



CCRKBA BOXES BOXER BILL

In a nationally syndicated television interview, John Michael Snyder, CCRKBA Public Affairs Director, ripped into a proposal by Sen. Barbara Boxer of California to ban so-called "junk guns."

Snyder said the Boxer proposal "is an attempt to resurrect the old issue of so-called 'Saturday Night Special' handguns."

He said that Sen. Boxer and Sarah Brady, the Handgun Control, Inc. chairwoman who has announced support for the proposal, are targeting inexpensive handguns.

"These are the kinds of firearms which people of less than substantial means, of people who cannot afford to live in the kind of neighborhoods that Boxer and Brady live in, need in order to be able to protect themselves from violent criminal attack.

"The Boxer and Brady approach really is an attack on poor people, on the ability of poor people to be able to defend themselves from vicious criminals.

"If these people really want to do something about criminal violence, they ought to direct their efforts towards improving the criminal justice system in our country. They should try to make sure that people who commit murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault pay a severe penalty for perpetrating such crimes."

Snyder was interviewed on the Boxer proposal by Carolyn Presutti, Washington correspondent of the Belo Capital Bureau, which services television stations in Dallas, Texas, Houston, Texas, New Orleans, Louisiana, Norfolk, Virginia, Sacramento, California, Seattle, Washington, Tulsa, Oklahoma and other major U. S. cities.

Boxer introduced a similar measure last year, but it failed to gather significant support.

Her proposal, which she's calling the "American Handgun Standards Act of 1997," would make it unlawful for a person to manufacture, transfer, or possess a so-called "junk gun" that has been shipped or transported in interstate or foreign commerce.

Basically, the measure would codify the existing "sporting use" test for imports and apply it to all handguns manufactured and sold in the United States. It would include a few exceptions, such as one which would grandfather any such firearms which were owned legally before enactment of the bill.

The "junk gun" definition would mean that BATF would be able to ban any handgun which does not pass the existing "sporting use" factoring standards presently applied to imported handguns.

It would impose a prohibition on the manufacture and sale of most common small-caliber handguns used by many lower income, law-abiding American citizens for defense of life and home.

Boxer herself has admitted that the terms "junk guns" and "Saturday Night Specials" are synonyms.

Boxer said that "junk guns" are "so cheaply made, so easy to buy, and such a threat to public safety that they are already banned for import" and that there is no reason to produce them in the United States.

She added that "junk guns" are so inaccurate, poorly constructed, and unsafe that they are unsuitable for sporting purposes or for home and self-protection.

Snyder said that law-abiding American citizens, including lower income, law-abiding American citizens, use firearms about two and one-half million times a year to thwart crime.

**STRAIGHT TALK
ABOUT WHAT YOU
CAN DO TO
PRESERVE YOUR
RIGHT TO KEEP AND
BEAR ARMS**

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**CITIZENS
COMMITTEE
FOR THE RIGHT
TO KEEP AND
BEAR ARMS**

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MOOG OF VIRGINIA THE CCRKBA AWARDEE

Paul W. Moog, Jr. of Virginia is the designated recipient of the CCRKBA Gun Rights Defender of the Month Award for February.

In nominating Moog for the Award, John Michael Snyder, CCRKBA Public Affairs Director, said "Paul is an energetic American who is determined to combat efforts to undermine the right of law-abiding individuals to keep and bear arms.

"As founder and executive director of the Northern Virginia Citizens Defense League, Paul has spearheaded the development of a local gun rights organization which is beginning to have a significant impact in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

"His efforts serve as an example for others around the country who would like to do something in their own areas in the effort to preserve and promote the traditional right of law-abiding American citizens to keep and bear arms."

Formed in 1994, the Northern Virginia Citizens Defense League (NVCDL) has about 200 members. It is a non-profit, all-volunteer, non-partisan grassroots organization dedicated to defending the civil rights of all Virginians. The membership considers the right to keep and bear arms an essential civil right.

Since its founding, NVCDL

- has picketed a local sheriff's gun buy-back program;

- been instrumental in reforming Virginia's discriminatory concealed weapons law into a "shall issue" CCW permit system;

- forced Fairfax County to comply with the Virginia CCW law by eliminating the personal history form, the police interrogation of applicants, and the imposition of excessive fees;

- helped stall anti-gun legislative proposals in the last session of the state legislature;

- saw to it that Fairfax County Police revamped the Department's "Firearms Safety Presentation;"

- distributed pro-self-defense literature at the Stand for Children Rally in Washington, D. C.;

- helped fund a lawsuit against Fairfax County for violation of a League member's privacy during the CCW application process;

- engineered a change in Fairfax County's hunting laws to exempt persons lawfully carrying firearms for personal

safety from county hunting restrictions;

- developed a list of products which members should not buy because the products' distributors evidenced aggressive anti-gun rights behavior; and

- produced and distributed "GUNS SAFE LIVES - 2.5 Millions Defensive Uses Each Year" bumper strips available for one dollar each from NVCDL, P. O. Box 821, Alexandria VA 22313.

NVCDL maintains a world wide web page and e-mail alert network to keep members and other interested parties informed of the latest developments in Virginia relating to the right to keep and bear arms. The web page may be visited at www.nvcdl.org. It contains information on

- legislative updates (federal and state);
- media alerts;
- links to firearms related sites;
- recommended reading; and
- exposes of anti-gun organizations.

Moog says that "when we started NVCDL in October of 1994 I would have scoffed at the notion that our little group of five activists would have expanded to over 200 members and supporters in less than two years. I would also have scoffed at the notion that we would be able to help reform Virginia's discriminatory concealed weapons law in our first year of existence.

"Because of our efforts, bureaucrats and politicians routinely monitor our world-wide-web page in hopes of anticipating our next move.

"Our monthly meetings, newsletters, e-mail alerts, and phone tree assure that all members are kept informed of the latest issues regarding individual liberty."

Born in 1961 in Pennsylvania, Paul grew up in the Washington, D. C. area, completed his schooling in Washington, D. C. public schools, was an electronic technician in the United States Navy from 1981 through 1988, now works as a computer analyst with the U. S. government and lives with his wife, Heidi, in Alexandria, Virginia.



POINT BLANK

"Straight talk about what you can do to preserve your right to keep and bear arms."

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CCRKBA TAKES POSITION ON EARLY HOUSE FIREARMS BILLS

As the U. S. House of Representatives convened briefly in early January before adjourning on January 9 until January 20, Inauguration Day, some Members of Congress introduced a number of bills dealing with the right to keep and bear arms and gun control.

CCRKBA has taken a position in support of these first pro-gun rights bills and in opposition to these first anti-gun bills introduced in the 105th Congress.

Among the bills opposed by CCRKBA are H. R. 12 by Reps. Charles Schumer and Jerrold Nadler of New York, and H. R. 186 by Rep. Alcee Hastings of Florida. Both were referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 12 and H. R. 186 each would impose limitations on the lawful private possession of handguns. H. R. 12 would prohibit a private citizen from purchasing more than one handgun during a one month period. H.R. 186 would provide for the mandatory registration of handguns.

Among the bills supported by CCRKBA are H.R. 27, H. R. 102, H.R. 339 and H.R. 424, all of which were referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary.

H. R. 27, the proposed "Citizens' Self-Defense Act of 1997," by Rep. Roscoe Bartlett of Maryland, would provide that a person not prohibited by law from receiving a firearm shall have the right to obtain firearms for security, and to use firearms:

- in defense of self or family against a reasonable perceived threat of imminent and unlawful infliction of serious bodily injury;

- in defense of self or family in the course of the commission by another person of a violent felony against the person of a member of the person's family; and

- in defense of the person's home in the course of the commission of a felony by another person.

Reps. James Barcia of Michigan, Joe Barton of Texas, Dan Burton of Indiana, Sonny Callahan of Alabama, Ken Calvert of California, Helen Chenoweth of Idaho, Howard Coble of North Carolina, Tom Coburn of Oklahoma, Michael ("Mac") Collins of Georgia, Gary Condit of California, Randy Cunningham of California, John Doolittle of California, Tim Holden of Pennsylvania, Gerald B. H. Solomon of New York, Bob Stump of Arizona and Don Young of Alaska are listed as original cosponsors.

H. R. 102, by Rep. Bob Barr of Georgia, would require that the national instant criminal background check system mandated by Congress in 1994 be established and used in connection with firearms transfers by November 28, 1997. This would obviate the handgun purchase waiting period mandated by the Brady Law, enacted in 1994.

H. R. 339, a CCW reciprocity proposal by Rep. Clifford B. Stearns of Florida,

would provide for a national standard in accordance with which nonresidents of a state may carry concealed firearms in the state, and also exempt qualified current and former law enforcement officers from state laws prohibiting the carrying of concealed handguns.

Original cosponsors are Reps. Bob Barr of Georgia, Roscoe Bartlett of Maryland and John N. Hostettler of Indiana.

H. R. 424, by Rep. Sue Myrick of North Carolina, would provide for the imposition of increased mandatory minimum sentences for criminals possessing firearms. Reps. Benjamin A. Gilman of New York, Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr. of Wisconsin and Gerald B. H. Solomon of New York are original cosponsors.

Rep. Randy Cunningham of California, with Reps. Brian Bilbray of California, John Bryant of Texas, Howard Coble of North Carolina, Tom Coburn of Oklahoma, Martin Frost of Texas, Ralph M. Hall of Texas, Duncan Hunter of California, Susan V. Molinari of New York, Sue Myrick of North Carolina and Ron Packard of California as cosponsors, introduced H.R. 218, which would exempt qualified current and former law enforcement officers from state laws prohibiting the carrying of concealed handguns. It was referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary.

GRAMM'S GUN STOLEN IN WASHINGTON THEFT

Sen. Phil Gramm of Texas, an outspoken and effective supporter of the individual right to keep and bear arms throughout his years in Congress, was the victim of a gun theft last fall, reported THE HILL, a weekly Washington, D.C. publication on Capitol Hill, in its Jan. 8, 1997 issue.

According to reporter Jennifer Senior, a .44 caliber revolver dating back to the Civil War was stolen from Gramm's private office, sparking a Christmas break investigation by the U.S. Capitol Police that concentrated on the Capitol Hill work force.

Larry Neal, Gramm's press secretary,

said the office first reported the firearm missing on Nov. 7, 1996, after Sen. Gramm defeated Victor Morales in his bid for reelection.

Police estimate the value of the 13 and 3/4 inch bluish Colt Peacemaker at between \$2,500 and \$3,500. Described as being in mint condition, the 1864 antique was loaned to Gramm by a personal friend from Texas.

Neal said "it was on a table in the Senator's personal office," and added that the firearm last was seen in October. "You could see it as you walked in the door. It's an interesting artifact."

Neal said Gramm's office will not be

offering any reward for the return of the firearm. According to a tape recording of a Dec. 12, 1996 interview with a man questioned by U.S. Capitol detectives, which THE HILL reported it obtained, Detective Joseph DePalma said the U.S. Capitol Police intended to reward anyone with information which could help close the case. "There's a monetary reward," he said. "We can't reveal how much it is, but it's substantial."

Sgt. Dan Nichols, a spokesman for the U.S. Capitol Police, says he can't discuss the case because it's still open.

SNYDER OUTLINES GUN RIGHTS BEFORE THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA

John Michael Snyder, CCRKBA Public Affairs Director, was the featured speaker during last month's meeting of the Northern Virginia Citizens Defense League. He took the opportunity to outline contemporary arguments in support of the right of law-abiding individual citizens to keep and bear arms. Following here is a summary text of his remarks.

We are committed to the defense of the civil rights of all Virginians, of all Americans.

Believe me, we need this commitment.

In this year of 1997, some leaders in diverse areas of our state, local and national life emphasize the necessity of collective interdependence. They see this as a key to international security, to future American economic success, to educational rejuvenation, and to freedom from crime.

While there well may be some solid rational basis for this emphasis, there is a danger that an over emphasis in this direction may lead to an undermining of another, at least equally significant element, of our life in society.

That element is the individual citizen, the integrity of the individual citizen, the inviolability of the civil rights of the citizen.

Indeed, according to a report published in THE WASHINGTON POST last fall, on October 20, 1996, a majority of the electorate is upset with, and even hostile to, government.

In face-to-face interviews with 2,047 adults, the Gallup Organization found majorities who believe that the so-called "governing elite" is out of touch with average Americans.

According to the survey,

- 64 percent believe the governing elite is "insensitive to the people's concerns;"
- 59 percent believe it is "unconcerned with values and morality;"
- 54 percent believe it is "unconcerned with the common good;" and
- 69 percent believe it is "only concerned with the elite's own agenda."

It seems that a lot of people see an essential contradiction between collective interdependence and individual civil rights.

I do not.

While there sometimes is a necessary tension between them, the two together, when properly understood and utilized,

comprise an essential social and political unity.

Let's be specific.

In the area of fighting crime, for instance, we can agree, I think, that we need well-staffed, well-trained and adequately funded law enforcement forces to protect our society from crime and from civil chaos.

We also can agree, though, I think, that to place exclusive reliance on police would be to invite disaster.

Under our system of government and law, the police have a duty to enforce the law, to enforce government decisions, and to protect society. They do not have a duty to protect individual citizens. This is evident from a number of court decisions which have refused to hold police responsible for violations of a duty to protect individual citizens when citizens have alleged that the police have failed to protect them.

In a 1981 decision in *Warren v. the District of Columbia*, D.C. App., 444 A.2d 1, for instance, the Superior Court of the District of Columbia held that "the fundamental principle (is-ed.) that a government and its agents are under no general duty to provide public services, such as police protection, to any particular individual citizen... The duty to provide public services is owed to the public at large, and, absent a special relationship between the police and an individual, no specific legal duty exists."

If in fact the police did have a duty to protect all individual citizens all of the time, we would not have a free society. We would have a policed society, or a police state.

Just consider the number of times law-abiding citizens in the United States use personal firearms in order to prevent crime or to thwart crime already in progress.

As our Northern Virginia Citizens Defense League bumper strip has it, "Guns Save Lives - 2.5 Million Defensive Uses Each Year."

This is not just simple sloganeering. There is a valid basis for the citation.

Although it is difficult to obtain precise figures, since many private citizen uses of firearms for self-defense are never reported to the police, research by Florida State University criminolo-

gist Gary Kleck provides some insight.

In a huge 1992-1993 study undertaken by Dr. Kleck, nearly 5,000 people were asked detailed questions about whether or not they had used a firearm to protect themselves from crime, and if so under what circumstances. From the results of this study, Professor Kleck estimated that close to 2.5 million Americans annually use firearms for self-defense. In the vast majority of these cases, no one is killed or wounded, and rarely are shots even fired.

Newspapers throughout the United States chronicle defensive uses of firearms throughout any given year. On August 25 of last year, for instance, The Press of Atlantic City, New Jersey reported that a teenage crook got quite a surprise after he entered the home of 68-year old Ruth Haskin through a kitchen window and walked into her bedroom. The woman from Upper Deerfield Township kept a caliber .22 handgun within arm's reach whenever she slept. Upon waking up to find the youth in her bedroom, she reached for her gun and shot him in the chest as he came at her, wounding him.

Evidence also indicates that an armed citizenry generally has a deterrent effect on crime. According to sociologists James Wright and Peter Rossi, criminals tend to be more concerned about encountering an armed victim than about being arrested by the police. Wright and Rossi conducted two studies commissioned by the U. S. Department of Justice in the 1980s that examined the attitudes of incarcerated criminals toward violent crime. They interviewed over 1,800 convicted felons who were in prison in 10 different states. A majority of these felons claimed to worry more about dealing with an armed victim while committing a crime than about running into the police. That's one reason why so many crimes are committed outside the home: criminals fear armed homeowners. When criminals do target houses, they pick residences where no one is home to avoid the possibility of being shot. Criminals prefer preying on people on the streets. Because of concealed weapons restrictions in many areas, they most likely will be unarmed in those areas.

The Wright and Rossi study validates the common sense realization that civilian gun ownership has a significant deterrent effect on criminal behavior. Thirty-four percent of the felons interviewed indicated

RIGHTS ARGUMENTS IN SPEECH VIRGINIA CITIZENS DEFENSE LEAGUE

that at some point in their careers they had been "scared off, shot at, wounded, or captured by an armed citizen." See THE ARMED CRIMINAL IN AMERICA, A STUDY OF INCARCERATED FELONS, by James D. Wright and Peter H. Rossi, a U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice Research Report published in July of 1985.

All of this comes as no surprise to us with the common sense realization that criminals don't want to run into law-abiding armed citizens. They don't even want to run the risk of possibly running into an armed citizen.

In a study of FBI statistics for states which have enacted laws allowing their law-abiding citizens the right to carry concealed handguns as compared with states which have not enacted such laws, Chicago law Professor John R. Lott, Jr. demonstrates that firearms ownership has a life-saving, crime preventing function in society.

According to Professor Lott, who prepared a synopsis of his study last August for THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, "by adopting shall-issue laws, states reduced murders by 8.5 percent, rapes by five percent and robbery by three percent. If those states which did not permit concealed handguns in 1992 had permitted them back then, citizens would have been spared approximately 1,570 murders, 4,177 rapes, 60,000 aggravated assaults and 12,000 robberies...

"The benefits of concealed handguns are not limited to just those who carry them or use them in self-defense. The very fact that these weapons are concealed keeps criminals uncertain as to whether a potential victim will be able to defend himself with lethal force. The possibility that anyone might be carrying a gun makes attacking everyone less attractive: unarmed citizens in effect 'free-ride' on their pistol-packing fellows."

Professor Lott in his study states that "the policy implications are undeniable: If you're interested in reducing murder and rape, then letting law-abiding, mentally competent citizens carry concealed weapons has a positive impact."

In his work, Lott also cites other, earlier studies indicating that, of those private firearms which are used in self-defense up to two and a half million times a year, about 400,000 of the defenders so using their guns believe that using a gun "al-

most certainly" saved a life.

According to a USNEWS/CNN survey conducted nearly two years ago by the Gallup Organization and reported in the May 1, 1995 issue of U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT, almost 13 million Americans have prevented crime with the help of a firearm.

The survey of 813 randomly selected adults found that 37 percent of Americans (about 92.5 million) say they own a gun for protection, and 14 percent of that number say that the presence or use of the gun actually helped prevent a crime.

There is evidence, too, that the law enforcement community generally concurs with the proposition that gun ownership by law-abiding citizens has a social, crime-battling benefit.

Each year, the National Association of Chiefs of Police (NACOP) conducts a postal opinion survey of the nation's 15,000 Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police, and receives at least a 10 percent response, considered tremendous for this kind of poll.

According to the ninth such annual survey completed last year, 94.9 percent of the nation's command officers believe that any law-abiding citizen who wishes to obtain a firearm of the types lawfully sold for recreation or home protection should be able to do so under current state law.

In addition, 89.6 percent believe that the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution grants any law-abiding citizen the right to purchase a firearm for sport or self-defense under state and federal laws.

The survey reminded respondents that "in past years, riots, earthquakes, hurricanes, floods and other national disasters have required citizens to protect themselves and their property until order could be restored."

When the respondents were asked if "any law-abiding citizen should continue under your state laws to purchase any legal weapon for self-defense," 93.1 percent said "yes."

About half of the officers indicated that their police departments are unable to respond to emergency calls where a person is being threatened with a deadly weapon in time to save that person from serious injury or death.

This shows that the individual ulti-

mately is responsible for his or her own safety in the face of violent criminal attack.

It eviscerates the argument that the police alone are responsible for public and personal safety and that, in the current era, the possession of firearms for personal safety is unnecessary and unwarranted.

It indicates that, on the contrary, such possession is often both most necessary and absolutely warranted.

The personal possession of firearms can be necessary for both personal and public safety. After all, personal safety and the public safety are intertwined. If persons are not safe, than the public is not safe.

Those who work to undermine the individual right of law-abiding citizens to keep and bear arms in effect undermine both personal and public safety.

This includes supporters of waiting periods between purchase and acquisition of handguns such as that contained in the Brady Law.

According to the NACOP survey, 84.6 percent of the command officers say the five-day waiting period has not prevented a criminal from obtaining a firearm from illegal sources in their area.

The mandated waiting period tells the law-abiding citizen that he or she does not have a right to self-defense for the time of the waiting period. In effect, it potentially undermines the right to life of a threatened and unarmed citizen at least for the length of the waiting period. Hopefully, the U. S. Supreme Court soon will see fit to declare this wretched piece of legislation fully or partially unconstitutional.

Of course, there are those die hard anti-self defense people and organizations refusing to accept a reality staring them in the face. The reality is that the right to self-defense and the ability of law-abiding citizens to exercise that right is of great benefit to society at large.

Proponents of restrictive firearms laws or of outright bans on gun ownership, for instance, like to point to the number of murders, about 18,000 or so, caused each year by the misuse of firearms.

They fail, however, to keep this in perspective. They fail to mention that the 18,000 figure is nine one-hundred thousandths of one percent (0.00009%) of

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THE DEFENSE OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS

(Continued from page 5)

the estimated 200 million rifles, shotguns and handguns in private hands in the United States.

They also fail to mention that the 18,000 figure is seventy-two thousandths of one percent (0.0072%) of the estimated two and one-half million annual defensive uses of firearms in the United States.

This means that firearms in the United States are used by private citizens to save lives or to stop crime each year over 138 times more than they are used by people who murder other people.

Few, if any, of the anti-self defense extremists would fail to see the social benefit, or even necessity, of the estimated 200 million privately owned motor vehicles in the United States, even though there are about 43,000 deaths due to motor vehicle accidents each year in the United States.

While there are about 200 million guns in private hands in the United States and an equal number of motor vehicles, there are more than two times the number of deaths due to motor vehicle accidents in the United States than there are murders committed with the use of firearms.

Even if we were to add the estimated 18,000 suicides committed each year with the use of firearms to the 18,000 other murders committed with the use of firearms, the figures together, 36,000, still is well below the 43,000 deaths due to motor vehicle accidents.

Those who deny the social benefits of firearms ownership really do not have a realistic perspective. They really are not in touch with reality.

The right to own firearms, and the ability to exercise the right to self-defense which gun ownership provides law-abiding citizens, is at least as beneficial to society as is the private ownership of motor vehicles. Maybe even more so. To my knowledge, it has not yet been demonstrated that auto ownership stops crime, but we have demonstrated that private gun ownership stops crimes millions of times each year in the United States.

We're really on solid ground. Guns are good. Guns save lives. Guns prevent crime.

Let's see to it that right to carry concealed laws such as the one here in Virginia and in other states are maintained and strengthened.

Let's battle against laws and legislative proposals in this great Commonwealth and elsewhere which undermine the right of law-abiding citizens to exercise their natural right to self-defense.

A number of our good, law-abiding neighbors, such as those who live in Maryland and the District of Columbia, really are unfortunate. They live under unenlightened, backward political regimes which generally don't allow law-abiding citizens to carry concealed firearms, even for the protection of their lives and the lives of their loved ones. Those regimes must be replaced with enlightened political leaders who believe in the people, who believe in empowering law-abiding citizens to be able to protect themselves and their loved ones from violent criminal attack.

Actually, Virginia, too, is burdened with some backward, unenlightened, anti-self defense, anti-gun extremists, such as Rep. Jim Moran, who also ought to be replaced.

In the meantime, though, let's work for a federal law which will allow a citizen who has a permit to carry a concealed firearm issued by any state, such as Virginia, to carry that firearm in any state, including Maryland, and, even though it's not a state, the District of Columbia.

As I said, guns are good. They save lives. We need them. Society needs them. Let's rededicate ourselves, here and now, to see to it that the right of law-abiding individual citizens to keep and bear arms, the right to self-defense, the right to protect our society from violent, brutal, predatory criminals, the right to preserve, protect and defend innocent life itself, is maintained and strengthened.

In Washington, D. C., Congressman Bob Barr of Georgia introduced H. R. 26, to provide that the firearms prohibitions applicable by reason of a domestic violence misdemeanor conviction, which last year were enacted into law, do not apply if the conviction occurred before the prohibitions became law, that is September 30, 1996. With Rep. Bob Stump of Arizona listed as the original cosponsor, it was referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary.

CCRKBA hopes that, if the 1996 act is amended, it is amended so that any correction relates to the severity of the domestic abuse crimes involved in each instance. Thus if there is evidence of actual physical violence involved in a domestic abuse investigation and the defendant is convicted or pleads guilty after proper advice of the consequences, the present prohibition on firearms ownership should be retained.

Failing that, CCRKBA believes Congress should reinstitute and fund a federal system for relief from disability, as previously existed with felony records. If a crime is felonious, it should be treated as such no matter who is involved. If not, the matter should be left to the discretion of the states or the federal agencies involved.

In the Lone Star State of Texas, State Sen. Jerry Patterson and State Reps. Ray Allen and Bill Carter announced that right to carry reform bills would be introduced in both chambers of the State Legislature. The three right to keep and bear arms supporters would like to roll back restrictions on where license holders may lawfully carry and preempt local regulation of concealed handgun license holders.

According to the U. S. Department of Justice, drug offenders accounted for nearly a third of the 872,000 felony convictions in state courts in 1994. Property crimes made up nearly another third.

The Justice Department's Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that violent crimes were responsible for less than one in five state felony convictions that year.

The median age of convicted felons rose from 27 years in 1988 to 29 years in 1994, reflecting the rise in the average age of the population as the large "baby boom" generation grows older.

Teenage murderers, however, were an exception to that trend. Teenagers accounted for 10 percent of murderers in 1988 but 18 percent in 1994, as they were recruited into violent crack cocaine trafficking. Later government figures from a different survey, reported the Associated Press, show that the arrest rate of teenagers for violent crimes, particularly murder, declined in 1995 for the first time since 1987.

People in their twenties accounted for about 20 percent of the adult population but 43 percent of the convicted state felonies.

Fifty-one percent of the convicted felons were white, 48 percent black and one percent other races.

The violent crimes of murder, manslaughter, rape, robbery, aggravated assault and kidnapping accounted for 18.9 percent of 1994 state felony convictions. Property crimes of burglary, larceny, fraud and forgery accounted for 31.6 percent. Drug possession or trafficking accounted for 31.4 percent.

The number of law enforcement officers who died in action in 1996 was the lowest in 30 years, according to the National Association of Chiefs of Police (NACOP).

NACOP, which has been compiling statistics since 1960, said as of December 31, 1996 that 118 line-of-duty deaths had been reported for the year.

Even if the number rises somewhat as expected with late reports, that would still make 1996 the safest year for law enforcement officers since 1966, when 108 deaths were counted.

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 "The Australian government's campaign to disarm its gun-owning population has descended into a farce," reports Chris Oliver Wilson of the LONDON DAILY TELEGRAPH.

According to Wilson, "firearm owners are collecting generous compensation for handing in newly banned guns, then buying equally lethal but legal weapons with the cash.

"The gun lobby's success in evading the ban is making a mockery of legislation passed in the wake of the massacre of 35 persons in Port Arthur, Tasmania, by lone gunman Martin Bryant last April.

"Gun dealers across the country have been inundated with shooting enthusiasts brandishing government compensation checks, often worth thousands of dollars. They are buying powerful new lever-action and bolt-action rifles, which have ranges up to 400 yards.

"It is a fiasco," said Colin Elkington, a New South Wales gun dealer whose sales have soared. 'Many owners are handing in banned guns and buying 10-shot repeating firearms of the same caliber. They're as lethal and not a lot slower to reload.'

Around 250,000 of the four million firearms in public ownership have already been handed in and \$90 million paid out. Mr. Elkington estimates that more than 150,000 new guns will be bought with the money...

"Olly Westcott, a fencing contractor from Perth, Western Australia, handed in his pump-action shotgun last week in exchange for about \$400. His next stop on receiving the money was Doug Barnes' Gun Mart, where he admired a Swift .22 bolt-action rifle with a view to buying one later.

"Mr. Westcott is convinced that behind the federal government's campaign lies a hidden agenda.

"They want Australia gun-free in the buildup to it becoming a republic,' he said, conspiratorially. 'This is a way of controlling the population. Next they'll clamp down on fishing.'

"The move to make Australia a republic would break traditional ties with the British Crown...

"Politicians' zeal for the measures was deflated when they found the strength of opposition at home, especially in rural Queensland, Western Australia and Northern Territory."

SAF Periodical Ad

**SNYDER OUTLINES GUN RIGHTS
ARGUMENTS IN SPEECH
BEFORE THE NORTHERN
VIRGINIA CITIZENS DEFENSE
LEAGUE**

