation," he said, "this new fund raising effort should put that question to rest. This is yet another outrageous example of the extreme ends to which they will go in order to stack our federal courts with far left activist judges whom they hope will trample the rights of law-abiding citizens."

Gottlieb told *Gun Week* that the Brady Campaign effort is "dripping with irony."

"Apparently," he said, "they only have a problem with conservative activism. They don't oppose liberal activist judges."

Gottlieb suggested that CREDO and the Brady Campaign want to stack the federal courts with judges who are "hostile to the individual right to keep and bear arms." He also said that the groups want to use Leahy as "a willing pawn in this insidious campaign."

A plea from CREDO ends by urging people to "please send Senator Leahy a message today: block the appointment of federal judges who are hostile to reasonable gun control laws."

Gottlieb said this campaign demonstrates "the depths to which anti-gun rights fanatics will sink in their political jihad against a cornerstone of our Bill of Rights."

"What this campaign has done is focus public attention on Sen. Leahy and how he handles judicial nominations," Gottlieb observed. "We will be watching to see whether the Senate gives honest consideration to all nominees, or whether Leahy and his colleagues will allow anti-gun extremism to prevail."

"It is time for the public to remind the Brady Campaign and its comrades that this is still the United States, not a police state," he said. [The New GUN WEEK, June 15, 2008](#)

New CARE Report Adds Fuel To CCW Change On Refuges

by Dave Workman, Senior Editor

A new report on the declining safety and funding at national wildlife refuges should add momentum to the effort to change rules on those refuges, and in national parks, that will allow visitors to legally carry concealed handguns for their personal protection.

A report from the cooperative alliance for refuge enhancement (care) that went to congress last month said the

nation's wildlife refuges are underfunded and have become magnets for all kinds of illegal activities that include methamphetamine lab operations in Nevada and marijuana growers in Washington, illegal immigrant camps, prostitution and more.

According to the report, the refuge system has cut 300 staff positions and one in three refuges are operating without a single staffer on site. The report also asserts that the national wildlife refuge system needs at least 845 full-time law enforcement officers, but currently only has 180.

"This is just more evidence that Americans need to keep their state gun carry rights as they move about their state even if they happen to enter federal lands," said Mike Stollenwerk with the Virginia Citizens Defense League (VCDL), one of the earliest advocates for concealed carry in national parks.

The proposed rule change submitted by interior secretary Dirk Kempthorne also included federal refuges.

Evan Hirsche, president of the national wildlife refuge association and care chairman, complained that hundreds of thousands of Americans visiting local wildlife refuges face the prospect of finding the area closed, open without staff or a visitor's center, or with decaying facilities. His organization believes that congress should increase refuge system funding to \$514 million in fiscal year 2009, and steadily increase that to \$765 million by 2013.

Meanwhile, the public is on its own in many areas, and that is what the proposed rule change on concealed carry ostensibly is designed to address.

The national wildlife refuge system is 105 years old this year, and they have some 40 million visitors annually.

Refuges provide hunting and fishing opportunities as well as non-consumptive uses, but in recent years they have also increasingly become the backdrop for all kinds of criminal activity. Combined with declining funding—despite generating an estimated \$1.7 billion in annual sales and some 27,000 jobs to local economies—and reductions in personnel including law enforcement, these public lands may not be as safe as they were a generation ago, leaving activists like Stollenwerk pressing for rules changes that will allow private citizens to carry firearms for personal protection.

The proposal has drawn fire from antigun environmental groups. The public has through the end of this month to submit comments pro or con regarding Kempthorne's proposed changes.

[The New Gun Week, June 15, 2008](#)

Police Fatalities Up In 2007--Majority In Traffic Accidents

Law enforcement deaths rose in 2007, but the majority of those fatalities were the result of accidents, according to preliminary data from the FBI.

Last year saw 140 police officers die on the job, including 57 who were killed in line-of-duty shootings, and 83 who died in accidents including car crashes or being struck by a vehicle. The figures are up from 2006, when the death toll was 114 police officers, including 48 who were stabbed, shot or physically injured in altercations, and 66 who died in accidents.

However, in 2005, there were 122 police who died on the job, including 67 who were killed in accidents and 55 who died "feloniously" in the line of duty.

According to The Washington Times, the 2007 police fatalities included 16 who were ambushed and 16 more who were killed "during arrest situations." Eleven others were killed during traffic pursuits or stops.

The South seems to be tough on police, with 31 officers killed in that region, while in the West there were nine fatalities, another nine in the Midwest and seven in the Northeast. One cop was killed in Puerto Rico.

Of those who were shot, two were killed with their own weapons and four had their guns stolen.

Thirty-eight police officers were killed with handguns, nine with shotguns and eight with rifles.

Meanwhile, according to The Press Association in Great Britain, the number of police officers wounded in shootings has climbed 60% over the past four years. Sweeping restrictions have banned handguns in that nation for the past several years, and greatly tightened the ability of citizens to legally purchase and own long guns. [The New GUN WEEK, June 15, 2008](#)

Microstamping Issue Heats Up, Pros Eye Research

by Dave Workman, Senior Editor

Microstamping is not the panacea that gun control advocates have been suggesting it is, and while state lawmakers around the country are heating up the rhetoric, especially in New York, experts in California say "further testing, analysis, and evaluation are required."

At least, that's the perspective of gun rights activists and even the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) is getting into the fray.

In the midst of the controversy, the University of California at Davis has re-released a study on microstamping that has now been peer-reviewed, and an assemblywoman in New York conducted a demonstration of microstamping at a gun range, but firearms industry representatives were barred from the event, according to the NSSF.

Gun Week obtained a copy of the California study, What Micro Serialized Firing Pins Can Add to Firearm Identification in Forensic Science: How Viable are Micro-Marked Firing Pin Impressions as Evidence? The study concluded that "while micro-stamping technology works with some firearms, it does not perform equally well for every encoding format or in every semiautomatic handgun."

The California research also revealed that the tiny stamped coding can be removed from a firing pin in about 30 seconds by rubbing it, on a sharpening stone. On another test firing pin, a light peening of the coded surface for 30 seconds "was a successful method of defacement"

At the New York event, sponsored by anti-gun Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel (D-Great Neck), the anti-gunners showed up in force.

Following the demonstration, pro-gun Assemblyman Greg Ball, a Carmel Republican, and Jake McGuigan, NSSF director of governmental relations, complained that the firearm industry has not been allowed to test the technology or even witness the event, the Legislative Gazette reported.

There is considerable disagreement over how much the technology will cost. Todd Lizotte, who holds the microstamping

patent, said the new technology would cost less than \$3 per firearm, while NSSF says it will drive up the cost as much as \$200 per gun.

The New York District Attorneys Association has unanimously endorsed Schimel's legislation mandating microstamping, according to a report in The Schenectady Daily Gazette. The Albany Times-Bulletin noted that the legislation had stalled in the state Senate.,

Meanwhile, on Capitol Hill, federal microstamping legislation has been introduced by perennial anti-gun Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA). What impact his recent diagnosis of an inoperable brain tumor may have on how that legislation progresses remains to be seen. That legislation is opposed by the National Rifle Association and other gun rights organizations.

Gun microstamping is just one aspect of this campaign. Another is the push to require that ammunition be coded.

Colorado Sheriff's Commentary Defends Individual Gun Rights

Weld County, CO, Sheriff John Cooke probably threw away any chance he ever had of being on the Brady Campaign's Christmas Card list when he authored a striking Op-Ed piece that appeared in the Northern Colorado Tribune on May 13.

Headlined "Sheriffs protect right to bear arms," Cooke's 620-word essay started out with a review of the Second Amendment and concluded with an explanation about why he issues so many concealed carry permits. In between, he dismissed as myth the contention that the Second Amendment only protects some right to arm militias, and he likely horrified anti-gunners when he wrote, "Government has no right to know who has a concealed weapons permit or who owns a gun."

"Make no mistake about where I stand in this debate," Cooke stated, "the Bill of Rights was written to protect the rights of the individual and not that of the state or the federal government. I am a fervent proponent of the individual's right to bear arms."

Cooke recalled that the most common question he was asked when he first campaigned for office in 2004 regarded his position on the Second Amendment and concealed carry for Colorado residents.

"Clearly," Cooke explained, "concealed weapons permits were important then and still are now to Weld County residents. To their credit, in 2003 a majority of Colorado legislators along with Gov. Bill Owens also recognized the importance of concealed weapons permits for the entire state..."

"Fed up with the blatant violations of the Second Amendment," the sheriff observed, "Colorado lawmakers standardized the rules for issuing concealed weapons permits. Now, an individual cannot be denied a permit based on where he or she lives, and all permits are recognized statewide."

He also lauded the fact that only county sheriffs can issue permits. That is no longer done by city police chiefs who do not stand for public election, Cooke observed.

"Chiefs do not answer to voters," he said. "Many did not agree with the majority of state legislators, Gov. Owens, the county sheriffs and Colorado voters that law-abiding citizens have the right to carry a concealed weapon, and therefore refused to issue concealed weapons permits."

"Even among sheriffs there is not total agreement on qualifications for concealed weapons permits," Cooke acknowledged. "The biggest disagreement is on the entry of permit holders' name into a statewide database. In the concealed weapons law, it is optional for the county sheriff to enter the names into the database. I absolutely refuse to enter Weld permit holders into the state computer system just because they legally exercise their rights."

Sheriff Cooke said he was proud of his department's most recent milestone, the issuance of the county's 2,000th concealed carry permit.

"From a safety perspective," Cooke concluded, "I am happy that the number keeps growing. People have a right to self-protection and to live free from the fear of crime. Having a firearm and a concealed weapons permit help achieve those goals." *The New GUN WEEK, June 15, 2008*

Chicago Alderman Under Fire For Self-Serving Gun Ordinance

by Dave Workman, Senior Editor

A Chicago, IL, alderman is under fire from gun rights activists across the map after it was revealed he proposed an ordinance to re-open gun registration in the Windy City, only because he personally "forgot" to re-register his own guns as required by a law he voted for.

Alderman Richard Mell, described by The Chicago Sun-Times as the owner of "an arsenal of weapons that (includes) shotguns, rifles and pistols, including a Walther PPK of James Bond fame," got support from anti-gun Mayor Richard Daley. There is more than just a suspicion that all of this is about politics. It turns out, the newspaper noted, that Mell is the "estranged father-in-law" of Democrat Gov. Rod Blagojevich.

According to the newspaper, Mell claimed that he "thought it was being done" by a staff member.

"If you have a person you trust to do it and they don't do it, then it doesn't get done," he told The Sun-Times.

But Alan Gottlieb, chairman of the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms, issued a blistering statement that it was Mell's personal responsibility to keep his gun registration current, not that of some assistant. Gottlieb called the ordinance proposal an "amnesty amendment" and "sweetheart deal" for Mell's benefit.

"For years, the Daley Administration has engaged in goon squad demagoguery against gunowners," Gottlieb said, "but now all of a sudden, just because Alderman Mell finds himself on the wrong side of a law he supported, he and Daley want to do Chicago gunowners a favor. This magnanimity is a flimsy sham, and law-abiding firearm owners all over Illinois should be outraged."

The Mell "amnesty plan" had gun rights activists furious. At least two of the most active gun rights forums in the country, KeepAndBearArms.com (KABA) and TheHighRoad.org (THR), drew comments that ran from sarcasm to simmering rage.

One man writing to the KABA website observed, "Other gunowners may now receive some mercy, but this cretin (Mell) would never have written this law if he hadn't been caught on the wrong side of it."

Another called Mell "hypocritical scum" and a third simply stated, "Gotcha!"

Mark Donahue, president of the Fraternal Order of Police, said Mell's proposal and Daley's endorsement of it reflect a double standard that sets one standard for members of the City Council, and another standard "for everybody else."

Donahue suggested that the registration be re-opened permanently.

Some Students Allowed Guns on Campus

People might think guns aren't allowed on college campuses, but KCTV5 News, the CBS affiliate in Kansas City, traveled to the University of Kansas (KU), the University of Missouri (MU), Kansas State University and Johnson County Community College to examine security and found that "No Guns" doesn't always mean no guns.

Campus police officers carry guns, drive fully equipped squad cars and patrol hundreds of acres to protect college students, and the officers all agree that when it comes to guns on campus, they're the only ones authorized to carry them.

But KCTV5 News found that at MU, students are allowed to bring their firearms to campus under one condition, they have to check them in and out with campus police.

"The intake process is that the individual would bring it into the lobby of the police department, at which point a supervisor will come forward, bring them a check-in form, which will give information about the person checking in the gun and also the gun itself as far as make, model, serial number, so that that can be check in the system to make sure it's not stolen," said Capt. Brian Weimer, of the MU Police Department.

MU police wouldn't let KCTV5 see the storage facility, but they said the guns were secure.

When students check them out, they're instructed to immediately leave campus with their weapons.

Police said it gives students an alternative to hiding guns in dorm rooms or cars, but KCTV5 News couldn't find another local school that allowed it. Even rural Kansas State said it was not worth the risk.

MU said it has never had a problem with the gun storage program. In fact, MU campus police reports obtained by KCTV5 showed 11 campus weapons violations in 2006 and 2007, none of them involving students who stored them.

Hunters like KU junior Eric Stein like the gun storage idea. It's not an option for him. KU doesn't allow it, but he said no student should fear law-abiding gunowners on any campus.

KCTV5 News contacted every school in the Big 12 and found four others schools allowed campus gun storage. Texas Tech, though, stopped the practice last year.

UN Renews Push For Small Arms Control

by Joseph P. Tartaro, Executive Editor

The United Nations (UN) Security Council spent a whole day in late April refocusing attention on international efforts to impose a global small arms control agenda in anticipation of the semi-annual meeting on small arms control in July.

While no action was taken by the Security Council, steps were taken to put new emphasis on global control of small arms, including rifles, shotguns and handguns.

Further discussion at the July meeting in New York City are expected to focus on a renewed push for a binding arms trafficking treaty (ATT) as well as some new or refurbished global initiatives.

In addition to pursuing the program of action on small arms which was adopted at the 2001 meeting, UN small arms control will focus on two new programs which will be guided by the Secretary General's office on disarmament. In the first of these efforts, the UN appears to be re-launching a program that had been allowed to wither, the office of Coordinated Effort of Small Arms (CASA). In the second, there would be a new office of International Small Arms Standards (ISAS) which would try to formulate basic guidelines for regulation of civilian firearms possession among member nations.

Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon has put new emphasis on the UN's efforts to promote a binding small arms agreement and has taken new support especially from actions taken recently in Africa.

The July meeting, however, is expected to be directed to marking small arms and individual nations' controls on small arms trafficking, including restrictions on imports and exports. Some of the basics of an international marking standard would appear to be acceptable to US government's delegation since arms manufactured in the US for domestic consumers, law and enforcement and the military are already serialized and marked with the manufacturer's name. In addition, US imports and exports are already carefully controlled through the State Department's Office of Munitions Control.

However, whether future occupants of the White House would follow the Bush Administration's policy of opposition to any binding treaty which would be in conflict with the Second Amendment remains to be seen.

In anticipation of a spirited meeting in July, the World Forum on the Future of Shooting Activities (WFSA) and its member components will be active participants as a recognized non-government organization (NGO). Among the members of the WFSA are the National Rifle Association (NRA), National Shooting

Sports Foundation (NSSF), National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association (NMLRA), Second Amendment Foundation (SAF) and Small Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers Institute (SAAMI). They will be joined at the meeting by other pro-gun member organizations from around the world.

Needless to say, anti-gun NGOs are also expected to be active and vocal as the push for stricter international controls on small arms, especially civilian possession of small arms, heats up.

So far there has been a heavy focus on marking firearms as part of the civilian disarmament effort.

For example, all firearms in Africa's Great Lakes Region, East Africa and the Horn of Africa will soon be marked with country codes, force code and serial numbers in the UN's fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

A workshop organized by the Regional Centre on Small Arms and held recently on Kenya's South Coast was told that 12

manual arms-marking machines have already been purchased through funding from the US government and will be distributed to each member state.

Kenya will also set up a database for all firearms held by individuals as well as governments. *The New GUN WEEK*, June 1, 2008

UK Police Say CCTV Boom Has Failed To Slash Crime

The massive investment in closed circuit television (CCTV) cameras to prevent crime in the United Kingdom (UK) has failed to have a significant impact, despite billions of pounds spent on the new technology, a senior police officer piloting a new database has warned, according to *The Guardian* newspaper. A British pound is trading for almost \$2 US these days.

Only 3% of street robberies in London were solved using CCTV images, despite the fact that Britain has more security cameras than any other country in Europe.

The warning comes from the head of the Visual Images, Identifications and Detections Office (VIIDO) at New Scotland Yard as the force launches a series of initiatives to try to boost conviction rates using CCTV evidence. They include:

- A new database of images which is expected to use technology developed by the sports advertising industry to track and identify offenders.

- Putting images of suspects in muggings, rape and robbery cases out on the Internet starting in June.

- Building a national CCTV database, incorporating pictures of convicted offenders as well as unidentified suspects. The plans for this have been drawn up, but are on hold while the technology required to carry out automated searches is refined.

Use of CCTV images for court evidence has so far been very poor, according to Detective Chief Inspector Mick Neville, the officer in charge of the Metropolitan police unit. "CCTV was originally seen as a preventative measure," Neville told the Security Document World Conference in London. "Billions of pounds has been spent on kit, but no thought has gone into how the police are going to use the images and how they will be used in court. It's been an utter fiasco: only 3% of crimes were solved by CCTV. There's no fear of CCTV. Why don't people fear it? (They think) the cameras are not working".

More training was needed for officers, he said. Often they do not want to find CCTV images "because it's hard work." Sometimes the police did not bother inquiring beyond local councils to find out whether CCTV cameras monitored a particular street incident.

"CCTV operators need feedback. If you call them back, they feel valued and are more helpful. We want to develop a career path for CCTV (police) inquirers."

The VIIDO unit is beginning to establish a London-wide database of images of suspects that are cross-referenced by written descriptions. Interest in the technology has been enhanced by recent police work, in which officers back-tracked through video tapes to pick out terrorist suspects. In districts where the VIIDO scheme is working, CCTV is now helping police in 15-20% of street robberies.

"We are (beginning) to collate images from across London," Neville said. "This has got to be balanced against any Big

Brother concerns, with safeguards. The images are from thefts, robberies and more serious crimes. Possibly the [database] could be national in future."

The unit is now investigating whether it can use software—developed to track advertising during televised football games—to follow distinctive brand logos on the clothing of unidentified suspects. "Sometimes you are looking for a picture, for example, of someone with a red top and a green dragon on it," he explained. "That technology could be used to track logos." By back-tracking, officers have often found earlier pictures, for example, of suspects with their hoods down, in which they can be identified.

"We are also going to start putting out [pictures] on the internet, on the Met police website, asking 'who is this guy?'. If criminals see that CCTV works they are less likely to commit crimes."

Cheshire deputy chief constable Graham Gerrard, who chairs the CCTV working group of the Association of Chief Police Officers, told *The Guardian*, that it made no sense to have a national DNA and fingerprint database, but to have to approach 43 separate forces for images of suspects and offenders. A scheme called the Facial Identification National Database (FIND), which began collecting offenders' images from their prison pictures and elsewhere, has been put on hold.

He said that there were discussions with biometric companies "on a regular basis" about developing the technology to search digitized databases and match suspects' images with known offenders. "Sometimes when they put their (equipment) in operational practice, it's not as wonderful as they said it would be," he said. "I suspect [Find] has been put on hold until the technology matures. Before you can digitise every offender's image you have to make sure the lighting is right and it's a good picture. It's a major project. We are still some way from a national database. There are still ethical and technical issues to consider." *The New GUN WEEK, June 1, 2008*

UK Paper Reports New Swiss Law Protects Rights Of 'Social' Animals

TheTimes (United Kingdom) newspaper online (UK) has reported on a new animal rights law in Switzerland that may reflect one more change in the world which may not sit well with older generations of pet owners, farmers and hunters.

According to *The Times*, "it is a world in which the goldfish are never lonely, the dogs are always obedient and the guinea-pigs are never tormented by children."

Under a new Swiss law enshrining rights for animals, dog owners will require a qualification, anglers will take lessons in compassion and horses will go only in twos.

From guinea-pigs to parakeets, any animal classified as a "social species" will be a victim of abuse if it does not cohabit, or at least have contact, with others of its own kind.

The new regulation stipulates that aquariums for pet fish should not be transparent on all sides and that owners must make sure that the natural cycle of day and night is maintained in terms of light. Goldfish are considered social animals

The creator of this animal Utopia is the Swiss federal parliament, the Bundesrat, which adopted a law in late April

extending to four legs the kind of rights usually reserved for two. The law, which takes effect Sept. 1, is particularly strict over dogs: prospective owners will have to pay for and complete a two-part course—a theory section on the needs and wishes of the animal, and a practice section, where students will be instructed in how to walk their dog and react to various situations that might arise during the process. The details of the courses are yet to be fixed, but they are likely to comprise about five theory lessons and at least five sessions "in the field."

The law extends to unlikely regions of the animal kingdom.

Anglers will also be required to complete a course on catching fish humanely, with the Government citing studies indicating that fish can suffer too.

The regulations will affect farmers, who will no longer be allowed to tether horses, sheep and goats, nor keep pigs and cows in areas with hard floors.

The legislation even mentions the appropriate keeping of rhinoceroses, although, *The Times* observed, it was not clear immediately how many, if any, were being kept as pets in Switzerland.

Animal protection groups have greeted the news enthusiastically, but critics say that it means an extra financial burden on taxpayers and animal owners, and that it will be impossible to monitor the implementation of the rules. Farmers' associations have protested, arguing that the law will have a negative effect on the economy and decrease their competitiveness on the international market.

One tabloid newspaper has accused the Government of pandering to the needs of guinea-pigs while ignoring more important animal issues, such as its failure to enforce a ban on dangerous dogs.

But Hans Wyss, head of the Swiss Federal Veterinary Office, said: "The aim is not only to ensure treatment of animals appropriate to each species, but also to decrease the risk of attacks by dangerous dogs. Inappropriate treatment could lead to behavioral disorders."

Doris Leuthard, the Economics Minister, assured pet owners that the authorities would not be visiting people's homes to enforce the law—although in extreme cases officials would have the power to intervene—but would count on the results of the training and a positive response from an "informed population."

"We do not want to create a surveillance state," Leuthard said, according to *The Times*.

She added that, in an age of consumer concern for animal welfare, farmers would benefit from the new law.

The attitude of the government is in sharp contrast to some alleged practices in Switzerland: activists campaigning for a ban of the production and trade in cat fur products claim that tens of thousands of cats are killed each year to satisfy a growing domestic and foreign market fuelled by the belief that cat fur can alleviate the pain of rheumatism.

Should pet owners require advance guidance as to what will be expected of them, a government website provides it. One entry reads:

"Guinea-pigs are very sensitive social animals. They are interesting to look at, but not at all appropriate to be cuddled or carried around by children."

And a word of warning for those planning a mercy killing for their goldfish: special chemicals will be required "to put them to death." Flushing them down the toilet is no longer an option.

Meanwhile, The Times reported on other changes taking place around the world in an era of increased sensitivity to animal welfare. As an example, it reported that restaurants in Beijing, China, that have been serving dog meat "believed, among other things, to enhance sexual prowess" have been ordered to close for fear of upsetting the 200,000 Western tourists expected to arrive for the Olympic Games. [The New Gun Week, June 1, 2008](#)

Cop Chief Shoots Self In Demo

From the "Only Cops Should Have Guns" file comes the story out of Riverdale, UT—carried by the Associated Press and KUTV News—regarding the mishap involving Police Chief Dave Hansen, who probably won't be dancing much at the policeman's ball.

On May 3, while at the gun range, he capped off a round that nailed him in the ankle, apparently with a .40-caliber semi-auto. This was during a demonstration on how to dislodge a jammed handgun, according to the published reports.

Hansen has been chief in Riverdale for about two years, and is a 23-year veteran of law enforcement.

While he didn't exactly "walk away" from this one, he did perhaps hobble a bit, and according to his brother, state Rep. Neil Hansen, an Ogden Democrat, the chief is very safety conscious about firearms. [The New Gun Week, June 15, 2008](#)

Estrangement and Self-Defense

In times past, angry women have been unfavorably characterized as "battle-axes," but in California recently, the estranged wife of a Kelseyville dentist apparently tried to nail him with a pickax. He shot her, instead.

This bizarre case was reported by The San Francisco Chronicle and Associated Press, and it sort of underscores that "hell hath no fury" adage.

According to the published report, Margaret Johnson broke into the home occupied by estranged husband Don Johnson, who had that very day served her with a restraining order. The May 2 attack occurred after Don Johnson had gone to bed.

Margaret reportedly broke in through a window armed with the pickax, but Don had a gun and he shot her, seriously wounding her in the neck.

She may be charged after an investigation is completed. [The New Gun Week, June 15, 2008](#)

Only Cops Should Have What?

An ex-lawman in Indiana and a veteran cop in Maine provide two recent contradictions to the notion pushed by gun control proponents that only the police should have guns.

Former Clarksville, IN, Officer Franklin Mikel pulled a 10-year prison sentence on a plea agreement in which he admitted selling morphine to an informant three times in 2007. The transactions reportedly occurred at the ex-cop's roller skating rink, Greentree Skateland, according to the Associated Press (AP).

Meanwhile, in Portland, ME, veteran Officer Brian Regan was indicted on five counts relating to an alleged assault on his wife in March of this year, AP reported. Regan reportedly insists that his wife, Heidi, attacked him and he was only defending himself.

Regan has been charged with reckless conduct with a weapon and criminal threatening with a weapon, both felonies. He also faces misdemeanor counts of assault, domestic violence assault and criminal threatening, the news service said. [The New Gun Week, June 15, 2008](#)

Illegal Alien: One, Dumb Robber

Let's offer a big "Welcome to the United States" cheer to Alberto Perez, who told Phoenix, AZ, police that he entered the country illegally last month, packing a gun when he came across the border.

Alberto needs to understand that armed invasion of the US isn't going to win him any friends north of the border, especially among folks who wear badges. He also did not leave a very good impression at one of his first stops—and almost his last one—a place called Soccer City.

According to Phoenix police and The Arizona Republic, Perez walked into that business on May 12 and pulled a robbery. The unidentified store owner handed over his money, and then watched in disbelief as Alberto allegedly locked the door and then reportedly called somebody using his cell phone, apparently to ask if he should shoot the businessman he had just robbed.

When the illegal alien gunman turned his back to the store owner, the intended murder victim jumped on Alberto's back, grabbed the gun and plugged our dumb criminal. When the police arrived, they found Alberto leaking rather badly, but not fatally. He was taken to the hospital and was expected to recover, and he will probably stand trial for armed robbery. Maybe he ought to get slapped with a gun smuggling charge, too, eh? [The New Gun Week, June 15, 2008](#)

IN Cop In Drive-By Shooting

From the "Only Cops Should Have Guns" file comes this story out of Gary, IN, about a police corporal identified, as Steven Andrus, whose days on the beat are probably over.

Andrus has been charged, according to The Munster Times, in a drive-by shooting that occurred back on Mar. 18 in the wake of a fight on St. Patrick's Day in a bar. The newspaper said a local resident had been at Cagne's Bar, along with his brother and stepbrother. The trio was confronted by some other men and a fight broke out.

But that's not the end of this story. The newspaper said that about 45 minutes later, the unidentified local resident was at home when his wife received three telephone calls asking for someone who was not a resident of the home. On the last call, a truck drove past the house slowly, and the unidentified resident got a pipe and started following the truck.

He stopped quickly when he heard several popping sounds that turned out to be shots. Bullets were recovered from the man's house and a neighbor's home.

How does Andrus mix in all of this? He was identified as a possible suspect by Portage police and that suspicion turned into something more when the Indiana State Police crime lab matched

the bullets recovered from both homes to Andrus' duty pistol. He was suspended with pay, had to turn in his gun and gear, and now that he's been charged, he is still suspended with pay. [The New Gun Week](#), June 1, 2008

Self-D In Mini-Mart Shooting

Nobody may ever know what exactly 30-year-old Marvin Sanchez was thinking when he walked into the Del Gaudio mini mart in Pacioma, out in California's San Fernando Valley, on Apr. 26, but it was soon obvious he hadn't thought things through very well.

Sanchez pulled a handgun on the unidentified store clerk and, according to KCAL News and The Los Angeles Times, the mid-afternoon robbery immediately took a sharp turn to the south, and moments later, Sanchez was lying on the sidewalk outside the store, stone dead.

The clerk, you see, had plans of his own that did not include being robbed and possibly shot. According to both news agencies, the clerk grabbed Sanchez' handgun and shot him.

Paramedics got to the scene but they were too late.

Here's an oddball kicker to the story: Anyone with information about the shooting was being asked to call detectives. From Gun Week's perspective, there's not a great deal to add. [The New Gun Week](#), June 1, 2008

FL Grocery Not `Gun-Free'

By the time you read this, the evaluation on 73-year-old Marshall Hugo Grant of West Palm Beach, FL, ought to be completed, and from all indications, he needed an evaluation.

According to The Palm Beach Post, Grant walked into an IGA Supermarket at about 5 p.m. on Apr. 28 through the Exit door, despite being told to come around another way by store manager Marino Hernandez. Grant evidently decided not to listen.

The newspaper reported that Grant pulled out a handgun, at which point Hernandez also drew a handgun. Things quickly got more interesting when assistant store manager Roberto Espinal also drew a handgun.

Solidifying the notion that guns are a great deterrent to violence, Grant backed out the door but before he did, he fired at least three rounds. Neither Hernandez nor Espinal returned fire, according to witnesses, but they stayed on Grant's tail, "surrounding" him in the parking lot as he continued shooting, and eventually the older man gave up his gun when he was told by the managers that cops were streaking to the scene.

Judge Nancy Perez had no sense of humor about this episode, and ordered Grant held without bond while undergoing a psychiatric examination, the newspaper reported. When that's done, he's still in a peck of trouble, facing charges that include attempted first-degree murder, shooting into an occupied dwelling, carrying a concealed firearm and aggravated assault with a firearm. [The New Gun Week](#), June 1, 2008

Teacher Busted For Gun

A Santa Ana, CA, elementary school teacher is in big trouble after a snoopy third grade student found a .38-caliber handgun in

a supply drawer in her classroom, according to The Los Angeles Times. A pre-trial hearing is scheduled June 6.

Thacher Jayne DeArmond has pleaded not guilty to charges of possessing a handgun on school property, and child endangerment by a caretaker, which are felonies that could land her in prison for more than six years if she is convicted. The newspaper noted that the handgun was not loaded, but ammunition was also found.

This incident occurred on April 2, but DeArmond's "not guilty" plea was not reported until May 1.

The teacher, now on leave, was released on \$20,000 bail and ordered to stay away from firearms, and school property in Orange County, The Times reported. She has surrendered other firearms to someone who does not live with her. [The New Gun Week](#), June 1, 2008

Hindsight Column:

Anti-Gun Politicians Keep Testing 'Curse Of The Gunnies'

by Joseph P. Tartaro, Executive Editor

Almost every week comes further new evidence that there really is something other-worldly stalking antigun politicians. It has been called the "Curse of the Gunnies" by one of the earlier observers of this spooky phenomenon, constitutional lawyer and filmmaker David T. Hardy, who first identified it as such in these pages back in 1980.

As I recall, Hardy's 1980 commentary linked Sen. Edward Kennedy's (DMA) problems at Chappaquiddick as just one of several examples of the curse at work.

From time to time, I like to reexamine the Curse of the Gunnies when something newsworthy happens, like when Elliot Spitzer took his huge, scandalous pratfall out of the New York governor's chair a few weeks ago.

However, I am not the only one who remembers the curse and calls it to mind when yet one more anti-gunner suffers its effect. Many readers refer to the curse when they send me news clippings from their area.

Sometimes, the curse is manifest in calamitous proportions, as with Spitzer. Other times, it might only be embarrassing exposure of a newsworthy gaffe.

Sen. Hillary Clinton's (D-NY) recent mailing fiasco during the run-up to the Indiana Democratic presidential primary is an example of the smaller, public ridicule-only variety. When her staff tried to cash in on what they claimed was a greater anti-gun position by Sen. Barack Obama (D-IL) than Clinton's own, they looked just plain stupid and hypocritical—and made themselves look incompetent in the process.

The Politico website was just one of several information and news outlets that focused on the Clinton campaign's attack on Obama's position on guns just prior to the Indiana and North Carolina primaries on May 6.

The campaign had sent a mailing piece to voters in Indiana that asked in large print, "Where does Barack Obama really stand on guns?" On the other side, it said: "Depends on who Barack Obama is talking to." The flier refers to a questionnaire in Obama's name from his run for the Illinois state Senate in

which he indicates support for a total ban on handguns. (Obama claims he never held that position.)

The mailer also references Obama saying he supported the Second Amendment in Idaho while also mentioning his oft-repeated statement from a San Francisco fund-raiser in which he said small-town Americans "bitter" over the economy "cling" to religion and guns.

At minimum, both Clinton and Obama favor specific gun control measures such as a ban on so-called assault weapons, a ban on private transfers unless a background check is conducted by a licensed dealer, and adding more lists of prohibited people to the National Instant Check System.

Most commentators who picked up on the Clinton mailer made much of the fact that it included an image of a left-handed bolt-action Mauser rifle that was never commonly available in gun stores and that the design looked like the gun was pointing at Obama's head.

We are not alone in finding a delicious irony in one anti-gun candidate making a total mess of her attempt to curry pro-gun votes from the people of Indiana.

Apparently, the Curse of the Gunnies applies when anti-gunners attempt to hide from their own anti-gun records. However, that's a not much more than a mild example of the curse at work.

More notable is what befell the former mayor of the small New Jersey town of Gutenberg in April, a politician who was one of New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg's Mayors Against Illegal Guns.

The Jersey Journal noted that if Gutenberg Mayor David Delle Donna had any aspirations of running for a higher office, he can forget it now.

The mayor faces a lifelong ban from holding public office following his conviction in federal court on Apr. 29, officials said. A federal jury found Delle Donna and his wife, Anna, guilty of conspiracy to commit extortion and two counts each of filing false tax returns. The couple was acquitted of two counts each of mail fraud.

Speaking outside the courtroom after the verdict, Delle Donna's attorney, Ralph Lamparello, acknowledged that the mayor will have to step down. It is just a matter of when. After his indictment last fall, Delle Donna announced that he would stay in office until the trial was over, saying he had a constitutional right to a fair trial. However, if Delle Donna is slow to remove himself from office, Hudson County Prosecutor Edward DeFazio will do it for him, The Journal noted.

"Since his conviction touched on duties as mayor, he is permanently deprived of holding public office in the state of New Jersey," DeFazio said.

The mayor's wife, who served on the town Planning Board, has already stepped down from that position. The Delle Donnas are expected to be sentenced to between 51 and 78 months in prison.

When Delle Donna resigns or is removed from office, Democratic committee members in Gutenberg will select three names for the Town Council to choose from to serve as acting mayor until November, said Jersey City Mayor Jerramiah Healy, who is the chairman of the Hudson County Democratic Organization.

The New York Times noted that Delle Donna is now part of an expanding list of politicians investigated by Christopher J. Christie, the US attorney. Previously, 11 officials were indicted on bribery charges, accused of trying to influence the awarding of public contracts. Included in that group were the mayor of Passaic, two members of the New Jersey General Assembly and five members of an Atlantic County school board.

If all of this sounds like an episode in "The Sopranos" rather than merely the Curse of the Gunnies catching up with an anti-gun politician, read on. By the way, The Times noted that Gutenberg, which sits in sight of New York City across the Hudson River, is only 11 blocks long and four blocks wide.

When the mayor and his wife were convicted on extortion and tax charges in the federal trial, major contributing evidence was contained in the testimony of Javier Inclan, a former Gutenberg councilman, who testified that while treasurer of the Gutenberg Democratic Organization he passed two envelopes to Delle Donna from bar owner Luisa Medrano that he believed were stuffed with cash.

However, despite the witness's role, The Jersey Journal reported that antigun Gov. Jon Corzine is sticking by Javier Inclan.

The governor, speaking through a spokeswoman, said Inclan's current job as one of his deputy chiefs of staff is safe, even after. Inclan testified that he passed an illegal campaign contribution to Delle Donna in 2002.

The Times noted that this is not the first time the small town has been hit by political scandal. In 2003, a former mayor, Peter LaVilla, pleaded guilty to misappropriating campaign funds and using the money for a private brokerage account after an investigation by the US attorney's office. In 2002, a councilman accused of receiving illegal advances on his salary resigned, although he was never formally charged. The same year, the town's chief financial officer pleaded guilty to misappropriation of funds.

Perhaps the Curse of the Gunnies is no more than the manifestation of the dark side of anti-gun officials. Maybe there is no such thing as that curse. It is curious though that so many anti-gun politicians suffer a major political fall and even ridiculous embarrassments.

I'm sure New Jersey and New York are not the only breeding grounds for corrupt politicians. And it is not so surprising that so many dishonest public servants adopt an anti-gun, anti-self-defense position. Some of them even remember the "rabble" in Colonial America tearing down the statues of King, George III and running political crooks out of town on a rail after decorating them suitably with hot tar and feathers.

Still, the anti-gunners keep on testing the "Curse of the Gunnies." *The New Gun Week, June 1, 2008*

****NEWS RELEASES**

Gun Owners of America E-Mail Alert
8001 Forbes Place, Suite 102, Springfield, VA 22151
Phone: 703-321-8585 / FAX: 703-321-8408
<http://www.gunowners.org>
Friday, June 6, 2008

Rep. Bill Sali To Government Agency: "Always Think Freedom"

Representative Bill Sali is introducing a bill to send a message to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATFE) that freedom still means something in this country.

As part of its Asset Forfeiture training program for agents, the BATFE ordered 2,000 Leatherman tools inscribed with the words "Always Think Forfeiture." The program urges agents to focus on seizing private property.

Rep Sali believes the agency should be thinking 'Freedom,' not 'Forfeiture.' The Idaho Republican complained about the program and received a letter from Acting ATF Director Michael Sullivan, who apologized for the "confusion" over the issue.

While Rep. Sali appreciated the apology, he said that, "My constituents deserve to know the truth about this marketing program, which has been interpreted by many Idahoans as anti-gun and anti-private property."

The agency halted distribution of the tools in the face of public outcry, but "[t]he fact remains that the ATF thought it was OK to think 'Always Think Forfeiture' instead of focusing on protecting our constitutional rights," Sali said.

In a letter to his fellow Congressmen, Sali noted that "the inscription raises serious concerns to law-abiding citizens as to the intent of an ATF agent who is performing investigations, particularly with respect to law-abiding gun owners."

Rep. Sali plans to introduce the 'Always Think Freedom' bill sometime next week. The bill will prohibit the agency from making purchases of tool kits "on which any reminder of forfeiture appears."

Action: Please urge your Representative to become an original cosponsor of the "Always Think Freedom Act."

You can visit the Gun Owners Legislative Action Center at <http://www.gunowners.org/activism.htm> to send your Rep. the pre-written e-mail message.

-END-

GA. Gun Dealer Made Right Move in Quest for Fair Trial, Says SAF

(06/02/2008) BELLEVUE, WA – Georgia gun dealer Jay Wallace's decision Monday to default on a lawsuit by New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, and carry his case to an appeals court, was the right move because of genuine concerns he could not get a fair trial before federal judge Jack B. Weinstein, the Second Amendment Foundation said today.

SAF has been the largest single contributor to Wallace's defense against the rogue lawsuit filed by Bloomberg, following the anti-gun mayor's infamous vigilante sting operation in 2006. SAF founder Alan Gottlieb concurred with Wallace's attorney, John Renzulli, that "There was no chance for a fair trial here."

"There must be an appearance of fairness from the bench in any trial," Gottlieb observed, "and that is unfortunately lacking in Jack Weinstein's courtroom when there is a gun case being heard. He defied a 2005 federal statute barring junk lawsuits against gun makers and allowed such a lawsuit to move forward, only to have it tossed out last month by the 2nd US Court of Appeals in Manhattan.

"Even when Judge Weinstein ruled against the NAACP in its first lawsuit against gun makers," Gottlieb recalled, "he made it clear that he believes there is a 'nuisance created by (the gun industry) through the illegal availability of guns in New York.' With a bias like that, Judge Weinstein should recuse himself from hearing cases related to the firearms industry, and hopefully, the appeals court will rule that Weinstein does not have jurisdiction over the city's case against Wallace."

Wallace's default was pandered by Mayor Bloomberg as a victory for the city, but Gottlieb suggested that Bloomberg should hold his tongue.

"Mr. Wallace and his attorney didn't throw in the towel," Gottlieb stated, "they merely avoided being kangaroo-kicked in Judge Weinstein's court. There is no indication this case is over, and based on New York's track record in court against the gun industry, whatever feeling of victory Mayor Bloomberg and his cronies now enjoy is almost certain to be very short-lived."

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News Briefs:

08/06/05 D.C. Police to Check Drivers In Violence-Plagued Trinidad

D.C. Police Chief Cathy L. Lanier announced a military-style checkpoint yesterday to stop cars this weekend in a Northeast Washington neighborhood inundated by gun violence, saying it will help keep criminals out of the area.

Starting on Saturday, officers will check drivers' identification and ask whether they have a "legitimate purpose" to be in the Trinidad area, such as going to a doctor or church or visiting friends or relatives. If not, the drivers will be turned away.

The Neighborhood Safety Zone initiative is the latest crime-fighting attempt by Lanier and Mayor Adrian M. Fenty, who have been under pressure from residents to stop a recent surge in violence. Last weekend was especially bloody, with seven slayings, including three in the Trinidad area.

"In certain areas, we need to go beyond the normal methods of policing," Fenty (D) said at a news conference announcing the action. "We're going to go into an area and completely shut it down to prevent shootings and the sale of drugs."

The checkpoint will stop vehicles approaching the 1400 block of Montello Avenue NE, a section of the Trinidad neighborhood that has been plagued with homicides and other violence. Police will search cars if they suspect the presence of guns or drugs, and will arrest people who do not cooperate, under a charge of failure to obey a police officer, officials said.

The enforcement will take place at random hours and last for at least five days in Trinidad, with the option of extending it five more days. Checkpoints could be set up in other neighborhoods if they are requested by patrol commanders and approved by Lanier.

The strategy, patterned after a similar effort conducted years ago in New York, is not airtight. There are many ways to get in and out of Trinidad, not just on the one-way Montello Avenue. And pedestrians will not be stopped, which is something critics say might render the program ineffective.

"I guess the plan is to hope criminals will not walk into neighborhoods," said D.C. Council member Phil Mendelson (D-At Large). "I also suppose the plan is to take the criminal's word

for it when he or she gives the police a reason for driving into a neighborhood."

Since taking over as chief in December 2006, Lanier has struggled with the issue of violent crime. She has added patrols, revived a unit specializing in getting guns off the streets and changed commanders in six of the city's seven patrol districts. Last weekend, officers were close enough in one case that they heard the barrage of gunfire coming from a triple homicide on Holbrook Street in Trinidad.

The program is aimed at the city's most troubled areas. The 5th Police District, which includes Trinidad, has had 22 killings this year, one more than all of last year. Since April 1, the Trinidad neighborhood has had seven homicides, 16 robberies and 20 assaults with dangerous weapons, according to police data. In many cases in Trinidad and across the city, gunshots are fired from passing cars, victims are found in cars or cars are used to make fast getaways.

"We have to try to take away the things that are facilitating the ability to commit crime," Lanier said.

Leaders of the American Civil Liberties Union said yesterday that they will be watching what happens closely and that legal action is likely.

"My reaction is, welcome to Baghdad, D.C.," said Arthur Spitzer, legal director for the ACLU's Washington office. "I mean, this is craziness. In this country, you don't have to show identification or explain to the police why you want to travel down a public street."

Interim Attorney General Peter J. Nickles said that his office reviewed the initiative and that similar efforts had survived court tests.

"I don't anticipate us being sued," Nickles said. "But if you do want to sue us, the courts are open."

U.S. Attorney Jeffrey A. Taylor said that D.C. officials consulted his office about their plans and that prosecutors suggested some changes to try to ensure that any arrests would hold up in court. "We applaud the District's efforts to make neighborhoods safer," Taylor said. "Whatever we do has to be consistent with the Constitution."

New York police set up a nearly identical checkpoint in 1992 in a neighborhood of the Bronx that was plagued by drug dealing and drive-by shootings. Police ran the Watson Avenue Special Operation on a random basis, mostly in evening hours. Officers stopped drivers, but not pedestrians, coming into the area, to confirm that they had a legitimate reason to be there.

A federal appeals court upheld the legality of the New York effort, saying in a 1996 ruling that it "served an important public concern" and was "reasonably viewed as an effective mechanism to deter crime in the barricaded area."

D.C. police have used various forms of checkpoints for years. In 1988, for example, they blocked streets and searched courtyards in a pair of apartment complexes in Northeast Washington in a bid to drive out drug dealers. That move came during the crack cocaine epidemic, in a year when the city recorded 372 homicides. Last year, the city had 181 killings.

Former D.C. police chief Isaac Fulwood Jr., who led the department from 1989 until 1992, said he liked using checkpoints because his officers were able to make arrests and gather intelligence.

"They are effective. You recover stolen cars and firearms," Fulwood said. "You've got to have a lot of them if you're going to have them. You need to move as the criminal element shifts." Some residents expressed support for the plan yesterday, saying they are willing to submit to the checks if it makes the neighborhood safer. "We can't endure any more homicides," said neighborhood activist India Henderson.

But others said they were disappointed police have not developed relationships that would allow them to gather information and find criminals without resorting to the stepped-up tactics.

"I knew eventually we'd be a police state," said Wilhelmina Lawson, who has lived in the neighborhood for 20 years. "They don't talk to us, they're not community minded."

One of Lanier's plans, the Safe Homes initiative, has yet to get off the ground because of a community backlash. The plan, announced by Lanier and Fenty at a news conference in March, called for police to go door-to-door in crime-ridden areas and ask residents whether they could go inside and search for guns. Residents and some council members voiced concerns that homeowners would feel intimidated by police. Lanier backed off, but said she plans to move forward soon by having residents call police to set up appointments.

Another plan, to arm hundreds of patrol officers with semiautomatic rifles, starting this summer, also got mixed reviews from residents.

Kristopher Baumann, head of the D.C. police lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police, said he was concerned about public perception of the checkpoints and the potential that it could lead to more citizen complaints. He questioned Lanier's overall approach, saying, "There is no strategy and no mid-term and long-term planning."

"That's the biggest disappointment of Chief Lanier's tenure," Baumann said. "One thing we were excited about and optimistic about was, for once, we'd have strategies to combat crime and not just be reactive. But we haven't seen it. It's been a year and a half."

Council member Harry Thomas Jr. (D-Ward 5), who represents Trinidad and other parts of Northeast Washington, said he had informal discussions with Lanier in which she had mentioned the possibility of the checkpoint announced yesterday, but he got little notice before the news conference. Civil liberties are always a concern, said Thomas, who maintained that residents are so concerned about violence that they will be willing to give the latest program a try.

"I think the general consensus is that we have to do something because people live in fear," he said. "What would you rather have?" he asked. "A positive pattern of [police] checking things . . . or these folks who come into the community and wreak havoc?" http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/06/04/AR2008060402205_pf.html

08/06/03 Lawmakers say they won't pack heat

Several gun rights lawmakers say they won't start packing heat on Capitol Hill if the Supreme Court overturns Washington, D.C.'s handgun ban.

Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) and other advocates of the Second Amendment support reversing the District's 32-year-old handgun

ban, but say security in the Capitol Buildings means there's no need for them to carry a gun to work.

"Why would I need to carry a gun? I mean, look at these guys, there's four guns around us right now," said Ryan, referring to four armed U.S. Capitol Police officers around the entrance to the Speaker's Lobby.

At the same time, Ryan and others are adamant that they should have the right to bring a gun to the Capitol.

"I've never brought a gun up here [on Capitol Hill]," said Rep. Virgil Goode (R-Va.), another gun-rights advocate who thinks the D.C. gun ban is unconstitutional. "But I think you should be able to."

Since the country's founding by revolutionaries fighting the British, Congress has been filled with gun owners. Still, it's unclear how many members of Congress own guns, partly because many choose to keep the matter private.

"I don't believe in telling people that, and I also don't believe in gun registration," said Rep. Nick Lampson (D-Texas), a gun ownership advocate who supports overturning D.C.'s ban. "I want to keep a little doubt in the minds of any potential criminals."

When Goode put forward an amendment to overturn the D.C. ban several years ago, he said he spoke with many fellow gun supporters about the amendment and got the impression they already had firearms in D.C.

"A few told me they did anyway," Goode said. "I'm certainly not going to name any names, but I had some with a twinkle in their eye say, 'I hope this thing passes so our guns are legal.'"

Since 1976, D.C. law has restricted handgun ownership to former or current law enforcement officers who had registered their guns before 1977. Still, there's some uncertainty whether the law applies to members of Congress.

A spokeswoman for the Washington, D.C. Police Department said the District laws governing gun ownership apply to members of Congress and city residents alike, with no exceptions.

But the office of the House sergeant at arms said lawmakers can keep firearms in their offices, which are on federal grounds.

"The regulation on the grounds here is that a member can keep a firearm [handgun, shotgun or rifle] within the confines of his office," said Bob Howe, adviser to House Sergeant at Arms Bill Livingood. "D.C.'s laws don't apply on Capitol grounds."

Many members of Congress aren't aware of the House regulations, which have been in place for more than 40 years, Howe suggested.

"Well, it's not something that's advertised," Howe said, adding that the sergeant at arms does not keep track of which members have firearms in their office. "We have no idea if any or all have them."

"I've never been informed of any privilege for congressmen to bear arms," said Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R-Fla.). "To my knowledge, they have to abide by the laws of the District."

Congressional firearm privileges do not extend to staff members. Phillip Thompson, Sen. Jim Webb's (D-Va.) executive assistant, was arrested last year as he attempted to enter the Russell Senate Office Building with a handgun.

Eventually cleared of the charges, Thompson said Webb had

given him the gun for "safekeeping" and that he had forgotten it was in his briefcase as he passed through security.

Webb, a registered gun owner in Virginia, did not take responsibility for the handgun and instead said only that the incident was unfortunate.

"I have never carried a gun in the Capitol complex, and I did not give the weapon to Phillip Thompson, and that's all that I think I'll say," Webb said during a news conference at the U.S. Capitol after the arrest.

Members of Congress have been involved in several other incidents, though most have been well off Capitol grounds.

Former Rep. John Hostettler (R-Ind.) was detained in a Kentucky airport after authorities found a loaded handgun in his carry-on baggage several years ago. He was questioned and later released after he said he forgot it was in his bag.

Former Rep. Bob Barr (R-Ga.) mistakenly fired an antique handgun at an Atlanta reception for him in 2002.

Dozens of lawmakers in almost every Congress have put forward amendments and bills to revoke the D.C. gun ban, all of which have failed.

"I remember back in 1976, I was on the House floor and brought up a resolution of disapproval because I said [the ban is] unconstitutional and it's going to go down," said Rep. Ron Paul (Texas), a GOP presidential candidate who was a congressional freshman when the ban was enacted. "And it took them 30 some years and now they're going to do it. I hope they rule correctly." http://thehill.com/index2.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=73826&pop=1&page=0&Itemid=70

08/06/03 Chevonne Ecclestone slaying casts cold shadow across Cleveland Metroparks - Phillip Morris

The mood of the Cleveland Metroparks, a nationally heralded urban park system, has recently changed. The parks seem less friendly.

In recent days, the more than 21,000 acres of parkland have gone from tranquil places of care-free abandon to places where passing strangers are eyed with caution.

Dog walkers and runners now greet each other with a bit more uncertainty.

Hikers saddled with book bags are no longer encouraged by passers-by with verbal support. They're simply watched.

A murder has a way of warping good history.

For years, I've spent several hours a week in one of the parks running or doing calisthenics. But since the May 10 attack on Chevonne Ecclestone, a 52-year-old woman who was beaten on the head with a rock while walking her dog in a Parma Metropark, I've noticed a distinct temperature change. It seems colder.

Ecclestone died last week after lingering in a coma for more than two weeks. Police say career felon Todd Torok of Parma attacked and robbed Ecclestone as she walked her poodle. The unprovoked attack, one of the most cowardly in recent local memory, was an assault on any of the 42 million annual visitors to the parks.

Only the wrong person suffered and died. I wish Ecclestone had had a gun.

The senseless violence shattered the shroud of comfort, familiarity and safety that has long been associated with the park

system. The parks have temporarily, at least, become less friendly to a community of strangers.

Two concerns continue to dog my thoughts as I wonder how the attack will affect the future of the lush system often referred to as Cleveland's "emerald necklace."

Will fewer children, young professionals and aging seniors make use of one of the best-maintained and most creatively marketed park resources in the nation?

And will more of those who use the park feel the need to carry weapons with them onto park grounds?

Under current Ohio law, registered gun owners with concealed-carry permits are free to bring their weapons onto Metroparks grounds. Will more gun owners now feel the need to arm themselves in the parks?

"We need the public's help as much as they need ours," said William Ryan, president of the Cleveland Metroparks Board of Commissioners. "If the public sees something that doesn't look right, all they have to do is get on the phone to one of our ranger offices. We will have a car there right away.

"It's all of our responsibility to look out for the parks. It's all of our responsibility to see that the parks remain in the excellent conditions that they are now.

"We need to make sure that 100 years from now, the generation that inherits these parks enjoys them as much as we do."

Ryan is absolutely right. And the dedicated rangers can help.

But we all have the responsibility to make sure that one lunatic with a rock does not rob Cleveland of one of its greatest and enduring natural resources.

We must not relinquish our parks.

http://www.cleveland.com/news/plaindealer/phillip_morris/index.ssf?/base/opinion/1212481818114160.xml&coll=2

08/06/02 Forcible disarmament in South Sudan will not improve security

In response to decades of armed violence and cattle rustling, the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) is planning a campaign to forcibly collect firearms from southern citizens. Government officials' motivations are understandable. Endemic pastoralist violence is reaching dangerous levels and there are widespread suspicions of outside support for the perpetrators as part of efforts to scupper the fragile north-south peace process. But coercive disarmament will not resolve matters. It will likely exacerbate simmering tensions and could result in thousands of deaths. What is more, it will make the international community's efforts to assist the fledgling government much more difficult.

Armed violence in Jonglei state is generating a political crisis of significant proportions. The state (about the size of Austria and Switzerland combined)

<http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article27386>

08/06/02 OKC police chief wants tighter gun laws

OKLAHOMA CITY -- Police Chief Bill Citty called Monday for tighter gun control laws to curb the kind of gang violence that left six teenagers with gunshot wounds following a drive-by shooting in southeast Oklahoma City two days earlier.

Citty, speaking at a news conference by a coalition of social services, clergy and community groups opposed to gang

violence, said he believes in a citizen's right to carry firearms but that too many guns are reaching the hands of gang members. He said gang members and their victims are getting younger and younger.

"There has to be some tighter rules and regulations on the sale of firearms and the registration of those firearms," Citty said.

On Saturday night, six people aged 14 through 17 were shot in a drive-by shooting that was witnessed by an Oklahoma City gang patrol officer who was driving through the area and heard gunshots, authorities said. Officials said the victims' injuries were not life-threatening.

One of three suspects was caught after the officer struck him with his cruiser. The 27-year-old suspect was arrested on seven complaints of assault with a deadly weapon. The remaining two suspects, aged 27 and 18, were arrested on six complaints of assault with a deadly weapon.

Citty called for tighter gun control laws one week after adjournment of the Oklahoma Legislature, which considered legislation that would have authorized gun owners with permits to carry concealed weapons to bring them into college and university classrooms and to lower the minimum age of people who can have concealed carry permits from 21 to 18.

Both measures were approved by lopsided votes in the Republican-controlled House but died in the Senate.

Citty and Oklahoma County Sheriff John Whetsel urged residents of violence-prone communities to help law enforcement officials identify gang members and their hangouts to prevent violence before it happens. Citty said shielding gang members who commit violent acts only enables them to commit more.

http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/article.aspx?articleID=20080602_12_OKLAH80306

08/06/02 Man killed at mall attacked deputy to shield sibling

JENSEN BEACH — His brother and friends tried to talk him out of it, but Miguel Pablo had been drinking and apparently thought he could spare his younger brother from a DUI arrest by fighting with a deputy in the parking lot of the Treasure Coast Square mall Sunday afternoon.

Pablo, 21, was shot dead in the struggle with deputy Jason Howard. Pablo's brother Francisco, 18, is charged with aggravated battery on a law enforcement officer for allegedly kicking Howard after Miguel Pablo knocked him to the ground, arrest records say.

Howard, 27, is on administrative leave while the shooting is under investigation, but Martin County Sheriff Robert Crowder said he believes the initial information supports Howard's decision to use deadly force.

"When you jump a deputy, you can expect to die," Crowder said. "If you attack a deputy who is armed, particularly when it's more than one person, the logical assumable result of that is that the deputy will be disarmed. And chances are he will then be executed by the people who disarmed him. I don't expect them (deputies) to take that chance."

Crowder said Howard would have been justified in shooting anyone who was involved in the attack. "He was on the ground being kicked when he finally resorted to defending himself," Crowder said Sunday night at the scene near the Sears store.

Pablo was hit from the front in the torso and the right arm with two shots from Howard's .45-caliber Smith and Wesson, according to sheriff's officials. Investigators found two more spent casings, indicating two shots missed.

Pablo's parents and girlfriend suggested Howard could have stopped him with a Taser or a nonlethal shot to his leg. "Why did they kill him?" Pablo's mother, Angelina Francisco, said. "He didn't have a gun, not even a knife."

Martin deputy Dennis Root, a Taser expert, said the Taser is considered a "low level" use of force and would be ineffective against multiple attackers.

Only one set of prongs can be fired at once, leaving the deputy open to attack by the second person, he said.

And when the decision is made to use deadly force, deputies are trained to shoot at the biggest target, the torso, with the goal of stopping the attacker in the shortest amount of time with the fewest shots, Root said.

"It's very difficult to hit a moving target. It's very difficult," he said. "We shoot to stop. ... Unfortunately, death can be a byproduct."

<http://www.palmbeachpost.com/treasurecoast/content/tcoast/epaper/2008/06/02/0602mcfatalshooting.html>

08/06/02 Ex-Steelers player 1 of 5 injured in restaurant shooting

NORTH VERSAILLES, Pa. - A former Steelers safety is among five people injured in a shooting at a Pittsburgh-area restaurant.

Police say 27-year-old Russell Stuvaints Jr. of White Oak was shot in the right hip early Sunday at Nigro's Restaurant in North Versailles. He played for the Steelers from 2003 to 2005.

Police say a woman and three other men also were shot. None of the injuries are believed to be life-threatening.

Allegheny County police charged 27-year-old Tyrone Watson of McKeesport with aggravated assault, reckless endangerment and carrying an unlicensed firearm.

Authorities say Watson fired a semiautomatic pistol after arguing with some customers.

Watson is in the county jail on \$10,000 bail. It was not immediately clear if he had an attorney.

<http://www.philly.com/philly/wires/ap/news/state/pennsylvania/19470224.html>

08/05/31 US soldier jailed in Mexico on gun charges freed

EL PASO, Texas - A U.S. soldier who was held in a Mexican jail for more than a month on weapons charges has been released, Mexican authorities said.

Spc. Richard Torres was arrested April 21 after he has said he accidentally crossed the border in El Paso with an AR-15 assault rifle, a .45-caliber handgun and 171 bullets in his car.

In a statement released Friday, a spokesman for the **Center for Social Readaption jail** in Ciudad Juarez said Torres, a 25-year-old Iraq war veteran, was released to U.S. authorities Friday afternoon.

Torres had faced a gun-possession charge.

Torres' mother, Gloria Medina, said in a phone interview Friday that a Mexican judge hearing the case threw out the charge, allowing Torres to be released Friday afternoon.

"The U.S. consulate called and said, 'I've got good news for you, Richard's being released,'" Medina said.

She said she spoke to her son and he was planning to drive to California after stopping for dinner in El Paso. A cell phone number for Torres was out of service on Friday.

Gloria Medina said neither she nor her son are harboring any ill feelings toward Mexico.

"I am just glad they have finally seen the light," she said.

Medina said Torres' 1999 Honda Prelude was released to the Army earlier this month and had been stored at Fort Bliss.

Torres said in previous interviews that he was headed home to Fresno, Calif., from Fort Hood, when he decided to stop in El Paso and walk across the border to grab breakfast in Ciudad Juarez, a hardscrabble border city plagued with violence.

Misunderstanding directions from a gas station attendant after driving all night, Torres said he accidentally crossed the border while looking for a place to park.

Investigators with the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives concluded that Torres, who was transferring to an Army unit based in Honduras when he was arrested, was not smuggling weapons into Mexico to sell them.

Medina said Torres will have a few weeks to spend at home before he reports back to Fort Hood and eventually to his next assignment in Honduras.

http://www.philly.com/philly/wires/ap/news/nation_world/19426474.html

08/05/30 N.J. accuses 5 of selling guns from Pa

Five men were indicted in New Jersey yesterday on charges of illegally selling guns bought in Bucks County sporting goods stores to buyers in Trenton.

Of the eight guns the men were accused of selling, two were used in shootings, including one that was fired at a Trenton police officer in 2004, the New Jersey Attorney General's office said.

Police in Trenton and Pennsauken recovered seven of the weapons - two rifles and five handguns.

The five defendants were indicted separately, and they are not believed to be connected.

Three are from Bucks County - Donald Clark, 36, and Nicholas James Titus, 39, both of Morrisville, and Matthew McGinty, 26, of Doylestown.

The others are Arthur Arrison, 52, of Hamilton, N.J., and Benjamin Travers, 50, of Trenton.

Most of the guns they were accused of selling were recovered in crimes. One was found discarded in an area of Trenton that authorities described as known for gang activity and drugs.

One weapon was recovered from Terrance Travers - no relation to Benjamin Travers - who was convicted of firing it at a Trenton police officer. He was wounded when police returned fire.

"We're literally prosecuting people who bought guns and put them in the hands of people who use them to shoot at police officers," said state Attorney General Anne Milgram.

The charges are the first to arise from a partnership formed last year between the state and the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

The arrangement, the only one of its kind in the nation, allows New Jersey police agencies to trace firearms used in crimes through an ATF database.

The database lists a gun's first buyer, date of sale and the retailer that sold it. The ATF relies on information sent to it by local police departments, but only 30 percent of departments nationwide participate.

Last year, Milgram ordered all police agencies in New Jersey to give gun-sale information to the ATF. She said yesterday that she hopes more states will follow New Jersey's lead.

The majority of the guns used in crimes in New Jersey - 72 percent - come from out of state, according to ATF statistics. The largest share - 14 percent - come from Pennsylvania.

New Jersey's initiatives are meant to target "straw purchasers" who buy guns legally and sell them to criminals who are barred from owning firearms.

"It's critical for us to target these folks," Milgram said.

She said the indictments of the men accused of bringing guns from Pennsylvania to New Jersey "confirms what we knew to be true" about the flow of illegal weapons into the state. The Attorney General's Office did not identify the Bucks County stores that sold the guns because the initial sales were legal. Milgram said investigators are pursuing more cases against straw buyers traced through the ATF partnership.

"This is really just the start," she said.

<http://www.philly.com/philly/news/local/19383169.html>

08/05/30 Police Rifle Stolen from Orlando Cruiser

ORLANDO, Fla. --

A thief stole an assault rifle from a marked Orlando police cruiser in a parking lot.

Investigators said the thief broke into the OPD vehicle at an apartment complex and forced open a secured compartment to get to the weapon.

The assault rifle is an AR-15, Local 6 reported.

<http://www.officer.com/online/article.jsp?siteSection=1&id=41624>

08/05/30 Thieves Target Florida Police Cars DELAND, Fla.

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In the last five days, four police cars belonging to different agencies have been broken into in Volusia County.

In one of the break-ins, the thieves made off with a rifle and ammunition.

Investigators said it's certainly possible the crimes are connected. They said it could be one or more individuals targeting marked vehicles parked at law officers' homes.

So far, one Volusia County sheriff's car, one from New Smyrna Beach Police Department, one belonging to an Orange City officer and one Seminole County deputy's car have been targeted.

In each case, the front passenger window was smashed for access.

The most recent break-ins occurred Thursday morning.

A patrol car from Seminole County and one from New Smyrna Beach were both parked at the officers' Deltona homes. The Seminole County deputy lost a gas mask.

Early Sunday morning, a unit from the Orange City Police Department was hit but nothing taken and last Saturday morning,

a Volusia County deputy's patrol car parked in Deltona was broken into -- that's when a thief stole a shotgun.

"In this case, the deputy did leave the keys in the ignition and that enabled the thief to access the shotgun and also the trunk where the ammunition was being kept," Gary Davidson of the Volusia County Sheriff's Department said.

Investigators said in every case weapons were properly secured if they were in the vehicles, and three out of four break-ins yielded little or nothing, but in the Volusia County deputy's case, because of a mistake, a shotgun is on the streets.

"This was not a failure of policy. We want the weapons to be there, close to the deputies when they need them. In this case, the deputy simply left the keys in the ignition," Davidson said.

<http://www.officer.com/online/article.jsp?siteSection=1&id=41622>

08/05/29 South Side Home Invasion Ends With Suspect Being Shot

PITTSBURGH -- A home invasion suspect was shot after a house in the 3100 block of Josephine Street was broken into on Pittsburgh's South Side late Wednesday night.

According to police, Dale Boehm, 19, and another man broke into the home through the kitchen while a resident there was watching the Penguins game.

Police said a 25-year-old resident of the home heard the door being kicked in, so he grabbed a gun and began exchanging fire with Boehm and another man. Boehm was shot in the stomach, police said. He was taken to UPMC Mercy Hospital in critical condition.

"We heard some sounds that thought were fireworks for the Penguins game, but it wasn't," said neighbor Josh Ebaugh, who said he realized it was gunfire when police showed up.

Police were unable to locate the other man involved in the home invasion. They recovered a baseball bat and firearm at the scene.

Attorney John Elash, who has tried 150 homicide cases in the last 33 years, knows a bit about self-defense with deadly force.

In 1981, Elash won an acquittal for Carrol Jones who shot two unarmed home invaders, killing one.

"They didn't have a gun or knife on them, but they were coming at him," Elash said. "In your own home, you don't have to retreat. You don't have to back up. You don't have to run into another room. You can protect yourself right there, and you can use deadly force.

"The man who shot the intruder said he is packing his belongings and moving out of the home. Boehm is charged with burglary, robbery and aggravated assault, among other charges. Police said he would be taken

<http://www.thepittsburghchannel.com/news/16424894/detail.html>

08/05/29 Souvenir rifle shell gets Mass. 4th-grader suspended

Winchendon family shocked

This week's outrage comes to us from Winchendon, Massachusetts where, in yet another case of "zero-tolerance" enforcement defying common sense, fourth-grader Bradley Geslak was suspended from Toy Town Elementary School for bringing a Memorial Day souvenir to school.

According to a May 29, Telegram.com article, a uniformed

veteran gave the 10-year-old two empty rifle shell casings from blanks used during the town's Memorial Day celebration Monday morning. Bradley gave one of the empty casings to his grandfather and kept the other as a souvenir. The trouble began when he took his souvenir to school the next day.

"He was just playing with it at lunch," explained Crystal Geslak, Bradley's mother. "He wasn't showing it to anyone; he had it in his hand and was playing with it."

A teacher saw him with the harmless piece of brass and confiscated it. Ms. Geslak was then called at work and told to come and pick up her son, who had been suspended for five days!

Ms. Geslak arrived at the school to find her son in tears. "I was totally shocked. I couldn't believe this was happening," she said. "It was just an empty shell, not even from a real bullet. A sharpened pencil would be more dangerous than this piece of metal."

"He was so proud to have been given them. His dad's a veteran, his uncle's a veteran, both his grandfathers are veterans. Memorial Day is a big thing to us. It's a very important holiday and we have a big celebration every year," Ms. Geslak said.

Ms. Geslak, who will be forced to miss work in order to stay home with her son, says she is worried about what having a "weapon-related suspension" on his school record will mean to his future.

To add insult to injury, the family says a school official told them that the shell would not be returned, and that the next step might involve assigning a probation officer to Bradley! Yes, you read that right, a probation officer.

A young boy punished over a harmless souvenir. By any standard, that's outrageous.

<http://www.telegram.com/article/20080529/NEWS/805290859/1116>

08/05/28 letter to editor: Gun laws won't help

I am a retired federal law enforcement officer and firearms instructor, and my son is an active police officer in the Philadelphia suburbs. Most of the active and retired law officers that I know do not favor the type of restrictions on gun possession and ownership that

Mayor Nutter has proposed ("New gun laws put to test in court," May 20).

First of all, so-called assault weapons are used in roughly 2 percent of gun-related crimes. The weapons used in the two recent shootings of police officers in Philadelphia were SKS rifles.

They are less powerful than the average deer rifle and are used with other such semi-auto rifles in target shooting and hunting in some other states. Many were brought home as war souvenirs by Vietnam veterans. The weapons used in the two shootings were not legally purchased or possessed by the perpetrators. One was purchased out of state. Thus, none of the mayor's ordinances, had they been in place, would have prevented those tragedies.

The laws proposed by the mayor would strip these legally owned and possessed weapons - as well as pistols such as the Glock 17, a handgun carried by Philadelphia police officers - from law-abiding citizens without justification or compensation. The criminals are not going to register or turn in their weapons. Criminals who use straw purchasers would likewise not be

deterred. They would simply use more straw purchasers or obtain them out of the city or in other states.

Richard A. Compton

Supervisory Special Agent (Retired)

Drug Enforcement Administration

Langhorne

<http://www.philly.com/inquirer/opinion/pa/19309864.html>

08/05/28 Nutter takes his gun-control campaign to Harrisburg

HARRISBURG - Mayor Nutter said yesterday he will work with anyone willing to help him address the gun violence that plagues Philadelphia and other parts of the state.

Nutter, who took office in January, told a Pennsylvania Press Club lunch he was interested in "a different kind of dialogue," and that both sides have to be more realistic.

"I'm committed to working with anyone who is serious about this issue," he said. "And if we could, on both sides I guess, tone down some of the rhetoric, and be that much more direct and serious about how we discuss these issues, all of us will be that much better off."

His priorities include requiring gun owners to report lost or stolen weapons - a proposal the Legislature has resisted - and reinstating a federal crackdown on assault weapons.

John Hohenwarter, state lobbyist for the National Rifle Association, said city officials should concentrate instead on improving the criminal-justice system.

"I'm disappointed that the mayor continues to focus on the firearm and not the criminal," Hohenwarter said. "You have a revolving-door courtroom, and you have intervention programs which just aren't working or

they're just not there. You have to make sure you keep the bad guy in jail."

Nutter spoke of the May 3 fatal shooting of Philadelphia Police Sgt. Stephen Liczbinski, who was struck by multiple bullets from a Chinese SKS rifle while responding to a bank robbery. There is no legitimate reason to possess such high-powered weapons, he said.

"Certainly they're not used for sport, they're not used for hunting, they're not used for target practice," Nutter said.

"Because, quite honestly, the devastation these weapons were designed to create leaves virtually nothing left."

He said gun violence affects many lives.

"I'm a strong supporter of the Second Amendment, but I'm also a strong supporter of the First Amendment," he said. "And one of those tenets is that people have the right to peacefully assemble."

He said elected officials have a responsibility to address gun violence, and he argued that most Pennsylvanians support discussions.

"Reasonable people must have reasonable conversations on behalf of the law-abiding citizens of the commonwealth, and [on] behalf of those who seek to be safe, who seek to be free," he said.

"We cannot make progress as long as we are talking past each other." <http://www.philly.com/dailynews/national/19309374.html>

08/05/28 Castle Doctrine Moves Forward in Ohio

The House approved several Senate amendments on Wednesday and the Castle Doctrine may now become law. Senate Bill 184, the concealed carry Castle Doctrine, has a wide range of support in the statehouse. "The bill as I understand it, in its current form, is something I will support," said Gov. Ted Strickland.

<http://www.nbc4i.com/midwest/cmh/news.apx.-content-articles-CMH-2008-05-28-0006.html>

08/05/28 Nutter pushes Harrisburg connection

HARRISBURG - Mayor Nutter said yesterday that his goal is to meet with all 253 lawmakers in Harrisburg as part of a concentrated effort by his administration to advance Philadelphia's agenda in the Capitol.

"We're going to spend a significant amount of time here in Harrisburg - not just me, but other members of the administration," Nutter said at the monthly luncheon of the Pennsylvania Press Club in Harrisburg, adding that he's been to the Capitol four times since taking office in January.

"I think we have a great story to tell about Philadelphia," he told the room of about 120 reporters, lobbyists and government officials. "We have our challenges, we have our problems, no question about it. But there are many good things going on in Philadelphia."

As part of that strategy, Nutter said he would create a new position, based in Harrisburg, for an employee to help advance issues important to Philadelphia. The city already contracts with outside lobbyists, but Nutter said the person hired would be a city worker with no client but the city.

Among his top priorities, Nutter said, is working with lawmakers to enact "commonsense" gun-control measures that he believes would benefit all municipalities, not just Philadelphia and other urban areas.

Though he touched on other topics, including the city's casinos and the importance of additional funding for public education, Nutter dedicated the majority of his speech to the gun issue.

Nutter called himself a "strong supporter" of the Second Amendment right to bear arms, but argued that in many Philadelphia neighborhoods - as well as in other parts of the state - "it is virtually impossible to exercise your First Amendment right to peacefully assemble because you can't feel safe on the streets."

He said he would push legislation to crack down on assault weapons such as the one that killed Philadelphia Police Sgt. Stephen Liczbinski. He also supports legislation requiring lost and stolen guns to be reported, which has overwhelming support from Philadelphia lawmakers, but which was recently defeated in the House.

City Council approved, and Nutter has signed into law, bills that limit handgun purchases to one a month; ban certain assault weapons; require the reporting of lost or stolen firearms; prohibit gun possession by people subject to protection-from-abuse orders; and allow removal of guns from "persons posing a risk of imminent personal injury" to themselves or others.

But the National Rifle Association has opposed the bills in court. The NRA has opposed the gun-control measures, saying they are an infringement on Second Amendment rights.

"I am prepared to work with anyone, anywhere, at any time, under any set of circumstances, who is serious about addressing

this issue," Nutter said yesterday. "No discussion, no group, no organization is off-limits or off-bounds."

<http://www.philly.com/philly/news/local/19309904.html>

08/05/28 UK CITIZEN INDICTED FOR ATTEMPTING TO BUY HANDGUN

The United States Attorney's Office announced today that Stephen Jackley, 22, of the United Kingdom, has been indicted by a federal grand jury for lying about his nationality and attempting to use false identification to purchase a handgun.

On May 19, 2008, Stephen Jackley was arrested on Route 100 in Vermont after fleeing Henry Parro's gun shop in Waterbury. Court documents show that Jackley entered the gun shop and asked for a compact model Glock handgun. He filled out the federally required form and falsely claimed that he was a United States citizen and that he currently lived in Vermont. When asked for a means of identification, Jackley produced a Vermont non-driver's ID. The store owner found it suspicious and asked if it was real. While Jackley insisted it was, the owner called the Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles and found it was a forgery. Jackley then fled the store. In the process, his rental car collided with a vehicle parked at the store. The Vermont State Police soon thereafter arrested Jackley heading north on Route 100.

Court documents show that Jackley, a resident of Worcester, England, had flown to Boston on May 13, 2008 and then traveled to Vermont. Documents found in his vehicle show that he planned to purchase a gun and that he was planning to use it to commit armed robberies, including banks robberies in England. The documents also show that Jackley is facing charges in the Netherlands for armed robbery with a knife.

<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/vt/press/2008/may/jackley.html>

08/05/27 Jerry Patterson: National parks gun ban unconstitutional

Recent displays of my Second Amendment rights have earned some harsh words from editorial writers at some of Texas' big city newspapers, including the San Antonio Express-News.

I've been criticized for acknowledging I carried a concealed handgun, as is my right, on recent visits to Big Bend National Park. A National Park Service rule prohibits carrying a loaded, concealed handgun.

"Evidently, Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson was absent from school the day the Constitution was covered," wrote the San Antonio Express-News Editorial Board.

While that's an awfully cute jab, the reality is I've learned the Constitution over the course of a lifetime - not just one day. I've taken oaths to uphold and protect our Constitution - as a U.S. Marine and as a state elected official.

So look at the facts.

The ban on loaded firearms in National Park is not a law. It is a rule enacted by unelected bureaucrats of the National Park Service. There was no legislative process - these bureaucrats arbitrarily terminated this Constitutional right.

Fortunately, the clearly unconstitutional National Park Service rules on possessing firearms in federal parks are changing. Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne recently proposed new rules that would respect state firearm laws and the Second

Amendment.

Nonetheless, some editorial boards oppose allowing citizens the right to self-defense. Law-abiding Texans, they say, can't be trusted with guns and don't need them in the park, anyway, because no one else can have a gun.

On a recent hike in Big Bend, I found two expended 9mm shell casings, along with a discarded pack of Mexican cigarettes. The Texas Department of Public Safety ballistics lab confirmed two different weapons fired these casings. How could this be? There are no guns in Big Bend, because that's the rule, right?

Tell that to the rafters who were ambushed and killed several years ago in an area adjacent to the Big Bend known as Colorado Canyon. Tell that to the woman whose body, suffering from blunt force trauma to the head, was found floating in five feet of water at Amistad National Recreation Area.

In 2006, the most recent year available for statistics, the National Park Service says there were 116,588 reported offenses in national parks. That includes 11 killings, 35 rapes or attempted rapes, 61 robberies, 16 kidnappings and 261 aggravated assaults.

With the increasingly violent criminal activity along the Texas-Mexico border, carrying a firearm in remote areas along the border, including Big Bend National Park, is a choice every citizen should have.

Express-News editorial writers assert the current proposal to rescind the ban on lawfully carried firearms in national parks is a "solution in search of a problem." But the problem is very real.

Americans are guaranteed our right to keep and bear arms. That right is unassailable and inviolate. To rescind that right when one crosses an arbitrary boundary into a national park is an unconstitutional act no different than rescinding our Fourth Amendment protection against unlawful search and seizure.

As an elected official, I take an oath that I will "to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States and of this State, so help me God."

I do not regard such affirmations as anachronistic formalities. I guess you can call me an old-fashioned believer in the wisdom of those who penned the Bill of Rights and not much of a believer in the wisdom of editorial boards.

http://www.mysanantonio.com/opinion/stories/MYSA.052808.O PED_1B_CommentPatterson.2690f28.html

08/05/27 30 months in jail for broken gun

Judge hands down penalty for misfire from 20-year-old rifle federal judge has ordered a 30-month prison sentence for a man whose rifle misfired, letting loose three shots at a firing range, prompting 2nd Amendment supporters to warn their constituents how easily they, too, can become a "gun felon."

"It didn't matter the rifle in question had not been intentionally modified for select fire, or that it did not have an M16 bolt carrier or sear, that it did not show any signs of machining or drilling, or that that model had even been recalled a few years back," said a commentary in Guns Magazine on the case against David R. Olofson, of Berlin, Wis.

"It didn't matter the government had repeatedly failed to replicate automatic fire until they replaced the ammunition with a softer primer type. It didn't even matter that the prosecution admitted it was not important to prove the gun would do it again

if the test were conducted today," the magazine said. "What mattered was the government's position that none of the above was relevant because '[T]here's no indication it makes any difference under the statute. If you pull the trigger once and it fires more than one round, no matter what the cause it's a machine gun.'

"No matter what the cause.

"Think about if your semiauto ever malfunctions. Because that's how close you could be to becoming a convicted 'gun felon,'" the commentary said.

WND reported earlier when Olofson, a drill instructor in the National Guard, was convicted in a federal court for illegally transferring a machine gun.

The verdict came in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin.

An expert witness told WND the conviction means anyone whose weapon malfunctions is subject to charges of having or handling a banned gun.

"If your semiautomatic rifle breaks or malfunctions you are now subject to prosecution. That is now a sad FACT," wrote Len Savage, a weaponry expert who runs Historic Arms LLC.

"To those in the sporting culture who have derided 'black guns' and so-called 'assault weapons'; Your double barreled shotgun is now next up to be seized and you could possibly be prosecuted if the ATF can get it to 'fire more than once,'" he wrote in a blog run by Red's Trading Post.

"Hey, but don't worry," Savage said. "The people testing it have no procedures in writing and the testing will be in secret."

He said during an interview with Jews for the Preservation of Firearms Ownership that Olofson had been instructing a man in the use of guns, and the student asked to borrow a rifle for some shooting practice.

"Mr. Olofson was nice enough to accommodate him," Savage said. So the student, Robert Kiernicki, went to a range and fired about 120 rounds. "He went to put in another magazine and the rifle shot three times, then jammed."

<http://wnd.com/index.php?fa=PAGE.view&pageId=65455>

08/05/27 Proposed bylaw angers Toronto gun enthusiasts

TORONTO (Reuters) - Firearm enthusiasts slammed Toronto's proposed anti-gun measures on Tuesday, which would see shooting ranges, gun clubs and firearm manufacturers banned from Canada's largest city.

Toronto Mayor David Miller announced on Monday he will support staff recommendations contained in a new report that recommends restrictions on land use for the manufacture, distribution, assembly, warehousing and discharge of guns as part of the city's move to reduce gun crime.

The report also calls for new zoning regulations that would eliminate recreational use of firearms, effectively terminating permits for gun clubs in Toronto.

Marc Porter, a member of the Forest Hill Revolver Club, who owns two target pistols, said Miller was "misguided in his quest" to rid the city's streets of gun violence, adding that only athletes and hobbyists will suffer.

"I've been doing this for 31 years and we are not the problem. We are not training criminals; we are not offering criminals instruction," Porter said.

Inspector Tony Cooper, Ontario's acting chief firearms officer, said the clubs have not been a public safety issue

"It's the mayor's prerogative to do whatever he likes, but we have had no problem with those particular ranges," he said.

In response to the criticism, Miller said the proposals were an effort by Toronto to "take care of our own house."

"It's been my duty to go to numerous funeral visitations of young men, and sometimes young women, who have been shot down on the streets of Toronto, and a number of those have been shot by guns stolen from local hobbyists," he told Reuters on Tuesday.

In April, Miller launched an online petition for a Canada-wide handgun ban after two innocent bystanders were fatally shot downtown in January.

According to a city report, more than 1,200 Canadians are killed and over 1,000 are injured by firearms each year. In 2006, Toronto experienced the highest number of victims of firearm-related violent crimes in Canada.

Canada's firearm-related homicide rate is six times lower than that of the United States, however it is three times higher than Australia's and six times higher than that of England and Wales, according to a 2006 Statistics Canada report.

<http://ca.reuters.com/article/domesticNews/idCAN2716317820080527?sp=true>

08/05/27 Philly mayor, 2 Allegheny lawmakers push gun laws

HARRISBURG -- Philadelphia's new mayor, Michael Nutter, is joining with two Allegheny County legislators to push for new statewide laws aimed at reducing gun violence on Pennsylvania streets.

But with the political power that sportsmen, hunters and the National Rifle Association have with the General Assembly, everyone admits it won't be easy to enact gun-control bills.

Mr. Nutter, a Democrat who took office in January, spoke to the Pennsylvania Press Club here today, advocating bills sponsored by two Pittsburgh-area Democrats, state Reps. Dan Frankel of Squirrel Hill and David Levdansky of Forward.

Mr. Frankel wants to ban the sale of assault weapons in Pennsylvania -- a state law that would make up for the expiration in 2004 of a federal ban on selling such weapons. He says there is no reason why any law-abiding gun owner needs an assault weapon.

Mr. Levdansky wants to require gun owners to report any lost or stolen handguns within 72 hours of noticing the loss. Such weapons often wind up in the hands of criminals and are used in crimes of violence, and police say it would help them to know when the gun disappeared. Gun owners who "lose" their weapons sometimes sell them to criminals in exchange for illegal drugs, police say.

One gun, from a home in Perry County, outside Harrisburg, recently ended up in the hands of one of three men charged with killing a Philadelphia police officer in early May. Mr. Nutter, along with Gov. Ed Rendell, a former Philadelphia mayor and other Philadelphia officials are still upset about that.

Mr. Nutter said there is no reason why machine guns and assault weapons like the SKS paramilitary carbine that killed the Philadelphia policeman should be sold in Pennsylvania.

"This isn't just a Philadelphia or Allegheny County issue," he said. "It affects many towns and cities in the state."

In Philadelphia, which has seen about 400 gun-related deaths in each of the past two years, City Council recently approved five municipal gun-control bills. Mr. Nutter signed them, but they may not survive a court challenge. Pro-gun groups have taken the city to Common Pleas Court, contending that that only the state Legislature, not individual cities, towns or counties, has the power to enact gun-control laws.

<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/08148/885169-100.stm>

08/05/26 Winnemucca police statement on bar shootings

On Sunday May 25, 2008 at approximately 2:30 a.m. the Winnemucca Police Department was dispatched to the Players Bar and Grill There were approximately 300 patrons in and around the bar....

The officers on scene discovered three adult males who had died from obvious gunshot wounds. Two additional gunshot victims were also located[, treated, and released from the hospital]....

The ... investigation lead detectives to believe that [Ernesto Fuentes] Villagomez entered the bar and at some point began firing multiple rounds. At least two of these rounds struck and killed the other two decedents, Jose Torres age, 20 and his brother Margarito Torres, age 19 both of Winnemucca. At some point during this shooting spree Villagomez allegedly stopped and according to witnesses reloaded his high capacity handgun and began shooting again.

It was at this point that ... [a 48-year-old Reno man] produced a concealed handgun and proceeded to fire upon Villagomez who succumbed to his wounds. The Reno resident was in possession of a valid Concealed Carry Permit issued through the Washoe County Sheriff's Office.... [T]he shooting of Villagomez by the Reno man was [concluded to be] a justifiable homicide

The investigation is currently pursuing a lead that indicates that this event may have been the result of a long standing feud between several families....

<http://news.rgj.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=200880526010>

08/05/25 There's no evidence that banning guns cuts crime

John R. Lott Jr. is a senior research scientist at the University of Maryland

Philadelphia had 406 homicides in 2007, and, at 28 per 100,000 people, it also had the highest murder rate of any major city in the United States. No wonder Philadelphians want things done.

Recently, the city focused on a new tragedy, the murder of a 12-year police veteran and father of three, Sgt. Stephen Liczbinski, by three bank robbers with long, violent criminal records.

To Gov. Rendell, Mayor Nutter, Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey, and freshman U.S. Rep. Joe Sestak, the solution is simple: more gun control. After pushes failed for new state and local laws, last Thursday these four politicians announced that the solution to Philadelphia's problems was re-enacting the Federal Assault Weapons Ban.

They focused on the Chinese SKS rifle used to shoot Liczbinski five times. Rendell claims that "the only people who

should have weapons like this is the police and the military." Some are calling the SKS an "assault weapon," although it is not so defined in any federal law and is not banned as such. And although the phrase assault weapon conjures up images of the rapid-fire machine guns used by the military, the SKS rifle is not a machine gun, instead functioning the same way as any semiautomatic hunting rifle. It fires a bullet similar to (indeed, slightly less powerful than) those fired from deer-hunting rifles, with the exact same rapidity.

This debate might make more sense if there were some evidence that the Federal Assault Weapons Ban lowered crime rates, but all the published academic studies by criminologists and economists find that neither the initial ban in 1994 nor its sun-setting in 2004 changed rates of murder or other violent crimes. Similarly, there is no evidence that state bans have mattered.

For example, a report for the National Institute of Justice by Christopher Koper, Daniel Woods and Jeffrey Roth at the University of Pennsylvania's Jerry Lee Center of Criminology studied the first nine years of the federal ban and found that "we cannot clearly credit the ban with any of the nation's recent drop in gun violence. And, indeed, there has been no discernible reduction in the lethality and injuriousness of gun violence." They note that "the gun-ban provision targets a relatively small number of weapons based on outward features or accessories that have little to do with the weapons' operation."

Even gun control groups realize that the presence or absence of such laws make little difference. Before the federal law sunset, a representative for the Violence Policy Center, a gun control group, said that "if the existing assault-weapons ban expires, I personally do not believe it will make one whit of difference one way or another in terms of our objective, which is reducing death and injury and getting a particularly lethal class of firearms off the streets." The center argued that the law involved only "minor changes in appearance."

Indeed, the U.S. murder rate was 5.7 per 100,000 people in 2003, the last full year before the law sunset. It was still 5.7 in 2006. Over the same period, the rate of violent crimes fell slightly. In the 43 states without their own assault-weapons bans, the murder rates fell, while they rose in the seven states with such bans. Violent-crime rates fell more quickly in the 43 without bans than in the seven states with them.

Yet it always seems easier for politicians to blame the lack of gun control rather than focusing on their own responsibilities. When Washington and Chicago experienced explosions in murder and violent crime after banning handguns, leaders there did not blame their bans, but rather they blamed the rest of the country that had not also adopted stricter regulations.

Ultimately, however, is it really surprising that Philadelphia's murder rates have risen while its arrest rates have fallen?

Former state House Speaker John Perzel proposed a different approach (an approach Rendell opposes) to fix Philadelphia's low and falling arrest rates. Perzel's solution? Help Philadelphia hire more police.

If politicians are unwilling to spend more money on police or to make the police force work more effectively, there is another solution: Encourage law-abiding citizens to defend themselves. One possibility is to eliminate fees for poor law-abiding people,

those who are the most vulnerable victims of crime, to obtain concealed-handgun permits. If the government isn't going to protect people, why charge them for the opportunity to defend themselves? Research by David Mustard at the University of Georgia also found that more concealed-handgun permits reduce the number of criminals with guns and thus reduce violence against police officers.

Obsessing on gun control proposals distracts from doing what works. At some point it should be obvious to everyone, even politicians, that all the hype about "assault weapons" is just wrong.

<http://www.philly.com/philly/opinion/19241934.html>

08/05/22 Cache of weapons seized in Camden

Police took them from the home of a murder suspect. A submachine gun and M1 rifles were among them.

Camden police officers have seized dozens of weapons, including a submachine gun and several military rifles, from the dilapidated home of a man charged with killing his neighbor.

Daniel Scott Winstanley, 61, was arrested May 13 after allegedly shooting 42-year-old Francisco Cordero in the head days earlier as the two walked on Federal Street.

When authorities entered Winstanley's State Street home, they found it in such an unstable condition it took several days to remove the weapons.

Authorities found 47 weapons they characterized as high-velocity rifles, a .45-caliber Thompson submachine gun, and 10,000 rounds of ammunition. The long guns included several M1 military rifles. The police also confiscated more than 100 simulated weapons such as BB guns as well as bayonets, custom knives and swords.

The rifles and submachine gun were all fully operational, according to Teresa Sicard Archambeault, Camden police spokeswoman.

"This is one of the largest numbers of firearms that we have found in one home for at least five years," she said. "These are powerful, dangerous weapons."

Everett Cook, a former longtime FBI employee who worked as a firearms instructor in Philadelphia, said he would not consider it unusual for a hunter or a serious gun collector to own dozens of guns.

"Some people could be collecting these firearms for 40 years or more," he said.

Owning a submachine gun is far more unusual, Cook said. Bail for Winstanley was set at \$500,000.

<http://www.philly.com/philly/news/local/19167924.html>

08/05/22 On the front lines of gun purchases in Philadelphia

Mayor Nutter says some gun shops are part of the crime problem. One owner deflects the comments. Same old, same old.

Leaning up against the counter in his second-floor gun shop in South Philadelphia, Gregory J. Isabella just sighed.

On Tuesday, his business, Firing Line Inc., and the business of a competitor, Colosimo's Inc. in Center City, found themselves in the crosshairs of Mayor Nutter, who referred to them as "gun traffickers."

"These gun traffickers are not going to stop us from keeping the citizens of Philadelphia safe," Nutter said.

What else is new?

Isabella's been in the gun business nearly a quarter of a century, and it's always the same. Politicians are constantly squawking about guns. Lots of squawk, not a lot of real action.

"You look at all these politicians and all these bureaucrats," Isabella said. "They are hypocrites. They want to do something about crime. They know the issue, and they don't do anything."

The issue, according to papers filed by the city in a court procedure yesterday related to Philadelphia's proposed gun laws, is that guns used in crimes often come from dealers like Firing Line and Colosimo's, who sell multiple guns to single customers.

"At worst, Colosimo's knowingly traffics in crime guns," city solicitor Shelley Smith and outside counsel Susan Burke wrote in the court documents.

James Colosimo said he was willing to talk about his business, but he was unable to yesterday because he had to undergo medical testing.

Isabella sees the crime issue a little bit differently than the mayor's people. The issue, he said, is that repeat offenders, who should be locked up, are out on the street. They get guns, illegally. And they use them because they are desperate. That has nothing to do with him and his business.

So let the politicians squawk. If Nutter and the others slandered him Tuesday - and his attorney is looking into it - he will sue, Isabella said.

Meanwhile, Isabella's got a business to run. There are eight employees to pay. He needs to ship out two semiautomatic rifles ordered by a university police department. He has to deal with the rising price of ammunition, up 70 percent in four years.

"It's the Pacific Rim, mostly China," he said, with its tremendous growth gobbling up all the aluminum alloy and brass needed for ammunition at higher prices. "And then you have the war effort."

Worst of all, there is just too much paperwork and too many regulations.

Here's the bottom line:

"We're going to operate the same way we've done for 24 years," he said. "If I were doing anything illegal, I would have been shut down years ago. State and federal law enforcement aren't stupid. They know who the bad dealers are."

So, does that make sense for a businessman who suddenly has a PR problem?

That is not a bad approach, said Carol Kaufman-Scarborough, a retailing and marketing professor at Rutgers University School of Business in Camden.

"I don't think I'd confront his [the mayor's] remarks directly," she said. "There are a lot of people who may not have seen the story, so taking the high road and talking about what you have done [well] is a more reliable strategy."

But, she said, it may not hurt to talk to the mayor or his people separately about good practices in the business. "Any type of problem also opens up an opportunity," she said.

Gregg Feistman, who teaches public relations at Temple University, said that the risk in saying or doing nothing is that "you leave a vacuum of information out there, then you have

other parties controlling the message instead of you controlling the message."

Isabella's not too worried. Business is actually up since Nutter started his campaign.

"When all this nonsense started with Nutter, people got up and shook off their guns and started to shoot" at the Firing Line's indoor range. "We've actually gotten busier both in sales and range use," Isabella said.

Housed on the second floor of a nondescript warehouse on Front Street, the Firing Line is a company outgrowing its quarters.

The entrance is a plain, somewhat scruffy door off a parking lot overgrown with weeds. Just inside the door are a couple of plastic buckets filled with spent shells.

Posters are tacked up along the walls of the staircase, including one from the National Shooting Sports Foundation - "Don't Lie for the Other Guy," which is part of the organization's push to educate gun dealers about straw buyers, people who buy guns legitimately, then sell them to others illegally.

"They're never prosecuted," Isabella said, proof to him, that once again, it's just more squawking, especially by local law enforcement officials. "Occasionally you'll get an initiative by the federal government," he said, adding that sometimes the state will try to track down straw buyers.

Inside, unloaded rifles are mounted on paneled walls, handguns are locked in the case below the counter and related equipment hanging on the Peg-Board behind the counter. Underfoot, shipping boxes crowd one another in a jumble near a computer and in a back office.

A table with a couple of chairs offers a good view of an indoor pistol range. Shooters, who wear ear protectors, stand separated by concrete walls, shooting at paper bull's-eye targets. The targets hang on a line and can be brought in closer or pushed out farther, just like laundry hanging on a clothesline with a pulley.

Forty percent of the business is wholesale, Isabella said. The rest comes from retail sales over the counter and from an indoor firing range. In about an hour yesterday, five people came in to shoot, buying the bullets they would need for their round. The sound startles at first, but soon, it's a steady ignorable noise, like a distant jackhammer. Isabella doesn't blink.

Three of the five who shot yesterday were undercover law enforcement officers, and the fourth was a Temple student graduating today who wants to be a police officer.

"I think they are blowing smoke," said Paul LaBruna, 22, the graduating senior from South Philadelphia who came in to shoot, talking about the city politicians. He spent about \$17 for 50 bullets that he would use up in 15 minutes.

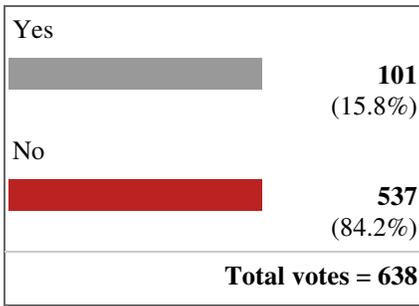
"A lot of the [gun] laws are ridiculous," he said. "The only way to do something about crime is a bigger police presence." And by the way, he's taking the city police exam next week.

<http://www.philly.com/philly/business/19167544.html>

Take a stand: Are gun shops to blame for gun violence in Philly?

READER FEEDBACK 6-2-08

Would more gun shop regulation reduce gun crimes?



08/05/22 Debate over guns in Ohio cars gets heated

Gun supporters and law-enforcement representatives clashed yesterday over proposed changes to relax Ohio gun laws, while the House committee chairman wondered why the State Highway Patrol was sitting silently in the back of the room.

Associations representing police chiefs, police officers, county sheriffs and county prosecutors urged lawmakers not to support a National Rifle Association-backed proposal that, among other things, would allow anyone to carry a gun inside a vehicle.

The multipart proposal, which could be added as an amendment to another bill and approved next week, says the gun must be unloaded. But critics say ammo could be kept within reach.

"We obviously have some concerns about officer safety, as it would take a nanosecond to load one bullet, which is all it would take," said Mike Taylor of the Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio.

Taylor said police also have concerns about a provision allowing off-duty officers to carry guns inside bars, essentially making them "armed bouncers." He and others, including a few lawmakers, also questioned why the measure specifies that law enforcement cannot seize legal guns during declared emergencies, when such seizures already are illegal.

John Hohenwarter, state liaison for the NRA, said much of the proposal sets to address problems that have arisen since the state's original concealed-carry bill was passed in 2004. Lawmakers passed a so-called cleanup bill in 2006. He said 27 states have passed legislation that goes beyond what the NRA wants in Ohio.

Ken Hanson of the Buckeye Firearms Association, who helped craft the amendment, said Ohioans have no idea how to follow Ohio's current convoluted law regarding guns in vehicles.

John Murphy, executive director of the Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association, agreed the gun transportation law could use a change, but not this one.

"It is confusing, no doubt about that," he said of current law. "However, I don't think the solution is just to do whatever the NRA wants."

Rep. Tracy Heard, D- Columbus, asked supporters how they justify going forward without any support from law enforcement. "Law enforcement is granted their powers by we the people," Hanson said. "We do not get our rights from them."

Rep. John J. White, R-Kettering, said he hopes to pass the bill out of committee next week. Legislative leaders and Gov. Ted Strickland have signaled general support for the NRA measure.

White said he wants the Highway Patrol to testify, a point he made twice in committee.

"Are you surprised the Ohio Highway Patrol has not joined you in opposition to these amendments?" he asked John Gilchrist of the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police, who said he didn't know.

With Strickland supporting the measure, the Highway Patrol has been quiet on the issue. The patrol's vocal opposition to previous gun bills, when Gov. Bob Taft was in office, helped limit when and how guns can be carried in vehicles.

http://www.dispatch.com/live/content/local_news/stories/2008/05/22/guncarry22.ART_ART_05-22-08_A1_NLA9661.html?sid=101

08/05/21 Control Criminals Not Guns By Walter E. Williams

Every time there's a highly publicized shooting, out go the cries for stricter gun control laws, and it was no different with the recent murder of Philadelphia Police Sgt. Stephen Liczbinski. Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell and Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, in a letter to the state congressional delegation demanding reenactment of the federal assault weapon ban, said, "Passing this legislation will go a long way to protecting those who put their lives on the line every day for us. ... There is no excuse to do otherwise."

Gun control laws will not protect us from murderers. We need protection from the criminal justice system politicians have created. Let's look at it.

According to former Philly cop Michael P. Tremoglie's article "Who freed the cop-killers?" for the Philadelphia Daily News (5/8/08), all three murder suspects had extensive criminal records. Levon Warner was sentenced in 1997 to seven and a half to 15 years for robbery, one to five years for possessing an instrument of crime and five to 10 for criminal conspiracy. Howard Cain was convicted in 1996 on four counts of robbery and sentenced to five to 10 years on each count. Eric Floyd was sentenced to five to 10 years in 1995 for robbery, rearrested in 1999 for parole violation and later convicted in 2001 for two robberies. If these criminals had not been released from prison, long before they served out their sentences, officer Liczbinski would be alive today. So what's responsible for his death: guns or a prison and parole system that released these three criminals? Tremoglie cites other examples of criminals, with convictions for violent crimes ranging from robbery and assault to murder, who were paroled and later murdered police officers.

A New York Times study (4/28/06) of the city's 1,662 murders in 2003-2005 found that 90 percent of the murderers had criminal records. A Massachusetts study reported that on average, homicide offenders had been arraigned for nine prior offenses. John Lott's book, "More Guns, Less Crime," reports that in 1988 in the 75 largest counties in the U.S., over 89 percent of adult murderers had a criminal record as an adult.

A few days after the murder of Liczbinski, Governor Rendell told a news conference, attended by state elected officials and top law enforcement officials, "The time has come for politicians to decide. You have to decide whether you're on their side -- the men and women who wear blue -- or whether you're on the side of the gun lobby." Instead of saying "whether you're on the side of the gun lobby," Rendell should have said "whether you're on the side of the criminal and the courts, prosecutors, prisons and

parole boards that cut soft deals with criminals and release them to prey upon police officers and law-abiding citizens."

If there is one clear basic function of government, it's to protect citizens from criminals. When government failure becomes so apparent, as it is in the murder of a police officer, officials seek scapegoats and very often it's the National Rifle Association and others who seek to protect our Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms. We hear calls for stricter gun control laws when what is really needed is more control over criminals.

There are many third-party liability laws. I think they ought to be applied to members of parole boards who release criminals who turn around and commit violent crimes. As it stands now, people on parole boards who release criminals bear no cost of their decisions. I bet that if members of parole boards were held liable or forced to serve the balance of the sentence of a parolee who goes out and commits more crime, they would pay more attention to the welfare of the community rather than the welfare of a criminal. You say, "Williams, under those conditions, who'd serve on a parole board?" There's something to be said about that http://www.townhall.com/columnists/WalterEWilliams/2008/05/21/control_criminals_not_guns

08/05/21 Police union boss blasts 'double standard' on gun plan

One set of rules for aldermen, one set for rest of us, he says

Fraternal Order of Police President Mark Donahue today decried the "double standard" that prompted Mayor Daley to endorse the idea of temporarily re-opening gun registration in Chicago after a request from Ald. Richard Mell (33rd).

"We have retired police officers who have a right to carry concealed weapons across the country, and they're being barred from registering their weapons in Chicago. We've taken one of these cases to Circuit Court. Dick Mell has taken his case to the City Council," the union president said.

"Whether he knows it or not, the mayor, by this agreement [to endorse a temporary gun amnesty] is establishing a double standard. One for members of the City Council, the other for everybody else."

A former hunter, Mell is proposing a one-month amnesty after he forgot to re-register his arsenal of shotguns, rifles and pistols as required every year by the ordinance he helped to pass.

During the month-long window, gun owners who attempted to re-register their guns between May 1, 2007 and April 1, 2008 only to be rejected on grounds the registrations had lapsed would be allowed to re-register without penalty.

Daley responded by endorsing the idea without reservation--not as a favor to Mell, but to get a realistic handle on the number of guns in Chicago.

The mayor argued that Mell is not alone. A lot of gun owners find themselves in the same predicament. Many of them are hunters who bring their guns "back and forth" to summer homes in Wisconsin, Indiana and Michigan, the mayor said.

On Wednesday, Donahue questioned the mayor's motives for endorsing the change. If the goal is truly what Daley says it is, then the amnesty window should be permanently re-opened for existing gun owners, the union president said.

"If they're looking to find out how many guns are in the city, leave it open. Why set a window on it? Do it for everyone who has an existing gun," Donahue said.

<http://www.suntimes.com/news/politics/964373,CST-NWS-mell21web.article>

08/05/20 Nutter: New laws will stop illegal flow of guns

New city laws to control the number of guns sold in Philadelphia are meant to stop the illegal flow of guns to criminals and not meant to stop legal sales, Mayor Nutter emphasized in a morning news conference.

The conference was scheduled hours before city officials return to court this afternoon to argue over whether the city can independently pass legislation to limit gun sales here.

The mayor has already signed legislation backed by City Council. The National Rifle Association and other groups, including gun dealers, have filed a civil lawsuit to block the laws.

With Police Commissioner Charles H. Ramsey at his side along with gun expert Joseph Vince and city solicitor Shelley R. Smith, Nutter said there are three simple points behind the legislation he signed.

First, the legislation will not impact lawful purchases. Second, federal authorities recommend such legislation as a way to curb gun violence. Third, the gun dealers trying to stop the legislation are ones that engage in multiple sales to a single purchaser - and those guns often end up at crime scenes, Nutter said.

"These gun traffickers are not going to stop us from keeping the citizens of Philadelphia safe," Nutter said.

Ramsey noted that while homicides are down 24 percent this year, 80 percent of the murders are committed with guns. Additionally, he said, nearly 2,000 guns have been confiscated so far this year in the city.

"We've got to do something," Ramsey said. "And these laws go a long way for putting in place reasonable steps to protect the citizens of Philadelphia."

The mayor acknowledged that the city is fighting the NRA, a strong lobbying group that has successfully stopped legislation at the state and federal levels.

Nutter said he can't understand why the NRA would not support legislation that would stop criminals from obtaining weapons, why multiple purchases - sometimes numerous guns bought within five days - are needed or why the sale of assault rifles should be legal.

Enforcing the pending legislation, however, appears to be an uphill fight for the mayor.

A Philadelphia judge appears poised to grant the NRA's request to block enforcement; the fight likely will continue to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

Previous rulings by the high court established that the state regulates firearms, not the city.

Nutter, however, said that does not deter him and said the city's expert, Vince, formerly of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, will be in court this afternoon to testify that those gun shops trying to ban the legislation are responsible for large amounts of multiple sales and guns found at crime scenes.

"We are talking about illegal guns in the hands of criminals," Nutter said.

<http://www.philly.com/philly/news/breaking/19100459.html>

08/05/20 Oh, shoot! Ald. Richard Mell forgot to re-register his guns No problem -- he'll just write a new law.

Ald. Richard Mell (33rd) is a former hunter with an arsenal of weapons that reportedly features shotguns, rifles and pistols, including a Walther PPK of James Bond fame.

But there's a problem

Mell forgot to re-register the weapons as required every year by the ordinance that he helped to pass as one of the City Council's most senior members.

So, what does an alderman do when he finds himself in violation of the law? He writes a new law. Mell has quietly introduced an ordinance that would reopen gun registration in Chicago and create a one-month amnesty for himself and other gun owners in the same predicament.

During the monthlong window, gun owners who attempted to re-register their guns between May 1, 2007, and April 1, 2008, only to be rejected on grounds the registrations had lapsed would be allowed to re-register without penalty.

"It's not just for me. It's for other people with the same problem. It's giving people who legitimately registered their guns at one time only to let it slip by a chance to come back into compliance," Mell said. "Some people didn't realize that, every year, you have to re-register your guns."

As an alderman who helps write Chicago's gun laws, Mell acknowledged that he should have been in compliance with the re-registration requirement.

"I knew it was the law. I thought it was being done [by a staff member]. If you have a person you trust to do it and they don't do it, then it doesn't get done. I'm not gonna say it's embarrassing. I'm just gonna say I should have done it," the alderman said.

Mell said he first realized he was in violation of the re-registration requirement about a year ago. When he tried to re-register his guns belatedly, the Chicago Police Department's Gun Registration Section refused to bend the rules. Mell appealed that ruling to the city's Department of Administrative Hearings but decided to re-write the law instead. "When we looked at the law, we saw the possibility of winning [the appeal] wasn't gonna happen," he said.

<http://www.suntimes.com/news/politics/958879.CST-NWS-mell20.article>

08/05/21 Police union boss blasts `double standard` on gun plan - Chicago Sun-Times

Fraternal Order of Police President Mark Donahue today decried the "double standard" that prompted Mayor Daley to endorse the idea of temporarily re-opening gun registration in Chicago after a request from Ald. Richard Mell (33rd).

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"Whether he knows it or not, the mayor, by this agreement [to endorse a temporary gun amnesty] is establishing a double standard. One for members of the City Council, the other for everybody else."

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Daley responded by endorsing the idea without reservation-- not as a favor to Mell, but to get a realistic handle on the number of guns in Chicago.

The mayor argued that Mell is not alone. A lot of gun owners find themselves in the same predicament. Many of them are hunters who bring their guns "back and forth" to summer homes in Wisconsin, Indiana and Michigan, the mayor said.

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<http://www.suntimes.com/news/politics/964373.CST-NWS-mell21web.article>

08/05/20 City, NRA to face off on gun laws

Common Pleas Court judge will consider legal arguments from the city and the National Rifle Association today on whether five local gun-control laws passed last month should be enforced.

Judge Jane Cutler Greenspan, who last month issued a temporary restraining order to keep the city from enforcing the laws, is considering whether to make the order permanent.

The NRA, pointing to a state Supreme Court ruling from 1996, insists that only the state can regulate firearms.

The city concedes that the state regulates lawful firearm ownership, but says the local laws are meant to control the illegal possession of firearms by criminals.

"We have a responsibility to the citizens of this city to take whatever steps are lawful to try to address the gun violence in this city," City Solicitor Shelley Smith said after a hearing on the issue yesterday.

Greenspan ordered the city and the NRA to condense their positions into writing by this morning, in advance of an afternoon hearing.

The city wanted to offer testimony from 10 witnesses, including Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey and a retired ATF agent, along with 75 exhibits that included two semiautomatic assault rifles. The city planned to use that testimony to argue that there is "no common lawful purpose" for assault weapons.

But NRA attorney C. Scott Shields objected to such a lengthy proceeding.

"What we're trying to circumvent now is putting on a dog and pony show of having to listen to all the different reasons why the

city needs gun control," Shields said. "They should really be concerned about criminal control."

The local laws would limit handgun purchases to one a month, make it a crime to not report a lost or stolen gun within 48 hours, allow police to confiscate guns with a judge's approval from people considered a danger to themselves or others, prohibit gun possession by people subject to protection from abuse orders and ban semiautomatic weapons with clips that hold 10 or more rounds.

Susan L. Burke, an attorney hired by the city to fight the case, said that putting the arguments down on paper for the judge to consider preserves the city's right to contest those issues when the case is appealed to a higher court.

Ultimately, the city is hoping to force a reconsideration of the 1996 state Supreme Court ruling.

Greenspan seemed to have little interest in ruling against that precedent. She said at one point that it was "plain as day" that the Supreme Court had decided that the state and not the city has the power to regulate firearms.

"Your claim has to go to the state," Greenspan told city attorneys. "That's where you need to make your case."

The hearing drew a small crowd of demonstrators from X-Offenders for Community Empowerment, a group of men who previously served prison terms, some for crimes with guns. http://www.philly.com/dailynews/local/20080520_City_NRA_t_o_face_off_on_gun_laws.html

08/05/20 18-year-olds granted gun rights

South Carolina State Supreme Court rules the age for possession should be lowered

Youths ages 18 through 20 can possess handguns legally under a state Supreme Court ruling issued Monday.

The unanimous decision mirrors a new state law that took effect last month.

The five-member high court said the old law violated the state constitution, which grants full legal rights to everyone who is at least 18 — with the exception of alcohol purchases.

"By expressly allowing the regulation of the sale of alcoholic beverages to the 18-to-20-year-old age group and not stating any other situation in which the General Assembly may restrict the rights of this age group, the state constitution precludes the General Assembly from prohibiting this age group's possession of handguns," Justice James Moore wrote for the court.

The state Attorney General's Office, in court papers, supported the old law.

"Certainly if it is appropriate for the Legislature to stop a 19-year-old from having a Heineken, it is also appropriate under the same power to prohibit that same 19-year-old from having a Glock 9mm semi-automatic pistol," according to a legal brief submitted for the appeal.

Attorney General Henry McMaster said Monday the court's ruling "means that those in jail on that charge will be able to ask to be released." But he added he believes those cases are "far and few between."

McMaster said his office will "need to study the decision" before deciding whether to ask the court to reconsider its ruling.

State Rep. Mike Pitts, R-Laurens, who authored the new law allowing handgun possession by those who are least 18, said

Monday that South Carolina was the only southern state to have the higher age limit.

"I see it as a self-defense issue," he said.

He said if his daughter, when she was 19 or 20, was driving his car, which had a gun in the glove compartment, she could have been charged under the old law even though it would have been legal for him.

Although the new law lowers the age for legal possession, it doesn't trump federal law banning those younger than 21 from buying handguns, Pitts said.

Violation of the old state law was a felony punishable by up to five years in prison and a \$2,000 fine. The Attorney General's office in court papers said there were "valid policy concerns" supporting handgun limitations.

"Indeed, it is common knowledge that the combination of young people, handguns and gangs creates a particularly toxic mix," the legal brief said.

Rock Hill lawyer Leland Greeley, who represented the defendant in Monday's ruling, said the court's decision might be used to challenge another state law that bans youths under 21 from obtaining concealed weapons permits.

The justices in Monday's ruling upheld a lower court ruling that threw out a York County indictment charging Berry Scott Bolin with possession of a handgun by someone younger than 21.

Bolin was 19 when he was arrested in connection with the February 2006 shooting death of Bobby Royce Hovis III, 19. Besides the weapons charge, he also was indicted on a charge of murder, though he eventually was convicted of a lesser charge of voluntary manslaughter and sentenced to 30 years in prison. <http://www.thestate.com/local/story/410185.html>

08/05/20 Strip-club owner gets 3 years on gun, fraud, tax charges

Wissinoming strip-club owner, who pleaded with a federal judge not to lock him up so that he could continue to see his three daughters, was sentenced to three years in a federal slammer yesterday.

U.S. District Judge Cynthia M. Rufe ordered Kevin Rankin, 62, of Northeast Philadelphia - a former lawyer, high-school math teacher and pal of jailed ex-City Councilman Rick Mariano - to surrender to the Bureau of Prisons in 45 days.

Rufe also fined him \$10,000 and ordered him to personally make restitution to the IRS of \$109,193 and share in the restitution of an additional \$107,100 with two co-defendants.

Court papers said that Rankin is in the process of liquidating his interest in 12 residential properties for \$815,000 and his ownership in the strip club, Dangerous Curves, for \$1.8 million.

Dangerous Curves came under federal scrutiny in October 2005.

Federal agents raided the club looking for evidence linking Rankin and club co-owner Bishop Krabsz to Mariano, who was convicted of corruption charges in 2006 and is currently serving a 6 1/2-year prison sentence.

Agents found handguns in a desk in Rankin's office at Dangerous Curves and at his apartment at Pier 3, and at Krabsz's home in Cherry Hill.

Rankin spent time in jail in the 1980s for his involvement in a mob-connected drug ring and cannot legally possess firearms.

He was convicted by a jury in July of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, and he later pleaded guilty to a second gun charge as well as conspiracy to make false statements to a financial institution, fraud and tax charges.

Addressing Rufe, Rankin said that he took "full responsibility" for his criminal acts, adding, "I'm no gunslinger."

Several prominent trial lawyers - including George Bochetto and Carmen Nasuti - testified on behalf of Rankin's character yesterday, as did a dancer at Dangerous Curves.

She told the court that Rankin had never said or done anything "inappropriate" with her.

Rufe said she couldn't understand why Rankin was back in court for sentencing yet again.

"Your character references are stellar but you're loose as a goose when it comes to your business," the judge said. "You allow others to sway you or you do it willingly," she said, adding that others would not be deterred from similar conduct "if you don't pay a certain price."

Nevertheless, the judge said some variance from the guideline-range sentence of 57 to 71 months was warranted.

In addition to Rankin's suffering from chronic heart disease, Rufe pointed to the fact that co-defendant Krabsz - convicted of similar charges - was sentenced in August by U.S. District Judge Mary McLaughlin to three years in prison.

Judges are sensitive to unwarranted disparity in sentences for defendants convicted of similar illegal conduct.

Defense lawyer NiaLena Caravaso said that Rufe "gave a fair sentence and gave us a fair hearing."

Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Barrett said: "The judge heard a lot of evidence and decided there were ample reasons for giving [Rankin] a 36-month sentence." *

http://www.philly.com/philly/hp/news_update/19092064.html

08/05/19 City Gun Laws Taken To Court

The battle over Philadelphia's gun laws is going to court.

Attorneys for the National Rifle Administration will ask a judge on Monday to overturn the gun control laws that City Council passed April 10 and Mayor Michael Nutter quickly signed into law.

On April 17, Common Pleas Judge Jane Cutler Greenspan temporarily blocked the city from enforcing the new laws until she could hear a challenge from the NRA.

The NRA argues that state law prevents Pennsylvania municipalities from regulating guns, a view that even Philadelphia District Attorney Lynne Abraham shares.

Among other things, the five city ordinances passed April 10 ban the sale of assault weapons; require owners to report a lost or stolen gun within 24 hours; and limit firearms purchases to one a month.

<http://www.myfoxphilly.com/myfox/pages/Home/Detail?contentId=6571501&version=3&locale=EN-US&layoutCode=TSTY&pageId=1.1.1>

08/05/19 Appeals Court Shoots Down New York City Gun Law

The media have been telling us to watch the gun-control case now before the U.S. Supreme Court, where we await a decision about Americans' Second Amendment rights. But the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals just handed down an equally important gun decision that has additional implications against judicial supremacy.

The court, which convenes in New York City, shot down the longtime liberal dream of achieving gun control by suing gun manufacturers for crimes committed by firearms. In a remarkable decision, this federal appellate court dismissed *City of New York v. Beretta U.S.A. Corp.* and protected gun corporations against frivolous lawsuits in state and federal courts.

The lawsuit was brought by the City of New York in order to seek control over gun suppliers. At stake was not merely money but also whether liberals would obtain from judicial activists the gun control that the liberals could not get from legislatures.

This decision provides a road map for how Congress should withdraw jurisdiction from judicial supremacists in other fields, too. The decision is a sweeping affirmation of Congress' power to stop future and pending lawsuits in federal and state courts.

This ruling broke an alarming trend of judicial supremacy and stopped outrageous lawsuits that tried to impede the sale of guns because of illegal acts committed by New York City residents and others. Billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg was left empty-handed in his attempt to sue businesses concerning crimes committed by residents of his city.

The lawsuit cited the harm from gun sales while ignoring evidence that the benefits far outweigh the harm. The trial court sided with Bloomberg, but the appellate court said "no" and put an end to the nonsense.

Congress had legislated the basis for this decision by passing the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act in 2005. The PLCAA protects against a "qualified civil liability action," defined broadly to include almost any lawsuit brought against a gun manufacturer or seller based on "the criminal or unlawful misuse" of a firearm distributed in interstate commerce. On the day it was signed into law by President George W. Bush, gun manufacturers moved to dismiss this case, and the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has now enforced the law.

The appellate court rejected an argument that this law denied access to the courts. New York City can and does sue all the time, but Congress properly rejected the ridiculous notion that the city could sue businesses over a typically beneficial product that was later used illegally.

Should General Motors Corp. and Ford Motor Co. be held liable for crimes committed by drunk drivers, or baseball bat suppliers be sued for criminal beatings inflicted with their products? Of course not. It was an outrage that courts even entertained such actions against gun manufacturers and suppliers.

If Congress had not effectively withdrawn jurisdiction, gun manufacturers would be reluctant to produce guns and many might go out of business. This intimidation would deter the lawful sale of guns.

That's exactly what gun-control advocates have long wanted: legislation from the bench that they could not persuade real legislatures to pass. A majority of legislators, who are elected, see the absurdity of gun control and recognize the valuable self-defense function of guns.

The role of judges should be (as U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts repeated in his confirmation hearings) like that of baseball umpires: calling the balls and strikes, but not changing how many strikes constitute a strikeout. Judges should interpret ambiguous laws fairly but not legislate from the bench.

Gun control has become so unpopular that not even the Democratic presidential candidates dare brag about their views. Instead the anti-gun crowd hopes to get what it wants from supremacist judges.

Misuse of courts to obtain a result contrary to the will of the American people should not be allowed on other vital issues. Congress should also take away from judges issues such as the Pledge of Allegiance, the Ten Commandments, the Boy Scouts, and the definition of marriage.

Take another example: Federal courts should not entertain lawsuits by illegal immigrants against local ordinances that enforce U.S. immigration laws.

This refreshing gun decision by the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals signals the way for Congress to return the judiciary to its proper place in our constitutional separation of powers system. In the previous Congress, the House of Representatives did pass bills to curb court mischief about the Pledge of Allegiance and the definition of marriage, and now it's time for the U.S. Senate to step up to the plate and take action against judicial supremacists.

http://www.townhall.com/columnists/PhyllisSchlafly/2008/05/19/appeals_court_shoots_down_new_york_city_gun_law?page=full&comments=true

08/05/17 Lucky cop nabs suspect whose gun had jammed

Tension filled the air as Police Officer Dave Klayman moved quietly through the North Philly mom-and-pop shop with his gun drawn.

It was late Thursday evening, and Klayman had just followed a shooting suspect into the store, on the corner of Lee and Tioga streets.

When the veteran 25th District cop called out to the suspect, the young man ducked down behind one of the aisles and started to fumble with something, Klayman said.

Luck was on Klayman's side.

The suspect, Vincent Hollimon, 19, was clutching a TEC-9 semiautomatic handgun that had just jammed, police said.

The teen gave up when he was cornered by Klayman.

Hollimon was charged with attempted murder for allegedly shooting and critically wounding a 31-year-old man in the back on Ella Street near Westmoreland over a drug dispute at about 11 p.m. Thursday, police said.

The teen also will face charges that include aggravated assault, robbery and possessing a firearm with an altered serial number, police said.

"I didn't think about it until afterwards," Klayman said, "but if his gun had been functioning, there probably would have been a shoot-out."

Capt. Chris Werner, commander of the 25th District, which is headquartered on Whitaker Avenue near Luzerne Street, commended Klayman for thinking quickly on his feet.

Werner said Klayman spotted Hollimon a couple of blocks away from where the shooting occurred and decided to follow him when Hollimon abruptly darted into the corner store.

"That's just good, heads-up police work," Werner said, adding that Klayman also had collared a murder suspect a week ago.

Klayman said Hollimon yelled out "Yeah, right," when he ordered the teen to come over to him in the store.

"I couldn't see his hands, so I didn't know what he had on him," said Klayman, a former sergeant in the Marine Corps.

Hollimon was taken to Temple University Hospital, where he was positively identified by his victim, Werner said.

According to court records, Hollimon is due in court next month to face robbery, theft and assault charges dating back to an incident that occurred on Feb. 15.

http://www.philly.com/philly/hp/news_update/19038509.html

08/05/16 It's about politics, not gun rights

Just when we were optimistic that Boones Mill would see some peace and quiet after a bitter election, people carrying firearms and a shouting match highlighted the town council meeting Tuesday night.

A group called the Virginia Citizens Defense League sent about 40 members to the Boones Mill Town Council meeting in an apparent protest over a sign that is posted at town hall. The sign requests that no firearms be brought into the building. Arguments also erupted over the residency of Boones Mill Mayor Ben Flora.

Both the sign and residency question were issues during the campaign, and it seems likely the losers of the election will not let the issues die.

That's sad, not only for the people in Boones Mill, but for the county as well.

At one time, the sign prohibited firearms from being carried into town hall, but the change to a simple request seems appropriate. State law prohibits a town or city from banning guns in most public buildings, including a town hall, so residents do have a right to carry legal firearms into a public meeting.

The common sense question here is, "Why would anyone want to do so?"

Speakers from the Virginia Citizens Defense League, a grassroots organization based in Northern Virginia, said the sign was discriminatory and prejudicial against gun owners, thereby threatening their Second Amendment rights.

If anything, using such a show of force to try to prove a nebulous point is more of a threat to Second Amendment rights. Who wants to attend a town council meeting with people toting guns for no apparent reason? That's a good way to make residents question the need to give people that right in the first place.

We are firm supporters of gun rights, but we certainly don't see the point of carrying firearms to a town council meeting. The move by the Virginia Citizens Defense League was ill-advised, and nothing more than a knee-jerk reaction to political sour grapes. In other words, members of the league, who apparently came here from other areas in the state, may have been well-intentioned, but they ended up involved in a political squabble they may have known nothing about.

Council member Peggy Steele probably spoke for most residents when she said, "That (carrying a gun at the meeting) worries me, especially if it is someone who has a temper." <http://www.thefranklinnews.com/article.cfm?ID=10892>

08/05/15 Draconian gun laws may prevent your grandma from protecting herself

It's not often you watch a video where a frail, 98-pound grandmother is slammed into the wall by a burly police officer, handcuffed and dragged from her home — all because she refused to surrender her firearm and leave her home.

She was not a felon, drug dealer or other miscreant but was a homeowner in New Orleans immediately after Hurricane Katrina.

This somewhat brushed-over bit of history is reappearing in discussion on talk radio and other locations as we await the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court on the District of Columbia's wholesale ban on handgun possession. In following the arguments and questioning by the justices in that case, I've found there are some unsettling similarities and actions by local government in New Orleans that clearly demonstrate the overused lawyer's phrase of "a slippery slope."

Perhaps the first ever wholesale government seizure of firearms in the modern age took place as municipal authorities were in the process of evacuating survivors of Hurricane Katrina and forcing many from their homes. What began as a confiscation of weapons from empty residences flowed to a removal of firearms from evacuees headed toward shelters and became an order to disarm the populace in the name of public safety.

Many in New Orleans at the time were attempting to protect themselves from looters and criminals taking advantage of an overstretched police presence. Some felt the police were not doing enough to protect them and they may have had a point. In October of 2006, the city fired 51 police workers for abandoning their posts during the hurricane and its aftermath; more officers had resigned.

It is not hard to see why some of the citizens felt they needed personal protection. This leads us to our grandmother, Patricia Konie, who was being filmed by a television crew explaining her decision to try and remain in her home and holding a rather antique looking revolver by the cylinder. We then see a large police officer lunge into the frame, slam her against the wall and take her into custody.

Now, the lack of the officer's public-relations awareness is frightening enough. But instances of this sort prompted a lawsuit to be filed in federal court by the NRA and the Second Amendment Foundation, alleging that the mayor, the superintendent of police, the sheriff and various unknown deputies engaged in a pattern or practice to deny the citizens their constitutional rights under the Second Amendment and equal protection under the law.

This lawsuit resulted in a consent order and injunction from the court, ordering the defendants to stop confiscating lawfully possessed firearms and to return those that had been confiscated to the rightful owners. This incident prompted the state of Louisiana, as well as a number of other states, to pass laws preventing their state and local governments from across-the-board seizures of firearms from people otherwise entitled to possess them in times of emergency. In October 2006, President Bush signed the Disaster Recovery Personal Protection Act into law.

Poor planning and a lack of leadership often lead to desperate measures. The District of Columbia also has been in a tempest of crime and in 1976 enacted the nation's most repressive gun ownership ban, banning handgun ownership outright for everyone but law enforcement officers, and forcing the owners of long guns and shotguns to render them functionally useless for self-defense.

This measure was in place as Washington became the murder capital of the United States, which makes the connection between the regulation and its purpose extremely weak.

So now we wait for the first comprehensive ruling on the meaning of the Second Amendment since a 1939 case that sidestepped the personal-rights issue altogether. When we get that, maybe we'll know a little more clearly if elderly women have a right to possess firearms to protect themselves.

http://www.gjsentinel.com/biz/content/news/opinion/stories/2008/05/15/051608_Wagner_column.html

Founding Fathers Intent:

"A general dissolution of principles and manners will more surely overthrow the liberties of America than the whole force of the common enemy. While the people are virtuous they cannot be subdued; but when once they lose their virtue then will be ready to surrender their liberties to the first external or internal invader." -- *Samuel Adams (letter to James Warren, 12 February 1779)*