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# Allegheny County Sportsmen's League Legislative Committee Report

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

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## ACSL Legislative Committee Chairman Writes Shotgun News Article

Just before his death, Neal Knox requested that the ACSL Legislative Committee Chairman, Mike Slavonic, write the "Neal Knox Report" column in Shotgun News. He asked that Mike Slavonic write the column on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court Decision, knowing he could not take the time to gather all of the facts in the decision himself.

The column was edited, and sent to the publisher, by Neal just before he went into the hospital where he learned from the doctors that he only had days to live.

His bedside request was that his daughter call Mike, because he forgot to copy Mike with the edited version of the column he sent to the publisher that afternoon.

The column was published in February 14, 2005 edition of Shotgun News, which appeared on the news stands a week after Neal's death. Neal died on January 17, 2005 after a long battle with colon cancer.

Neal Knox's contribution to the pro-gun movement is unmatched in modern history. We lost, what Gun Week referred to as a real champion of the firearm civil rights movement.

Neal sent his friends and supports the following message just before he died.

## Neal Knox's Farewell Message

*Dear Friends,*

I've always made it a point to deliver the news to you straight—good or bad. Now I'm afraid I have some unpleasant news. As you're aware, I have been fighting colon cancer for the past year. The doctors tell me that my fight is almost over.

I believe in miracles. I believe in God's healing power and eternal life through Jesus Christ. I know it will take nothing short of a miracle for me to win this battle.

Should that miracle be granted, I will rejoice; but I rejoice nonetheless, for I've been blessed with a wonderful life, a great family, work that I love, and many wonderful friends. Most of all, I thank God for my long-suffering wife Jay Janen who not only put up with me, but has actively supported my efforts for the Second Amendment for nearly forty-nine years.

It's been a great run!

I had always assumed that long life was my birthright. My father passed away just this past fall at the age of ninety-two.

I counted on the same sort of life-span and was planning accordingly. We've barely settled into that house in the country that I've been promising Jay for so long. I started rebuilding her classic Mustang convertible and have it in pieces in the basement

garage. I've laid out a 100-yard range next to the house, and was looking forward to having my dear friend Ken Oehler help me set up a ballistics lab in the basement.

Time for those projects was budgeted into the next generation of the Firearms Coalition. The plan was to have sons, Chris and Jeff, take more prominent roles in the fight, freeing me up to do other things like shooting and writing books. Jeff moved out here for that purpose over a year ago but my illness sidetracked those plans.

I have long wanted to evolve the Firearms Coalition into a resource for grassroots activists and organizations. The goals of the Coalition would be to provide activists with the resources, training, and technology they need to be more effective in the fight.

Now, I hope you will help Jay and the boys as it looks like they will be taking on this important task without me.

There will be more details in the weeks and months to come, including a new book that Chris, Jeff and I have been collaborating on. I regret that I am unlikely to see it in print, but I am confident in their ability to see it through.

I am thankful for you and the many other friends that have blessed my life, making me a truly wealthy man. There have been disagreements, even fights, but the goal of freedom has been a unifying force.

I ask your prayers, both for me and for my family, especially for Jay who never expected to see me go first.

I urge you to continue the fight. Continue your support of the ongoing efforts of the Firearms Coalition and keep the grassroots growing.

Thank you for keeping me in the fight for all these years.

As always: Yours for the Second Amendment,

*Neal*

## Anti-gun Legislation introduced in Pennsylvania General Assembly As of February

As of this date 5 bills have been introduced in the Pennsylvania General Assembly regarding firearms ownership and use, and none are pro-gun.

### House Bill 41.

This bill was introduced by THOMAS, JOSEPHS, YOUNGBLOOD, BISHOP, CORRIGAN, MELIO, JAMES, KIRKLAND, WATERS, MYERS, PRESTON, DALEY, WASHINGTON AND CALTAGIRONE, on JANUARY 25, 2005.

The bill will raise the fee for a license to carry from the current \$19 dollars to \$25. Five dollars of the fee collected shall be deposited into the Firearm Safety Education Fund, which will be established as a separate fund in the State Treasury. The moneys of the fund shall be distributed by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency to entities that provide firearm safety education to minors in this Commonwealth.

Also under the legislation, any person, licensed dealer, licensed manufacturer or licensed importer who knowingly or intentionally sells, delivers or transfers a firearm in violation of this section to a person who uses the firearm to cause death or serious bodily injury to another person, and who knew that the firearm would be so used shall, in addition to any other penalty provided by law, be ordered to pay restitution to the victim or estate of the victim equal to the medical and other expenses incurred by the victim as a result of the use of the firearm.

### House Bill 77

FRANKEL, BEBKO-JONES, BLACKWELL, CALTAGIRONE, CORRIGAN, COSTA, CURRY, D. EVANS, JAMES, PISTELLA, ROONEY, THOMAS, TIGUE, WASHINGTON, WHEATLEY AND YOUNGBLOOD, JANUARY 25, 2005

This bill will prohibit any person who has been adjudicated as an incompetent **or who has voluntarily enrolled in or who has been voluntarily** or involuntarily committed to a mental institution for inpatient care and treatment under Article II or section 302, 303 or 304 of the provisions of the act of July 9, 1976 (P.L.817, No.143), known as the Mental Health Procedures Act.

**House Bill 78**

FRANKEL, CORRIGAN, CURRY, JAMES, MELIO, PISTELLA, ROONEY, THOMAS, WASHINGTON, WHEATLEY AND YOUNGBLOOD, JANUARY 25, 2005

This bill would attempt to prohibit straw purchases by adding to the law that, "In the absence of any report by the purchaser to law enforcement authorities that the firearm has been stolen and in the absence of any record of lawful sale of the firearm, possession of a firearm, on or after the date of its purchase, by a person other than the purchaser of the firearm gives rise to a rebuttable presumption that the purchaser, at the time of purchase, knew or intended that the firearm would thereafter be transferred to another person.

**House Bill 161**

FRANKEL, BELFANTI, CALTAGIRONE, CAWLEY, CORRIGAN, CRUZ, DeLUCA, FABRIZIO, GEORGE, GRUCELA, JAMES, KOTIK, PETRONE, SHANER, THOMAS, TIGUE, WALKO AND YOUNGBLOOD, JANUARY 31, 2005

The bill defines the act of Home Invasion as

- (a) Elements.--An individual commits the offense of home invasion if all of the following apply:
- (1) The individual enters the dwelling place of another with the intent to commit an offense in the dwelling place.
  - (2) The dwelling place is occupied.
  - (3) The individual, with knowledge or reason to know that the dwelling place is occupied, remains in the dwelling place.

And, provides for a defense against prosecution.

(b) Defense.--It is a defense to prosecution for home invasion if the actor, upon realizing that the dwelling place is

- 1 occupied, does one of the following:
  - (1) Immediately leaves the dwelling place.
  - (2) Immediately surrenders to an individual occupying the dwelling place.
- (c) Grading.--Home invasion is a felony of the first degree.
- (d) Definitions.--As used in this section, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings given to them in this subsection:

**House Bill 170**

GODSHALL, PHILLIPS, BUNT, CAPPELLI, CLYMER,

CRAHALLA, CREIGHTON, FAIRCHILD, GERGELY, KILLION, SCAVELLO, THOMAS AND YOUNGBLOOD, FEBRUARY 1, 2005

- (a) General rule.--Whenever any firearm is required to be forfeited under this chapter, 18 Pa.C.S. § 6110.1(d) (relating to possession of firearm by minor) or any other law, the court shall order the appropriate agency to do one of the following:
  - (b) (1) If the firearm is an antique firearm, sell the firearm and distribute the proceeds as required by this chapter. (2) If the firearm is an automatic, military-style assault weapon, destroy or authorize the firearm to be retained by the agency and the prosecuting authority for official use. (3) If the firearm is not subject to either paragraph (1) or (2), then one of the following:
    - (i) Relinquish ownership of the firearm to the Drug Enforcement Administration.
    - (ii) Retain the firearm for official use by the agency and the prosecuting authority.
    - (iii) Sell the firearm to a federally licensed firearms dealer, if the court determines that the firearm is not harmful to the public, and distribute the proceeds as required by this chapter.
- (b) County policy to control.--Notwithstanding subsection (a), the court may not order the sale of a forfeited firearm if the county commissioners have adopted a written policy disapproving the sale of forfeited firearms.

**National News****State Police Call for Shutting Down Maryland's Ballistic "Fingerprinting" System**

The Maryland State Police Forensic Sciences Division has called for scrapping the state's ballistic imaging program, the Maryland Integrated Ballistics Identification System (MD-IBIS), stating it has found the system to be an ineffective tool for law enforcement.

The program has cost the taxpayers of Maryland more than \$2.5 million, but has produced no results. "There have been no crime investigations that have been enhanced or expedited through the use of MD-IBIS," the report says. "The program simply has not met the expectations and does not aid in the Mission statement of the Department of State Police."

"This report proves what we have been saying all along," commented NRA-ILA Executive Director, Chris W. Cox. "Ballistic fingerprinting is not a useful law-enforcement tool and is simply another attempt by those who would take away our Second Amendment rights to interfere with the ownership of firearms by law-abiding people."

## **Guns, Gun Ownership, & RTC at All-Time Highs, Less "Gun Control," and Violent Crime at 27-Year Low**

**Guns.** The number of privately owned guns in the U.S. is at an all-time high. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATFE) estimates that there were about 215 million guns in 1999,<sup>1</sup> when the number of new guns was averaging about 4.5 million (about 2%) annually.<sup>2</sup> A report for the National Academy of Sciences put the 1999 figure at 258 million.<sup>3</sup> According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, there were 30.7 million approved (new and used) NICS firearm transactions between 2000-2003.<sup>4</sup>

**Gun Owners.** The number of gun owners is also at an all-time high. The U.S. population is at an all-time high (about 294 million), and rises about 1% annually.<sup>5</sup> Numerous surveys over the last 40+ years have indicated that just under half of all households have at least one gun owner.<sup>6</sup> Some surveys since the late 1990s have indicated a smaller incidence of gun ownership,<sup>7</sup> probably because of some respondents' concerns about "gun control," due perhaps to the policies of the Clinton Administration.

**Right-to-Carry.** The number of RTC states is at an all-time high, up from 10 in 1987 to 38 today.<sup>8</sup> In 2003, states with RTC laws, compared to other states, had lower violent crime rates on average. Total violent crime was lower by 27%, murder by 32%, robbery by 45%, and aggravated assault by 20%.<sup>9</sup>

## **Gonzales Supports Gun Ban**

### ASSOCIATED PRESS

Attorney General nominee Alberto Gonzales told the Senate yesterday that he supports extending the expired federal assault weapons ban.

Mr. Gonzales also said he wants Congress to get rid of a requirement that would eliminate part of the USA Patriot Act this year, despite complaints that it is too intrusive.

Mr. Gonzales pointed out that his brother, Tony, is a SWAT officer in Houston.

"I worry about his safety and the types of weapons he will confront on the street," he said. "The

president has made it clear that he stands ready to sign a reauthorization of the federal assault weapons ban if it is sent to him by Congress. I, of course, support the president on this issue."

## **Michael Moore's Bodyguard Arrested On Gun Charge**

From Fox News January 20, 2005

**NEW YORK —** Filmmaker Michael Moore's bodyguard was arrested for carrying an unlicensed weapon in New York's JFK airport Wednesday night.

Police took Patrick Burke, who says Moore employs him, into custody after he declared he was carrying a firearm at a ticket counter. Burke is licensed to carry a firearm in Florida and California, but not in New York. Burke was taken to Queens central booking and could potentially be charged with a felony for the incident.

Moore's 2003 Oscar-winning film "Bowling for Columbine" criticizes what Moore calls America's "culture of fear" and its obsession with guns.

## **Rise In British Violent Crime**

- News Telegraph

### **Rise in violent crime but burglaries and car theft down**

(Filed: 25/01/2005)

The total number of crimes has fallen but violent crime and gun control has risen, new recorded crime figures released today show.

The total number of offences dropped 6 per cent for the three months between June and September, to just under 1.4 million.

During the same period house burglaries fell by 23 per cent, vehicle crime by 17 per cent and the murder rate dropped for the first time since 1996.

Ministers said the risk of being a crime victim was at its lowest for over 20 years.

But violent crime increased by 6 per cent with more than 100,000 incidents reported each month, Home Office figures reveal.

### **Crimes recorded by police in England and Wales, June to Sept 2004:**

- Violent offences up 6 per cent, to over 306,000
- House burglaries down by 23 per cent
- Vehicle crime down by 17 per cent
- Total crime down to under 1.4 million

- Sexual offences rose 22 per cent to 17,000, but officials said this was due to changes in the way offences were counted

### **2003 Crime and Justice Survey:**

- One in four boys aged 14 to 17 were classed as serious or prolific offenders
- Prolific offenders were defined as those who had committed six or more offences in the past year
- Serious was defined as carrying out a crime such as burglary, theft, assault or selling Class A drugs
- The survey also found that 13 per cent of girls aged 14 to 17, more than one in 10, fell into the category of being either serious or prolific offenders
- Of the estimated 3.8 million active offenders, it is believed 26 per cent, or just under one million, account for 82 per cent of all offences
- Mr Clarke admitted that a "significant number" of young people were involved in low-level crime - the majority of which is non-payment of bus or tube fares
- 3.8 million people aged between 10 and 65 had committed at least one offence in the previous year
- 2.1 million had committed a violent offence, 2.1 million had committed a property offence and 400,000 a drug-selling offence

### **Proposed S.F. Gun Ban Will Face Stiff Opposition**

- *Contra Costa Times*

Outlawing handguns will only eliminate an "occupational hazard" for criminals and make violent crime more rampant, said Sam Paredes, executive director of the Gun Owners of California. The Sacramento-based group, along with the NRA and other gun organizations, is planning to ask election officials to keep the initiative off the ballot and have vowed to sue if necessary. They claim the San Francisco proposal would circumvent the U.S. Constitution as well as state laws.

### **International Disarmament: Human "Rights" Coalition Pleads Case To United Nations**

The international gun prohibitionists have their sights set on you.

A coalition of human "rights" groups is urging the United Nations (UN) to begin drawing up plans for a "legally binding," worldwide "marking and tracing" system that they foresee as a means to track firearms from "factory" to "user" anywhere in the world (including the United States).

The coalition includes the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) and its vehemently anti-gun Director Rebecca Peters (who, in October 2004, debated NRA Executive Vice President Wayne LaPierre in the "Great Gun

Debate"), in addition to Amnesty International and Oxfam International.

Despite the fact that numerous iterations of this flawed concept have already proven ineffective and unworkable, the gun-ban groups are nonetheless pushing the proposal, which, in the end, amounts to nothing more than a dressed up global registration scheme. It is also, they hope, a means by which they can foist their anti-gun agenda on other countries worldwide.

But, of course, it's not hard to see through the coalition's predictable posturing and alarmist rhetoric. Behind the humanitarian platitudes exists a clear goal--a complete ban on private handgun possession, especially here in the United States. Ms. Peters freely admitted as much during her debate in London with Wayne LaPierre. The truth is that she and her cohorts are determined to destroy our Second Amendment rights. Rest assured, NRA-ILA remains unalterably opposed to their crusade.

NRA members can obtain a DVD or VHS copy of the debate between Ms. Peters and Wayne LaPierre by calling the NRA-ILA Grassroots Division at (800) 392-8683.

### **NRA-ILA Website Features New "Reckless Lawsuits" Feature**

One of NRA-ILA's top legislative priorities in Congress this year will once again be the passage of a "clean" federal law to block reckless lawsuits against the firearm industry. The "Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act" passed in the House in 2003, and had majority support in the U.S. Senate (and is supported by President Bush), but was torpedoed last year by anti-gun zealots, including former Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.), who helped his fellow anti-gun Senators attach a number of anti-gun amendments to the underlying measure.

We can't over-emphasize the need to take action in support of this critically important measure, and continue to ask you to please contact your U.S. Senators in support of legislation to halt these reckless lawsuits, and defeat any "poison pill" anti-gun amendments.

When formulating your plan of action, timely and accurate information is indispensable. To ensure that you have fast and easy access to the most up-to-date and useful information possible, NRA-ILA recently added a new feature to the home page of our website--[www.NRAILA.org](http://www.NRAILA.org)--titled: "Stop Reckless Lawsuits Against the Firearm Industry."

The new function will allow you to easily send an e-mail or letter to your U.S. Representative and U.S. Senators. To access the link, please go to the "Stop Reckless Lawsuits Against the Firearm Industry" heading at [www.NRAILA.org](http://www.NRAILA.org) and click the "[Take Action](#)" button.

Please be sure to visit this site often for the latest information and action items on this critically important issue, and please forward this link to your family, friends and fellow firearm owners.