



The United States Conference of Mayors

1620 Eye Street, N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20006
Phone (202) 293-7330 • Fax (202) 293-2352
E-mail: info@usmayors.org URL: usmayors.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, July 20, 2009

Contact: Elena Temple
202-861-6719/etemple@usmayors.org
Carlos Vogel
202-257-9797cvogel@usmayors.org

THE NATION'S MAYORS OPPOSE THUNE AMENDMENT, ACTIONS TO WEAKEN GUN SAFETY LAWS

Statement from Seattle (WA) Mayor Greg Nickels U.S. Conference of Mayors President

Washington, D.C. – “For more than four decades mayors have called for, and have worked hard to achieve, reasonable gun safety legislation which would keep guns out of the hands of criminals. In the 15 years since the initial passage of the Brady Law and the now-expired assault weapons ban, however, passage of additional common-sense legislation has been an elusive goal.

“But this year, mayors’ efforts to provide for the safety of their residents are actually losing ground in the face of an all-out, across-the-board assault on gun safety on Capitol Hill. Currently, the gun lobby is not just opposing common sense laws, it is pushing members of Congress to offer amendments to legislation that will make it easier for criminals and others who shouldn’t have access to guns to acquire them and use them:

- Today an amendment will likely be offered to the Senate defense authorization bill which would override state laws by mandating that states allow the carrying of loaded, concealed weapons by anyone permitted to carry concealed weapons in another state, even if that person is barred from possessing guns under the law of the state in which they wish to carry.
- Earlier this year, credit card legislation enacted by Congress included a provision which allows loaded weapons, including AK-47s, to be carried in national parks and monuments.
- The DC Voting Rights Act pending in Congress includes a provision in the Senate version that would gut the new gun laws passed by the District of Columbia, forcing them to go far beyond the Supreme Court’s ruling in the *Heller* case.
- The so-called Veterans 2nd Amendment Protection Act would allow mentally ill persons to possess firearms even if the Veterans Affairs Department has determined that they are mentally incapacitated, mentally incompetent, or experiencing an extended loss of consciousness.
- An amendment to legislation intended to expand access to Section 8 subsidized housing would bar public housing authorities from restricting gun ownership among public housing residents, a practice that has been in place in some areas for a decade or more and has helped to make these projects safer places in which to live.

“The American people need to be aware that public safety is being compromised by gun lobby amendments to disparate, unrelated legislation now moving through Congress. They need to be reminded of what’s at stake when more guns are on our streets: that every day in the United States there are approximately 84 deaths involving firearms, that 34 of these are homicides, and that well over half of these homicides – 56 percent – involve people age 29 and younger.

“Today, Congress is moving in the wrong direction. Instead of weakening the few protections against illegal guns currently on the books, our lawmakers should be moving toward reasonable changes in laws and regulations that would help keep guns out of the hands of criminals and give law enforcement the tools they need to fight crime.

“Today, the American people should be asking their members of Congress: When did law enforcement and public safety in this country take a back seat to the gun lobby – and why are you going along?”

The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,139 such cities in the country today, each represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the Mayor.