



NATIONAL SHOOTING SPORTS FOUNDATION, INC.

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DIRECTOR,
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August 23, 2012

Chairman William Horne
Advisory Commission on the Administration of Justice
Legislative Building
Room 3137
401 South Carson Street
Carson City, Nevada

Re: Testimony Concerning "Assault Weapons" Laws

Dear Chairman Horne and Members of the Advisory Commission:

The National Shooting Sports Foundation ("NSSF") is the trade association for America's firearms, ammunition, hunting and recreational shooting sports industry. Its mission is to promote, protect and preserve hunting and the shooting sports. NSSF has a membership of more than 7,000 manufacturers, distributors, firearms retailers, shooting ranges, and sportsmen's organizations. Our manufacturer members make the firearms used by law-abiding Nevada sportsmen, the U.S. military and law enforcement agencies throughout the state. This letter will hopefully provide useful facts on the ineffectiveness of "assault weapon ban laws across the country and how there is no benefit to public safety.

One only needs to look as far back as the 1994 federal "Assault Weapons" Ban to find legislation which did little to increase public safety. This gun control strategy soon proved to be a failure for the entire country. A comprehensive study by the Centers for Disease Control looked at the full panoply of gun control measures, included in the legislation, and concluded that none could be proven to reduce crime. Another study, commissioned by Congress, found that bans were not effective since "the banned weapons and magazines were never used in more than a modest fraction of all gun murders." These studies only demonstrate a ban that did not work or increase public safety. Pursuing "assault weapon" laws will only make Nevada gun laws that much more complicated for its law-abiding citizens and retailers to understand; simply look to your California neighbors for extremely complicated laws.

The problem, of course, with such laws is that criminals routinely ignore them (after all, they are criminals). Law-abiding citizens who have every right to purchase and own firearms are the ones who are suffering by eliminating aspects of their activities with this type of law. Many law enforcement individuals are in agreement when questioned on the necessity of more gun control laws. Their sentiments focus on the fact that we currently have enough laws and that these laws just need to be strictly enforced.

Earlier this month, California sought to pass legislation (SB 249) that would have completely banned the most popular firearm sold in recent years by making a "bullet button" illegal, thus classifying it as an "assault weapon." The bullet button was a regulation put in place by the California Attorney General's office back in 2000. While it has been described as a "loophole" by many, the creation of the bullet button was simply the industry trying to comply with the State of California's law and regulations. Fortunately for law-abiding citizens in California, the bill was defeated by the strength of the grassroots and the sheer volume of the firearms that are already in circulation.

As crime rates continue to decrease and firearms ownership increases it seems inconceivable to believe that "assault weapons" laws will do anything to increase public safety. The modern sporting rifles (MSR) that would be banned by possible legislation are sought after by military veterans, the educated public and law enforcement officers, in fact, nearly half (44%) of all MSR owners are current or former military/law enforcement. Of those civilian purchasers, the majority are 35+ years old, married, and have at least some college education with over 52% having household income of \$75,000+.

Over the past five years MSR's have seen a dramatic sales increase throughout the entire country, and during this time there has been no measurable increase in their usage during crimes. In fact, nearly every MSR purchaser (nearly 99%) owned some type of firearm prior to their first purchase. The top reasons why these consumers own a MSR are; recreational target shooting, home defense, collecting and hunting.

The firearms industry has contributed over \$200 million in economic activity to Nevada in 2011, employs more than 1,000 people in the state and generates an additional 900 jobs in supplier industries. In these difficult economic times, the firearms industry is still one of the few industries that has grown its profits while also contributing increased tax revenues to the state (to the tune of \$16 million). The firearms business is a highly regulated entity on both the state and federal level. It is unfortunate that precious time could be wasted on legislation which will do nothing to increase public safety and will only burden law-abiding businesses and gun owners.

Nevada, just like many other states, is facing very difficult budget times. Law enforcement organizations are feeling the pressure and would much rather focus their attention on proven crime fighting efforts as opposed to whether a law-abiding citizen possess a modern sporting rifle. Will additional personnel be required for the enforcement and confiscation of the illegal firearms if that is the direction that Nevada goes? How much will it cost the state to reimburse firearms owners for their now illegal possessions? There are hundreds of thousands of these firearms in existence in the state of Nevada. The average cost of one of these rifles is \$1,083. This means that the state will waste taxpayer dollars to pay for the firearms.

We believe this type of proposed legislation will accomplish nothing. It will only impact legitimate citizens reducing their legal activities, promote a loss of revenue and jobs to the state, require more law enforcement, and further confuse the firearms owning public who are already confused by the conflicting gun laws that currently exist which appear to affect only them. We suggest correction of current laws rather than implementing new "feel good" laws based upon irrational action and single events.

Crime control legislation should be based upon solid facts, not emotions, cosmetics or appearance. Semi-automatic firearms are now the most popular type of firearm in America and are used for a wide variety of legitimate sporting purposes, including hunting, small game control, target shooting and personal defense.

The National Shooting Sports Foundation would surely oppose moving forward with any "assault weapons" proposals because they will only serve to increase the regulatory burden on law-abiding licensed firearms owners and retailers without benefiting public safety.

Sincerely,



Jake McGuigan
Director, Government Relations/State Affairs