



# GUN NEWS CLIPS

Published by the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms

Liberty Park

12500 NE 10<sup>th</sup> Place

Bellevue, WA 98005

(425) 454-4911

(425) 451-3959 (fax)

[www.ccrkba.org](http://www.ccrkba.org)

Edited by Drew Petty, Projects Director email: [DrewP@liberty.seanet.com](mailto:DrewP@liberty.seanet.com)

AUGUST, 1999

## Pro-gun Republicans ready for fight

THE DENVER POST

By Charles Davant

States News Service

WASHINGTON Democrats Van to turn up the beat on House Republicans to try to force passage of a gun-control measure the Senate approved after the massacre at Columbine High School. But some pro-gun Republicans - including those from Colorado - say they will fight new gun laws.

Democrats hope the House will repeat what happened last month in the Senate when moderate Republicans defected and supported one Democratic gun-control proposal and some Republican members reversed their votes and supported another proposal.

Republicans hope public pressure for new gun laws will wane as the memory of the fatal shootings at Columbine recedes.

"They think that with Columbine moving farther in the past and with school ending, the American people will be exerting less pressure on Congress," said Rep. Diana DeGette, a Denver Democrat. "We want to make the Republicans consider and pass

three simple gun-control measures that were passed by the Senate."

To minimize the potential for disarray, House GOP leaders have decided to support the Senate plan, which would ban high-capacity ammunition magazines, require background checks for all buyers at gun shows and mandate the sale of trigger locks. But some Colorado Republicans, who are among the staunchest advocates of gun rights in Congress, plan to stray from the party line.

Rep. Bob Schaffer, who represents the Eastern Plains, and Rep. Joel Hefley of Colorado Springs, remain opposed to new gun laws in any form. Rep. Scott McInnis, whose district includes the Western Slope, could not be reached for comment but in the past has been a strident critic of gun control.

Rep. Tom Tancredo of Littleton has not decided whether he will vote for the Senate measure.

Schaffer and Hefley insist they will not succumb to pressure for new gun laws, which they see as an attempt to infringe on the constitutional right to keep and bear arms and punish law-abiding gun-owners. Instead, they and

other conservatives want to shift the debate to Hollywood's role in promoting violence.

But Tancredo, whose district includes Columbine High School, is not sure how he will vote on the gun control package the leadership sends to the full House for a vote next week, said spokesman Scott Gast.

"He wants to wait and see what (the gun control bill) looks like when it hits the floor," Gast said. "Some of the things the president proposed and the Senate did are relatively reasonable. He's willing to look at everything to see if it will make schools safer."

If Tancredo votes for the gun-control provisions, it would represent a departure from his past stance against new gun laws. The congressman received \$9,900 from the National Rifle Association in the last election and another \$1,000 in March. He said last month he was "skeptical" about the Senate plan.

But a switch would merely indicate another Republican has come to terms with new political realities after Columbine, -Said Rep. Mark Udall, D-Boulder, a gun-control advocate.

*DENVER POST, DENVER, CO JUNE 9, 1999*

*Gun News Clips* is a free publication of the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms. Its purpose is to inform, educate and entertain. Feel free to make copies and pass them out, and to subscribe simply call or email us.

# Gun Control Shot Down

Negotiations on the gun control issue between the House and the Senate are expected this summer.

BY David **Espo**  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON - Gun control legislation fell in a House crossfire on Friday, leaving the fate of the issue uncertain in Congress two months after a horrifying outbreak of violence at a Colorado high school.

The 280-147 rejection came as many Democrats rebelled against National Rifle Association-backed provisions in the bill to loosen some existing gun controls while dozens of conservative Republicans objected to the imposition of new ones.

"The American people will not stand for this," President Clinton said in a statement issued in Europe. "Our nation is waiting for Washington to pass a real law that keeps guns away from children and out of the hands of criminals."

The Senate had passed a gun control bill earlier, and despite the defeat of the House bill, negotiations between the two houses are expected this summer on the issue.

In the aftermath of the vote, the leaders of the two parties searched for political gains in the bill's ruins.

"Let there be no mistake," said Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill. in a written statement. "The vast majority of the Democrat caucus walked away when they had the chance to walk forward for the good of the country."

Democratic Whip David Bonior of Michigan countered bluntly: "The main obstacle here, has been primarily the Republican leadership."

Beyond the political squabbling, though, the vote left an uncertain road map for lawmakers looking ahead to House-Senate compromise talks.

"It's very difficult to handicap," said Rep. Bob Barr, a Georgia Republican who opposes gun control legislation. "But I think something will come out of the negotiations," he added.

House Democratic Leader Dick Gephardt of Missouri said that given public opinion on the issue, "I don't think you can forecast the outcome. Public opinion strongly supports increased gun control measures.

The Senate-passed measure would extend required background checks to all sales at gun shows, including those conducted by non-licensed firearms dealers. In addition, it would require dealers to provide safety devices with all handguns, ban the importation of certain high-capacity firearms clips and impose a lifetime prohibition of gun ownership on any juvenile convicted of a serious felony.

The defeated House bill included the safety-device, provision. And while it would have required non-licensed dealers to conduct background checks on their customers at gun shows, it would have reduced the amount of time allowed for the

check from three business days to 24 hours in all cases. In addition, it would have defined gun shows in a way to exclude some events that are now covered.

The issue rocketed to the top of the political agenda in the wake of the April shootings at Columbine High School in Colorado, in which two students killed 12 fellow pupils and a teacher before ending their own lives.

Republicans, in particular, said the answer to youth violence lay in measures other than gun control, and both houses approved bills in recent weeks to toughen enforcement of juvenile crime. The House passed bill also permits states to allow the posting of the Ten Commandments in schools and state owned or -administered facilities. That provision is, not part of the Senate bill, and it, too, will have to be resolved in compromise -talks.

But much of the focus of the congressional debate - and a great deal of the political maneuvering - was directed at the politically volatile gun issue.

Charlton Heston, the actor who is president of the NRA, telephoned at least one lawmaker on Thursday urging support for the gun show provision.

The NRA, which had been neutral on the final vote, dispatched a letter to lawmakers encouraging a vote for passage.

*TULSA WORLD, TULSA, OK JUNE 19, 1999*

## Clinton Says GOP Blocking Gun Control

Washington (AP) - President Clinton rejected a suggestion Friday that he fumbled a golden opportunity to stand tough for gun control.

The sweeping restrictions he would like to see - including a mandate that people "register guns like they register cars" - will take years to enact he said, because he is hamstrung by a Republican Congress "out of touch with the American people."

The president and his wife; Hillary, aimed their anti-youth-violence campaign family at breakfast tables nationwide Friday, appearing on ABC's "Good Morning America" with 40 teen-agers - some from schools made infamous by shootings last year - for a live brainstorming session.

ABC's Charlie Gibson opened the broadcast from the White House with a separate interview with the president. Gibson quoted an unnamed Clinton ally as saying the president, after the Littleton, Colo. school massacre, "had a chance to roar and he meowed."

Clinton replied "Look, let's join the real world here. You want to have an honest conversation -let's have an honest

conversation. I am the first president who ever took on the NRA. I got my party Congress to stand with me on the Brady bill . . . Now wait a minute you talk about roaring and meowing - then I came forward with this legislation."

Clinton pounded his fist into his palm.

"For you to, say I shouldn't take what I can get and instead I should ask for things that I am absolutely positive will be defeated in, the Congress is quite wrong," he said.

The president narrowly won Senate passage last month of a bill requiring background checks for all transactions at gun shows and child-safety locks on all new handguns, then lost a fight to have the House follow suit before its Memorial Day recess.

The administration believes it has an agreement with House Republicans for two measures beyond what the Senate did: background checks for explosives sales and increasing from 18 to 21 the age for owning handguns and assault weapons.

But Clinton has - as a matter of political practicality, he said - deferred until later the battle for

more controversial gun controls, such as a mandatory three-day waiting period for all handgun purchases and limiting gun purchases to one a month.

Clinton said Friday that the House Republican leadership delayed a gun vote until after the holiday recess in order to give the National Rifle Association time to lobby and water down the legislation.

"I made it clear I want to do this in sequence. I think this is going to take years. The Congress is out of touch with the American people."

After the interview, the president and Mrs. Clinton sat, down with students from Littleton, Springfield, Ore., West Paducah, Ky., Conyers, Ga., and other areas for a discussion of youth violence.

Hillary Clinton, with apologies for pulling "the nose mother routine," beseeched kids to ask questions and demand safe surroundings. "If you guys are going to a party, make sure there are no guns around," she said.

The first lady also asked students to speak out for tougher gun controls.

## Clinton appeals to women on gun control issues

By LAURIE KELLMAN

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON - President Clinton is turning to women for help in the congressional showdown this week over new gun control restrictions as he struggles to keep Democrats from crossing party lines.

Members of that key Democratic constituency are joining him at a White House rally today for an amendment by Rep. Carolyn McCarthy, D-N.Y., which Democrats say would tighten background checks at gun shows.

The event is an effort to keep Democrats in line as the House later this week takes up a juvenile justice bill for the first time since the Littleton, Colo., high school shootings.

In recent days, House Democratic Leader Dick Gephardt quietly urged two senior lawmakers in his party not to join Republicans in sponsoring National Rifle Association-backed gun legislation.

One, Rep. John Murtha of Pennsylvania, later told reporters he wasn't certain what he would do. The other, Rep. John Dingell of Michigan, a former NRA board member, met recently with the GOP whip, Rep. Tom DeLay of Texas, and is supporting a proposal favored by the NRA.

"There are about 80 percent of the Democrats who favor these gun

safety measures, and about 80 percent of the Republicans are against them," Gephardt, D-Mo., said on "Meet the Press" On Sunday.

Republicans counter that attempts to make a partisan issue won't stand up to scrutiny.

"This is an issue that divides constituencies across the parties,," said Rep. Tom Davis of Virginia, who chairs the Republican House campaign committee and said he intends to vote for some gun restrictions when he issue reaches the floor.

Asked whether gun control would prove to be a defining campaign issue in next 'year's campaign, Davis said, "nationally, no. This is an issue that will play differently" in different regions.

Linda DiVall a Republican pollster, said the issue cuts across party lines because Western and Southern Democrats tend to be more conservative on the gun issue.

And in fact, in recent closed-door meetings, some Democrats have recalled the loss of seats in 1994 after a vote on banning assault-style weapons.

One first-term Democrat, Rep. Ronnie Shows of Mississippi, said, "I definitely come from a different

cultural area and background (from many Democrats). I'll just vote my way. I think they'll understand."

Needing to pick up only six seats next year to gain a House majority, Democratic leaders have seized on the issue in the wake of the Colorado shootings.

"I think that it's a lightning rod issue, just as shutting down the government, trying to shut down the Department of Education, not funding the air war over Kosovo and impeachment were issues said Rep. Patrick Kennedy; D-R.I. chairman of the Democratic campaign committee.

Rep. Barney Frank, D-Mass. added that recent school shootings have altered the political landscape because people fear for their children's safety and may be more willing to express their concerns at the ballot box. "Nobody is sure how much," he added.

But Jim Baker, the NRA chief lobbyist, said, "I think that's more wishful thinking than it is reality. The offices that I'm visiting, NRA members and members (lawmakers) are making their views known that they don't think that the antigun members' attempts to lay the blame for Littleton are fair."

# Smith & Wesson sticks to its guns

## Manufacturer offers to sell the county replacement weapons at a discount

By Dan Hansen  
Staff writer

The maker of handguns the sheriff contends are defective is offering to set things straight with Spokane County.

Sheriff Mark Sterk warned last month that his deputies are carrying unreliable Smith & Wesson handguns.

Sterk asked county commissioners for nearly \$200,000 to buy 287 replacement guns from a German manufacturer. That would be the cost after trading in the old guns and buying new holsters to fit the replacements.

Hearing of the county's dissatisfaction, Massachusetts-based Smith & Wesson offered an unsolicited \$41,000 solution to county Commissioner Kate McCaslin this week. The company offered to provide the Sheriff's Department with new .45-caliber

semiautomatics for \$144 apiece after trade-in.

"Our biggest thing is we want to make them happy. We stand behind our pistols," Smith & Wesson sales manager Michael Hall, said.

The guns, which could be delivered within 30 days, would have the same dimensions as those they would replace, so deputies wouldn't need new holsters. Nor would deputies need to be retrained, as they would if a new make were selected.

"That's good news. It will save us lot of money," McCaslin said.

Hall is bringing some of the guns to Spokane for tests on Monday.

Those tests, lose conducted by the departments gun experts should go a long way toward determining whether deputies would be willing to continue betting their lives, on Smith & Wesson, said Undersheriff Burel Schulz.

"We need a reliable weapon, and from what I've heard, this .45 is good," Schulz said.

Sterk wasn't available for comment, but he wrote, in an e-mail message to McCaslin: "If we, can get all this in writing, I am convinced, we should trade with S&W."

The county bought most of the handguns carried by deputies in 1991 and repeatedly has had to replace faulty parts. Some of the guns jammed after the first shot during recent target practice, deputies said.

Sterk had proposed replacing the 10 mm Smith-& Wesson handguns with .40- and .45-caliber semiautomatics manufactured by Heckler and Koch.

Hall disputes that the deputies' handguns are inherently unreliable. They're simply at the end of their lives, he said.

The gun was dropped from production because the 10 mm proved too potent for law enforcement, Hall said.

# NRA donates \$1,000 to PHS team

By JEAN CARTER  
Citizen staff writer

The Preston High School rifle team was recently the recipient of a \$1,000 donation from the National Rifle Association (NRA) to purchase spotting scopes, said team coach Larry Biggs. Biggs, who presented the check to Principal Al Koch, said the rifle program has had a lot of support from the administration.

*In addition to the NRA grant, Biggs was granted monies from the Preston Education Foundation, to buy equipment. Other donations were from private individuals who provided money, pellet traps, gun cases, equipment bags and other needed items.*

Each year, said Biggs, the NRA Foundation helps to sponsor the "Friends

of NRA," to raise money for shooting sports. "We are pleased that they awarded us this money," said Biggs, who submitted the grant proposal last year.

"It is because of this support that we had nearly 50 kids involved in competitive shooting, with 200 kids involved with air rifle target shooting within the high school physical education program," said Biggs.

The high school rifle team did not have a place to practice their .22 caliber rifles this year, explained Biggs, so all practicing was done in the gym with air rifles.

Led by senior Dennis Shumway, the team placed second in the Utah State Championship and first in Idaho for competition in both the third and fourth posture positions

during the state Southeast Idaho Invitational. The Preston Junior High School team took first place in their age group. The high school team also won the region five at large team, sponsored by the National Guard. Nine of the 10 shooters placed in the top 20 in this region, but did not place in the top 10 in the nation.

"We will have a strong team again next year," said Biggs, "with returning lettermen Cejay Golightly, Blake Gilbert, Jimmy Golightly, Rory Roberts, Jared Jorgensen, Logan Hobley and Curtis Shumway. They will all be trying to be one of the top four shooters for team matches."

CITIZEN, PRESTON, ID JUNE 9, 1999

## Texans speak on guns from own experience

FORT WORTH (AP) - When, talk in Congress, turns to guns most Texans come to the debate armed with plenty of hands-on experience.

A Fort Worth Star-Telegram survey found that at least 21 of the 30 House members and both U.S. senators from Texas own firearms.

"I grew up around pistols and rifles," said Rep. Charles Gonzalez D-San Antonio, whose father, former Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez, gave his sons .22-caliber rifles for their 12<sup>th</sup> birthday. "It's part of the Texas culture."

The fondness for firearms crosses both political parties and illustrates the complexity of the gun control debate,

The House is preparing to take up Senate-approved restrictions requiring background checks for all gun show sales and safety locks on weapons. The House is expected to vote on a gun control package in late June as part of a bill aimed at curbing juvenile violence.

"I've got a bunch of guns," said Rep. Ralph Hall, D-Rockwall, whose, gun cabinet is fairly typical of the state's House delegation. "If I laid them all out I could have held off one comer of the Alamo."

Rep. Jim Turner of Crockett said gun ownership is part of life in his

East Texas district. Turner is one of five Texas Democrats who received contributions in the last election from the National Rifle Association. On the Republican side, Rep. Mae Thornberry of Clarendon received \$6,000 from the NRA.

But the tradition isn't restricted to rural areas. Several House members whose districts include portions of the Dallas-Fort Worth area also own guns.

House Majority Leader Dick Armev of Irving repeatedly told audiences that if he ever imitated President Clinton's personal behavior he would find himself looking up at his wife from a pool of blood while she asked, "How, do I reload this thing"

Armev's wife knows how to use her 20-gauge shotgun. It's part of a family collection that includes a 12-gauge shotgun, two rifles and a .45-caliber Pistol.

The rate of gun ownership among Texas lawmakers is even higher than the rate among the voters they represent. A recent Texas poll found that 53 percent of Texans have a gun in the house. Nearly a third have more than one. The gunowning tradition cuts across racial, ethnic and gender lines.

Rep. Max Sandlin, -D-Marshall, who estimated he has 15 firearms,

has started teaching his 4 year-old son how to shoot

Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, who owns "several shotguns and a couple of handguns," has hunted doves with the state's senior senator, fellow Republican Phil Gramm.

Several Texas Democrats wore guns daily in their previous careers in law enforcement. "I packed a gun for many years. You get, used to it," said Rep. Solomon Ortiz of Corpus Christi, a former Nueces County sheriff, "Without it you feel naked."

Ironically, two of the strongest defenders of the right to bear arms own no guns.

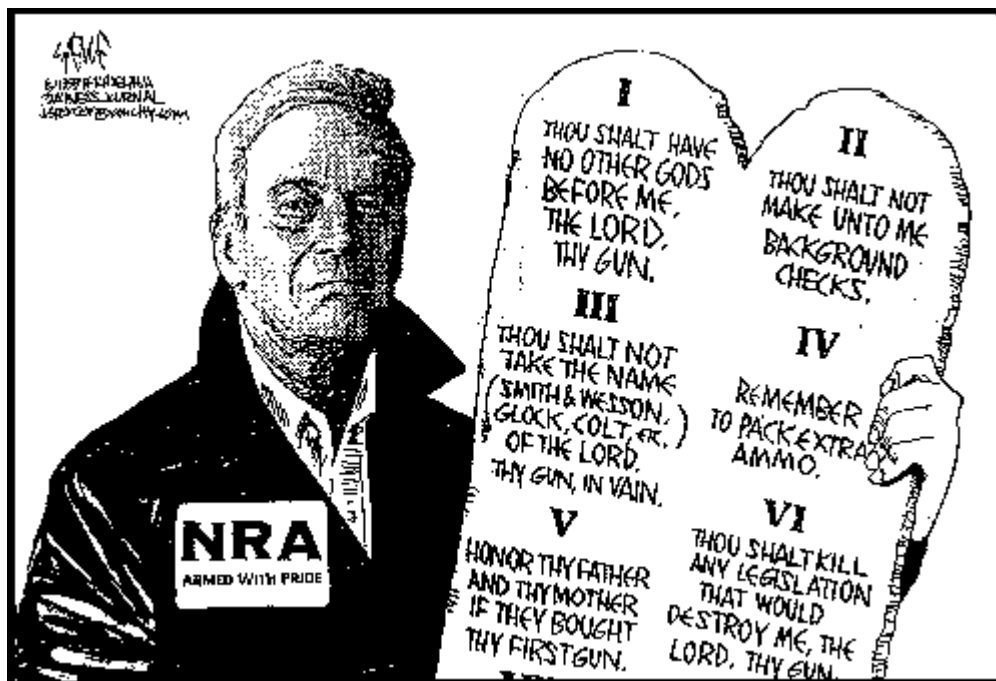
"Once my right to own a gun is threatened, I buy one. That's when it will be necessary," said Rep. Ron Paul, R-Surfside.

Rep. Bill Archer, R-Houston, said he's unarmed because he's "Very afraid of guns."

Despite their strong support for gun ownership, most Texas lawmakers say they are willing to consider new restrictions in the aftermath of the April 20 massacre at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo.



SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER, SEATTLE, WA JUNE 16, 1999



BUSINESS JOURNAL, PORTLAND, OR JUNE 25, 1999

# 'Copycat' Gun Bill Sets State Senate OK

## Ban on modified weapons like one used in Littleton

By Lynda Gledhill"

CHRONICLE SACRAMENTO  
BUREAU

Sacramento - The state Senate passed a bill yesterday to close a loophole in California's assault-weapons law, an important step in creating what proponents say would be the toughest firearms ban in the country.

The bill, by Alameda, Democrat Don Perata is designed to outlaw so-called copycat weapons - assault weapons designed with slight modifications to skirt the state's 10-year-old ban. It would also outlaw the manufacture or sale, of large-capacity ammunition magazines. With the Colorado school shootings focusing national attention on gun-control legislation, SB23 passed the Senate 22 to 13 after five minutes of perfunctory debate. The bill is one of many gun-control measures moving through state legislatures around the country,

"One of the weapons used in the Columbine High School (shooting) would have been illegal under my bill," Perata said, referring to a TEC-DC/9 assault pistol. "It is now legal under current California law because it is a 'copycat,' and it was manufactured to evade the law."

A similar bill passed the Legislature last year but was vetoed by then-Governor Pete Wilson, who declared it was a "maze which would entrap the unwary" and lead to endless litigation.

This time the measure is virtually assured of becoming law. The Assembly is expected to pass it. And Governor Gray Davis last month promised that he would sign it. "I am determined that these weapons will become illegal on my watch," Davis told reporters in April.

Perata's bill is designed to build on the state's original assault-weapons law, passed in 1989 after a man used an assault rifle to kill five children at a Stockton elementary school.

That law banned specific models of military-style semiautomatic weapons. And it gave the attorney general the power to go to court to add so-called copycat weapons to that list. But last year a state court struck down the "copycat" provisions.

Perata's bill attempts to deal with the "copycat" problem by expanding the ban to cover a generic class of weapons based on the guns' physical characteristics. It would also outlaw the manufacture or sale of magazines holding more than 10 rounds of ammunition.

The measure passed the Senate yesterday with only a slightly wider margin than, last year. Perata attacked Republican opponents of the bill, accusing them of being unmoved by the high school shootings in Littleton and elsewhere.

"How many events does it take to change minds?" he said. "There is no difference today on this floor than from last year."

But opponents said the bill would have little effect because owners or manufacturers of assault weapons could easily skirt the bill's restrictions. Opponents also said it would affect sporting rifles used by many people legally.

"They say we are protecting society, but the bills don't do that," said Senator Richard Mountjoy, R-Monrovia. "It hurts the law-abiding citizen."

Owners of guns that fall under the ban would have one year to register their weapons with the state Department of Justice. The bill would prohibit owners

from selling or giving away their weapons, thereby eliminating the guns over time.

"I don't see why we can't separate guns that are made to be used in Bosnia as opposed to the streets of Los Angeles or Walnut Creek," Perata said. He said that he expects no major changes to the bill as it moves to the Assembly and on to the governor's desk.

Also taking up a gun-control measure yesterday, the Assembly passed a bill requiring stricter security at all gun shows. Not doing so could result in a fine as high as \$2000.

The bill was passed just three weeks after Lockyer showed off illegal firearms, including a rocket launcher, purchased at a Los Angeles gun show. The vote was 44 to 18 to send the measure to the Senate.

Opponents say that the measure was unnecessary and that existing laws should be enforced. But the bill's author said that existing provisions are not enough. "Self-policing isn't working," replied Ellen Corbett, D-San Leandro. "There's no licensing of promoters at all."

Other states have grappled with gun-control measures in the aftermath of the Littleton massacre. In New Jersey, Connecticut and Illinois, measures that would enact tighter restrictions on gun ownership are making their way through legislatures.

Measures by gun-rights proponents are losing the support of legislatures around the country. Colorado legislators backed away from a move to allow the carrying of concealed weapons, and Michigan is currently battling over two similar measures.

## California lawmakers vote to limit handgun purchases

*With data showing some people buy several handguns at once, a bill would restrict them to one a month*

By Barry Meier

NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

The California Legislature approved a measure Thursday to limit handgun purchases to one a month, making it the largest state to pass a measure that gun control advocates say would reduce the flow of guns to criminals. Gun Control proponents and some law-enforcement officials have long argued that sharply limiting the number, of revolvers and pistols that can be bought at one time is a key step in helping close off the illegal gun market. The authorities say intermediaries for gun traffickers often buy several firearms at once from federally licensed dealers, and the guns are, then resold to criminals. Under federal law, a person who passes a background check can buy an unlimited number of guns at one time and as often as he or she wishes. Three states - Maryland, Virginia and South Carolina - have passed laws limiting handgun purchases to one every 30 days.

In California, about 41,000 of the approximately 183,000 handguns sold in 1998 went to people who bought more than one at a time, according to data compiled by state regulators. In

some instances the purchases involved eight or more guns.

Gov. Gray Davis, a Democrat has not said whether he will sign, the bill, a spokeswoman said.

"This is one of the strongest measures in the country to shut down the flow of handguns to the black market," said Luis Tolley, a lobbyist for Handgun Control, an advocacy group. "We hope California's action will encourage other states and congress to adapt similar measures."

Passage of the legislation was the first setback for the National Rifle Association after its recent, success in defeating a congressional proposal that would have strengthened federal laws on firearm sales at gun shows.

Although advocates such as Tolley applauded, the passage of the California bill, the impact of similar measures elsewhere has been mixed. The new bill like others, of its kind, applies only to handguns, not to rifles. Law enforcement authorities in Virginia, which enacted a one-handgun-a month measure in 1993, said the law has reduced the illegal trafficking of guns bought from

dealers in the state. But traffickers have turned elsewhere for weapons or criminals have found other strategies to buy guns in Virginia federal and state officials

Robert Marcus, owner of Bob's Gun and Tackle Shop in Norfolk, Va., and president of the Virginia Firearms Dealers Association, which opposed the Virginia law, said it has not reduced sales. In addition, he said, the number of customers who have complained about having to wait 30 days to buy more than one handgun has been small.

"I would say that if the numbers bear out that there has been a reduction in illicit trafficking, then I would have to say that this is a positive," Marcus said.

Under federal law, licensed gun dealers must file a report with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the federal agency that regulates the manufacture and sale of guns, when an individual buys two or more firearms from them during any five-day period. An agency spokesman said the agency receives 1,500 to 1,800 reports each week.

OREGONIAN, PORTLAND, OR. JULY 2, 1999

# A win for the NRA

## Overturing background check law a defeat for common sense

The National Rifle Association has proven that it still packs, plenty of political punch, lobbying hard and winning a House vote which loosened restrictions on sales at gun shows. Stung by a tough gun control measure passed by the Senate in the wake of the Columbine High School tragedy, the NRA mounted an effort to roll back the Senate's action. Supporters argued that measure would help restore the rights of law-abiding citizens to purchase guns.

President Clinton, a strong supporter of gun control, assailed the House's 218-211 vote as "a great victory for the NRA but ... a great defeat for the safety of our children" and accused the House of squeaking the legislation through "lift the dead of night" when the average American might not notice.

"So one more time, the Congress of the United States ... said, 'We don't care what's necessary to protect our children. We can't possibly bear to make anyone in the NRA mad,'" Clinton said Friday in Europe.

The House vote took place Thursday at midnight on an amendment sponsored by the chamber's most senior Democrat, Rep. John Dingell of Michigan, a former NRA board member.

Dingell argued that going along with the Senate's requirement for background checks would have allowed government too great a role over the private lives of gun owners, raising the specter of background checks of buyers who purchase firearms at flea markets and saying that the regulation would drive gun shows out of business.

Dingell's provision would cover even fewer gun shows than current law and would give the government only 24 hours to complete background checks, rather than the three days that is now the case. So, not only did the House turn its back on the Senate proposal, it effectively decided to roll back existing restrictions on gun sales.

Given the Senate's action in the aftermath of Columbine it's not surprising the NRA made a push to

recoup lost ground in the House. It's unfortunate that the House members didn't have the courage of their Senate colleagues in standing up to the pressure of the gun lobby and following their legislative example.

Background checks for gun buyers may be inconvenient and annoying, but they serve a good purpose: they keep guns out of the hands of people with criminal backgrounds and they provide a waiting period which curbs spur-of-the-moment gun purchases. They don't, in any way, hinder law-abiding citizens from exercising their right to purchase weapons.

Requiring background checks for people buying guns at gun shows is not an unfair mandate as long as background checks are required for those buying weapons at gun shops.

The president, who conceded the NRA beat him, has vowed that the House's "vote will not stand the light of day" and pledged to continue to seek support for the Senate-passed gun control measure. We'd live in a safer society if he succeeds.

Don Kaul

## Here are a few answers to NRA questions

I've written several columns on gun control recently - I'm for it- as usual, got a big response from my friends at the NRA. I don't have time to reply to each individually (and, in any case, some of them forgot to sign their names), so let me use this as an open letter to respond to the some of the most frequently raised questions.

No, I am not a complete idiot

I have no wish to go back where I came from. I come from Detroit, where hardly anyone wants to go back to. In any case, they've torn down my ancestral home to make room for a vacant lot.

I am not a pimp for the leftwing socialist movement. This is a silly suggestion. Pimps do what they do for money; that is why I called the NRA "pimps for the gun industry." People make money selling guns. There is no money in leftwing socialism. Nobody offers you thousands of dollars to make speeches, nobody wants you on television. You're either a left-wing socialist for love or you're not one at all. Actually, I'm not one at all; I'm a left wing capitalist.

I am a patriotic American. I've never understood how taking a high-powered rifle into the woods and banging away at a defenseless deer who is, in any case, a pacifist, qualifies as patriotism, but some people seem to think so. If you want to recreate the murder of Bambi's mother, that's your business, but don't think it makes you Patrick Henry. I've even heard of cases of vegetarians being patriotic Americans, but I'm not one of them either.

I do not wish to ban all guns. Every time anyone suggests a gun control

measure, any gun control measure, the gun types start clacking on about how immoral, illegal and unconstitutional a ban on guns would be. I think guns are OK in their place. People who want them should have the right to keep a few sensible guns around the house, for protection or whatever.

But semi-automatic pistols? What are you afraid of, the Attack of the Man-eating Squirrels? I think there are certain weapons-those whose main purpose is to kill a lot of people quickly - that we should try to keep out of circulation. There are a number of ways of doing this; I would try them all. I would also have a stiff, very stiff, registration fee for gun dealers. We have something like 150,000 gun dealers in this country. That's absurd. Most of them are enthusiasts who sell guns on the side or keep them for themselves. A serious registration fee would leech out these low rollers, leaving the field to legitimate dealers who make their living selling guns: These you could regulate effectively and, with the reduced competition, their business would go up enough to make up for the heavy registration fee.

I am not in favor of banning cars, although I realize that more people are killed by cars than by guns. There is a reason for this, and you don't have to have a high school education to figure it out. Cars are made to transport people; guns are made to kill people.

I am in favor, however, of regulating cars, just as I am guns. We do some of it, of course, but I would be in favor of sterner, periodic drivers' tests to get some of the dim bulbs off

the road. (And I might consider banning SUVs, if you caught me in the right, mood.)

I don't think repeal of the First Amendment is a good idea. Admittedly, when you look at some of the crap that's passing for entertainment these days, doing away with its free-speech protection is tempting. I'm convinced, however, that it would only make things worse. Besides, with the advent of the Internet, censorship becomes all but impossible. We've lived with free speech for 220 years and, like it or not we're stuck with it

That doesn't mean that the violence in our popular culture is not a real problem. A few years ago, Barry Levinson, one of our fine movie directors ("Diner," "Rainman") observed that an astonishing amount of our entertainment was driven by violence. So he made an absolutely charming film called "Avalon," about an immigrant family in Baltimore in the first, half the century. No violence. It bombed. His next film was about Bugsy Siegel, the gangster who invented vented Las Vegas.

The point is, we have to support the good stuff or it goes away. Conversely, if we stopped supporting the bad stuff, it too would go away

It takes some time and effort to grow and maintain a healthy culture, not only for our children but for ourselves. Until we're willing make that effort, we're going have a junk culture, First Amendment or not.

There. I hope that clears everything you were confused about. If not, tough.

## Ruling May Aid California Cities' Suit Against Gun Manufacturers

SAN FRANCISCO -In the duel between California and the weapons industry, the side with the guns has evidently taken an early hit

One day after San Francisco and Los Angeles sued firearms manufacturers, distributors and trade associations last week, a federal Judge in New York gave the West Coast plaintiffs' cause an apparent boost with a ruling in another gun case.

Jack B. Weinstein, a senior U.S. district judge in Brooklyn, rejected gunmakers' motions to toss out a trail blazing February jury verdict holding firearms manufacturers liable for the negligent distribution of their guns.

Since the verdict stands, *the* innovative theory of negligent distribution of weapons upon which the California cases rely in part - comes out a potential winner.

"It's certainly a positive development for us," San Francisco Deputy City Attorney Owen J. Clements said Friday,

He was echoed by David Kairys a law professor at Temple University in Philadelphia who, first devised the notion of cities' gunmakers under the public nuisance theory.

"Here we have a prestigious federal judge interpreting the law very favorably to the California plaintiffs," said Kairys, who is of counsel to San Francisco and Los Angeles for their suits.

Kairys, who is also advising Chicago in that city's similar suit, who studied civil procedure under Weinstein at Columbia University Law School.

"On almost every crucial issue,[Weinstein] took up, he ruled for the plaintiffs- on causation, on duty and on substantive negligence," said Kairys. He also noted that, the city and county parties to the California suits have less of a burden than the individual gunshot victims and their heirs who sued in New York. An opposing view came from Robert Ricker, a lawyer who is the executive director of the American Shooting Sports Council, one of the defendants in the California suits.

Ricker, who is based in Washington, D.C., predicted state courts will conclude that California' Firearms Control Act already regulates the industry so tightly there's no merit in the plaintiff's claims here.

"The New York verdict was based on New York law," Ricker said. "Out in California, it's a different ball game."

Ricker, a former assistant general counsel for the National Rifle Association, worked as a lobbyist in Sacramento from 1983 to 1995. He said Friday that he drafted many of the provisions of Penal Code 12000, the Firearms Control Act. He expects to closely advise the defense in the current California cases, he said.

The California suits, filed in state Superior courts, take a path identical to that followed in the New York case, accusing the industry of flooding distribution channels with weapons, leading to a criminal black market

The New York decision will add momentum to the California cases, plaintiff lawyers said.

"This is the first firearms case that's reached such a verdict now has gotten the judge's seal of approval," said Mark E. Elovitz, one of the plaintiffs' lawyers in the closely followed New York case, *Hamilton a Accu-Tek*, CV-95- 0049JBW. "The timing of this boosts the wave of what's happening elsewhere."

Elovitz, of Schulte Roth & Zabel in Manhattan, said that cases are in different courts in different states, although the states, the important finding of negligence will influence all cases. "The defendants had their day in court, and the verdict will make it difficult for them to dispute, negligence in any other forum."

The verdict Weinstein upheld awards damages to plaintiff Steven Fox, 16, who was shot in the head and is severely disabled American Arms Inc. Beretta USA and Taurus International Manufacturing Inc were ordered to a total of \$520,000.

Though the gun that shot Steven was never found, the damages were apportioned under the market-share doctrine which divides liability according to each manufacturer's fraction of total sales of a product.

Beretta and Taurus are also defendants in the case filed May 25 by San Francisco City Attorney Louise Renne, along with 26- other gun manufacturers, six gun distributors and three trade associations.

California a *Arcadia Machine & Tool Inc.*, 303753.

Beretta's national counsel, Lawrence G. Keane, of Pino & Associates in White Plains, N.Y., said last week, that his client will appeal Weinstein's ruling.

"We remain highly confident that the appellate court will reject these novel theories and dismiss the plaintiffs claims," Keane said.

He added that key defense points in the California cases wig include the facts that San Francisco police carry Beretta pistols and that until recently the police department sold confiscated guns to the public.

"Our guns are safe, and selling guns is legal," Keane said.

A similar situation exists in New Orleans, where Mayor Marc Morial sued Beretta and other weapon makers in the first such US lawsuit late last year, Keane said.

"The police sold guns there, too. In fact, the city of New Orleans was the biggest seller of guns in New Orleans until they filed their suit," Keane said. "Then they ended the practice. The reality is that it's criminal use, not the manufacture or sale of guns, that is the problem."

Weinstein's 113 page opinion equates the duty of gunmakers to that of cigarette manufacturers by quoting from his own opinion in *Blue Cross & Blue Shield of New Jersey Inc. v. Philip Morris Inc.*, 36 F.Supp.2d 560, 583 (1999).

"The trend in modern tort law generally has been to reject the rigid and formalistic barriers which once prohibited third parties from recovering for 'indirect' injuries."

Extending the trend to guns, Weinstein described for the, first time the legal responsibility of gunmakers to those who may be harmed by their product after it has passed through other hands:

"It is the duty of manufacturers of a uniquely hazardous product designed to kill and wound human beings, to take reasonable steps available at the point of their sale to primary distributors to reduce the possibility that these instruments will fall into the hands of those likely to misuse them."

# Guns yes, snacks no

S.F.'s school board finally gets its priorities right, allowing armed-cops on campus but not commercial intrusions

After a performance that had been growing steadily sorrier, the San Francisco school board redeemed itself somewhat with a pair of wise decisions. First, it rescinded its goofy and hastily enacted ban on cops bringing guns on campus. Second, it decided to prohibit the use of corporate brand names in textbooks as well as barring exclusive district-wide contracts with soda and snack food companies. The Board of Education finally got it right about what belongs in schools and what doesn't. Two weeks ago, board member Dan Kelly introduced a spur-of-the-moment amendment that would, have required police to disarm before they came on campus. It passed 5-1. Board President Juanita Owens, who was absent that night, was horrified. So were many others who care about school safety. One problem was that the action was almost certainly illegal. Another problem was that the police, reasonably, refused to disarm. An even deeper failing of the legislation was that cops aren't the enemy. They're supposed to protect students (and teachers and administrators) from the enemy - who just might be packing an arsenal of semi-automatic guns or a dozen grenades. Temporarily, the lessons of Littleton, Colo., were lost on the school board, but it snapped back to its senses Tuesday night. Even so, some of the rhetoric that preceded the board's 6-1 reversal was hilarious, and a bit scary. One public interest attorney bemoaned that police with guns send students the wrong message about how to settle disputes. Hello? What message, we wonder, would the speaker infer from the copious bloodstains spattered around the library at Columbine High School?

The school board did equally well in recognizing that big-time commercial pitches have no place on campus. The new Commercial-Free Schools Act upholds the principle that schools should be marketplaces of ideas, not of consumer products and advertisements.

Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Nike And other corporations try to buy their way into schools to persuade kids to try, and stick with, their brands. It's a severe temptation for cash-deprived districts that need, say, a new football scoreboard.

In addition, companies such as Jelly Belly and Colgate send out "teaching kits" that feature their products as instructional aids.

One caveat: The school board's action seems to allow individual schools to cut contracts for exclusive snack or soda sales while banning such agreements district-wide. The ban should apply to each and every school as well as the district.

Easy money can't make up for the intrusion on the educational landscape.

In the past, the school board has sometimes lost its way. It approved, without adequate information, the purchase of a downtown building. It failed to require accountability from outgoing Supt. Bill Rojas on budgets and his embarrassing lobbying efforts. Ill-starred debates over the Edison School and quotas for the teaching of ethnic literature didn't cover the board in glory.

Still, the school year is never over until the last exam question is answered. And judging by its two most recent actions, the school board might be on the path to bringing up its final mark.

## House does NRA bidding on guns

By abandoning even modest attempts at gun control, the U.S. House of Representatives has turned its back on an anguished nation that, after one too many schoolhouse slaughters, had plainly telegraphed its desire for reasonable restrictions on firearms.

Voters should respond to legislators who aren't paying attention by making gun control the No. 1 topic of the upcoming congressional and presidential election campaigns.

The wishes of the majority of Americans who favor controlling guns over protecting individuals' rights to own them should prevail over the minority, whose wants were so effectively represented in the recent sausagemaking, er, legislation-making by the National Rifle Association. After the Columbine High School massacre, there was reason to believe that Congress would heed the shift in sentiment on gun control.

Hope abounded that Congress would support sensible, workable measures to keep firearms out of the hands of children, convicted felons and the mentally ill. The Senate's adoption of a 72-hour waiting period for firearms purchases at gun shows was a welcome indication of that. But too much time lapsed between the Senate and House debates, permitting the NRA to mobilize with a \$1.5 million lobbying blitz. This unseemly form of persuasion, plus the emergence of Michigan Democrat John Dingell as the NRA's water carrier, paved the way first for Thursday's 218-211 vote that reduced the number of gun shows that would be covered and gave law enforcement agencies just one day to complete background checks.

Even that restriction proved too much, for many House members, who were being led around by the nose by the NRA. Less than 24 hours later, the House caved completely on gun control by a 280-147 vote on the juvenile justice bill.

The magnitude of the win for social conservatives, mainly Republicans but some Democrats, was a blow to Republican Speaker Dennis Hastert, who had favored an all-out effort to pass the legislation. In addition to backing some gun control strategies, Hastert was being pragmatic: He was wary that if the entire bill died, Democrats would respond by loading up pending appropriations bills with gun-related amendments.

As misguided as was the final vote, and the vote on the gun show provision, at least they were related to the purpose of reducing firearms violence among and toward young people. On Thursday the House veered crazily off course and ended up trodding on the First Amendment's separation of church and state by agreeing to allow states to decide whether to post the Ten Commandments in public buildings.

In perhaps the most idiotic statement on the subject, Georgia Republican Rep. Bob Barr flatly stated that had the commandments been in plain sight at Columbine High School, the shootings would not have taken place. The Ten Commandments vote was totally devoid of meaning because it surely would have been struck down as an unconstitutional violation of church and state. Nearly two decades ago the U.S. Supreme Court tossed out a Kentucky law that mandated the posting of a copy of the commandments in each public classroom.

The provision was deficient not only because it mixed religion and the state but also because it would elevate one belief over many others.

As New York Democrat Jerrold Nadler aptly asked, "Whose Ten Commandments? The Christian version, the Protestant version or the Jewish version? They're different, you know."

With so large a margin of victory, gun-control opponents are unlikely to entertain another floor debate on the subject any time soon. That being the case, we'd favor the strategy that Hastert would like to avoid - proposing amendments to appropriations bills.

Provisions like those that have already passed the Senate, including:

- The sale of safety locks with all handguns.
- Banning the import of large-capacity clips and magazines.
- Prohibiting those under 18 from possessing semiautomatic assault weapons.
- Imposing a lifetime ownership ban on those who committed "violent acts of juvenile delinquency."

The House hasn't yet heard the cries of its constituents.

The volume must be turned up.

# Blame violence on family dynamics

**BEN WATTENBURG  
and DANIEL WATTENBERG**

After Littleton and, now, Conyers, willingness to take on Hollywood has become the test of seriousness and political manhood for liberals. Likewise, standing up to the gun lobby has become the test of seriousness and political manhood for conservatives.

But while the NRA and Tinsletown are taking it on the chin, one vast and mighty bloc of voters has been let off the hook: all the soccer moms and Dockers dads raising this generation's children.

If there is a useful symbol of a larger social failure in the Littleton massacre, it is a symbol of parental dereliction: Eric Harris' parents apparently did not realize that Eric and Dylan were making pipe bombs in the garage on their play dates.

Critics have labeled the aestheticized violence and chic nihilism found in today's youth-oriented mass entertainment "cultural pollution." In the spirit of the metaphor, they would regulate or punish the "polluters": stricter enforcement of R ratings at theaters and video stores, restrictions on violent advertising imagery, and voluntary restraints on content by the entertainment industry. Newt Gingrich even called for exposing movie and video-game makers to liability lawsuits.

But while exposure to violence in large concentrations may become "toxic" over time, the pollution metaphor is an evasion. It implies that just as parents are by themselves helpless to prevent the exposure of their children to air or water pollution, so too they are helpless to limit their children's contact with entertainment violence. But are they'?

Unlike pollution, exposure to violent entertainment is voluntary. Indeed, consumers pay for the privilege of contamination by "cultural pollution." And since the vast majority of teens remain partly or wholly financially dependent on their parents, parents are directly or indirectly, tacitly or otherwise, subsidizing "cultural pollution."

Of course, policing the viewing and listening of defiant and resourceful teens is not easy. And technological progress is not helping. It never has.

Technology has been the ally of teen independence at least since the mass production of automobiles after World War I gave them the mobility to escape the supervision of parents and neighbors. The appearance of transistor radios and portable record players after World War II aided the rise of an independent youth market (read: rock and roll) in music. And, of course, the sizzling post-war economies of the '20s and '50s gave teens more money and consumer clout.

Today, the cultural circuits continue to multiply. More movie theaters, more television channels, cheaper consumer electronics and, of course, the Internet have all done their part in enhancing the cultural autonomy of teen-agers.

At the same time, with the rise of the two-earner couple, parents spend less time at home and, inevitably, less time monitoring the movies, music, concerts and games their kids are spending their money on. But, under the law, parents retain virtually unchecked authority within the home to monitor and control how their children spend their money and time if they choose to exercise it.

Advertisers and retailers salivate at the size and consumer clout of the 60 million Americans known as

Generation Y: they know that today's children and adolescents have far more money and spending autonomy than their predecessors. Maybe they have too much of both.

Maybe parents need to retake the purse strings. They could cut or condition allowance money for starters: demand receipts, demand more work around house or more schoolwork in exchange for money.

Are today's baby-boom parents up to the task? Maybe not. The anti-authoritarian, non-conformist ideals of their own youths still exercise a powerful hold over them. Fear of exposure as authoritarian squares haunts many of today's boomer parents, a fear revealed in the horrific exclamation familiar from a thousand bad boomer sitcoms and personal essays: "I'm turning into my mother/father!"

Shy of establishing the authority and discipline that might instill respect and yes, a bit of salutary fear in their children, they often resort instead to a strategy of friendly, egalitarian complicity with them. To exercise the influence of an adult, they are forced to assume the guise of a somewhat older, somewhat more worldly peer.

The easiest way for busy working parents to obtain this pseudo-complicity is to buy it - with a broad-minded tolerance of their kids' cultural tastes and plenty of money to underwrite them. In thus pandering to their children, busy dual-income parents may also allay their own feelings of self-guilt for spending so much time on the job and so little at home.

Show me a country of aggressive kids, and I will show you a country of passive parents.

## Second Amendment faces serious assault

Last week a long-time reader of The People's Defender stopped by the office to ask if I would share my views on the latest gun control flap emanating from Washington.

As a former (and quite likely, future) member of the National Rifle Association, I have very strong opinions on the subject and was more than happy to oblige at least one reader.

When our Founding Fathers wrote the Second Amendment to include the words "the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed," it shouldn't take a Philadelphia lawyer to tell us that's not really what they meant. And we should stop listening to all those "interpreters" of the U.S. Constitution who think they know better than the likes of Jefferson, Madison, Mason and (Samuel) Adams.

Make no mistake about it, our Founding Fathers wrote what they meant and they meant what they wrote. In numerous writings, the constitutional framers stressed the right of the people to be armed - not only as a part of the militia, but as private citizens defending themselves and their property from any and all aggressors.

But once again, that constitutional right is under direct fire from the bleeding hearts in Washington (and Hollywood) who would prefer we believe their pabulum that guns are the root of all evil.

Hollywood hate-monger Spike Lee can call for the death NRA President Charlton Heston and the public outrage is nil. Sitting large at her talk-show throne, Rosie O'Donnell (the same woman who thinks fathers only get in the way of families) lips into Tom Selleck for his support of gun owners.

Lee, whose movies glamorize violence and encourage a total disrespect for the police and other forms of authority, is more than a little hypocritical in his attacks against the NRA. Similarly, O'Donnell uses her stage to advocate gun control while reaping the benefits of an advertising contract with Kmart - one of the nation's largest gun dealers. Obviously, the recent shootings in Littleton, Colo., have given the liberals additional ammunition in their quest to confiscate American's legally owned guns. Never mind that, as syndicated columnist Tony Snow pointed out: "We have 20,000 gun-control statutes on the books nationally. The Columbine massacre involved as many as 19 separate violations of the Colorado and federal codes. It seems unlikely that one additional law could deliver us from murderous teens."

Mr. Snow is quite correct. Playing on the emotions of the day, both Democrats and Republicans in Congress feel it is in their political interests to appear as if they are doing something, anything, to prevent another Columbine. And since we now live in a no-fault society, let's blame the guns.

That's right. The guns did it. The teen-agers couldn't help it; the guns made them do it.

Baloney. The Columbine shooting was a premeditated act of murder. The perpetrators carefully planned and plotted the executions. Whether they used guns, bombs, or drove their cars through a crowded playground, they were determined to kill. The murderous likes of Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold had had previous run-ins with the law. If the legal system had punished them appropriately, there's a chance neither

would have had the inclination to further abuse the law. But there were no consequences for these law breakers because they were "good boys" playing with "bad guns."

Boys good. Guns bad.

For decades now, that's been the liberal tack on the gun control debate.

It's a smoke-and-mirrors distraction from the real issue of crime. Rather than enforce those 20,000 existing laws and severely punish criminals, it's more convenient to place blame on an inanimate piece of hardware.

Meanwhile, Americans' rights to self-defense continue to erode.

For a bit of irony on the Colorado shootings, let's look at the Centennial State a few years ago. In 1992, the violent Crips and Bloods gang from Los Angeles invaded Denver. The NRA helped draft legislation to combat the gang and its wave of terror. Among the provisions in the NRA plan: violent offenders 14 and older would be tried as adults; the death penalty would be considered for juveniles convicted of murder; and the records of violent juvenile offenders could be used in sentencing criminals over 18. Some said this was too harsh, but as the NRA accurately noted, "Street gang members in Los Angeles, Colorado, or anywhere else are not children. They are criminals, and violent ones."

Perhaps the more alarming irony is that President Clinton and his rag-tag band kill thousands of innocent civilians in Kosovo, sell defense secrets to China, and all Congress wants to do is pass another meaningless gun control law to infringe on the rights of law-abiding Americans.

Just shoot me, already.

Rory Ryan is publisher of The People's Defender.

## The NRA wins and America loses

When is the last time you can recall the desires of 272 million people subverted by a minority of 2.9 million? If you answered anything other than "last week," you are wrong. This nation is a much more dangerous place than it has ever been, thanks to the psychological and fiscal dominance of Congress by the 2.9 million members of the National Rifle Association.

It was painful, absolutely painful, to watch what transpired in the House of Representatives during the debate on gun control and youth violence. It was not painful because the bifurcated bill under consideration ultimately died, (that was probably a blessing in disguise.) It was painful because legislative responses to the recent increase in mass murders by middle-class students proffered by politicians of both parties were so ineffectual as to be laughable.

Parents are crying out for some sort of protection for their children. They are petrified to send them to school. They rightfully fear their children coming home in a wheelchair or not coming home at all. To this, some mooncalf member of Congress - to wit, Rep. Robert B. Aderholt, R-Ala. - responds by allowing states to post the Ten Commandments in public schools if they so desire. Has this country gone crazier by half than we already believe it has? Can you honestly believe that if Columbine High School had the Ten Commandments posted on every wall, in extremely large type, that the situation would have been any different? Ali yes, if Eric Harris or Dylan Klebold saw those words every day in school, they would have put down their weapons and paid rapt attention. Even Aderholt graciously admitted that his amendment would have had little impact. While Democrats clearly have the moral high ground in this debate, there is plenty of bipartisan blame to go around. Former NRA board member Michigan Democrat John Dingell devised the amendment that undermined the bill's efficacy. Anyone who understands how pre-purchase checks of would-be gun buyer's works understands Dingell's pettifoggery.

If a "law abiding" citizen with no criminal record tries to purchase a weapon, the computer background check goes through quickly in most cases. If the computer detects a problem, it needs 72 hours to peruse the records of every law enforcement agency in the country, before it can determine whether the would-be purchaser has a criminal record or not.

Dingell's amendment would only permit 24 hours for such a background check, preserving the "right" of suspected criminals to buy weapons at gun shows. I hope Dingell can sleep at night. He certainly doesn't deserve to.

But the prize for the height of hypocrisy in this debate goes to Rep. Duncan Hunter, R.-Calif., who would have used the power of the federal government to override local control. Republicans, who crow incessantly about burdensome federal regulations and protest congressional laws that override local control, offered an amendment that would have done just that. He wanted to overrule 23-year-old District of Columbia law banning handgun possession. Local leaders have decided handguns are too dangerous in this, the former murder capital of the country. But an over-intrusive, regulation-happy member of Congress from a district 3,000 miles away thought he knew better.

Luckily his amendment died along with the rest of the bill.

This was nothing more than legislation by dollar sign. The National Rifle Association, reports The Washington Post, spent \$1.5 million in May and June on phone banks, mass mail mailings and radio ads, rallying their troops and threatening members of Congress who dared vote against them.

The association's lobbying effort was so expert that even critics complimented the group's prowess. But prowess only goes so far. Conscience must enter in at some point. While NRA officials celebrate this Pyrrhic victory, let the memories of Littleton, Colo. Pearl, Miss., and Springfield, On ring in their ears and suffocate their hearts.

Bonnie Erbe is a columnist for Scripps Howard News Service.

## Less than one percent of Texans have concealed handgun permits

By Gayla Baker

THE TERRELL TRIBUNE

David Wylie, owner of Wylie's Gun Shop, was guest speaker at the Terrell Kiwanis meeting Tuesday.

Wylie told the group over 188,000 Texas citizens were in possession of a concealed handgun permit. "But if you look at the population of Texas, this is less than one percent of the population with a permit," Wylie said.

Statistics also show the population holding the largest number of permits is the group who are above age 50, with 20-25 year olds only having a total of 224 concealed handgun permits.

Wylie explained the costs of the license is about \$300 "from start to finish." There is a 10-hour mandatory class and each person must fire 50 rounds of ammunition. In order to pass the class, those attending must pass 70 percent of the written and shooting portions of the test.

"Once a person has attended class and sent in the proper paperwork, it will take approximately three months to get the permit back in the mail," Wylie said.

The permit is good only in states that recognize the Texas license. "Right now 'this includes Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana," said Wylie.

The permit must be renewed every four years and a four-hour retraining course is required.

To qualify to take the handgun course several regulations must be met including the person taking the course must be over the age of 21, of sound mind, not defaulting on a Student loan, tax payments or be delinquent on child support payments.

"These are just a few of the regulations that must be followed to obtain a concealed handgun permit," he continued.

Wylie said the law describes a handgun as an object designed to be from one hand. "This, includes a shotgun if you can fire it with one hand."

To conceal a handgun, Wylie explained, the weapon must be where no reasonable person can tell you have it otherwise the law considers it to be reckless concealment.

"If you are going to carry a handgun, I recommend you be proficient in using it. Most people just shoot the gun enough to pass the required test, but they really should take it out and fire it several times a year," Wylie said.

*TERRELL TRIBUNE, TERRELL, TX JUNE 16, 1999*

# GUN NEWS CLIPS

AUGUST 1999

Would you like to give the gift of *Gun News Clips*? Or would you like your very own subscription? There is absolutely no cost to you, simply fill out the form below and return it to us, or apply on line at [www.ccrkba.org](http://www.ccrkba.org).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

If you are not a member of the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms, and would like to join, or would like to give a donation, please enclose a check or money order, or include your credit card number below.

\_\_\_\_ \$15 Annual    \_\_\_\_ \$50 Five Year    \_\_\_\_ \$150 Lifetime membership    \_\_\_\_ \$1000 Patron

\_\_\_ Visa    \_\_\_ MasterCard    \_\_\_ American Express    \_\_\_ Discover \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Send to:

Gun News Clips  
CCRKBA  
12500 NE 10<sup>th</sup> Place  
Bellevue, WA 98005