

# THE Gun Owners

31 YEARS OF NO COMPROMISE – 1975-2006

## GOA Continues Efforts to Block Gun Confiscation

by *Erich Pratt*

It's been a pretty good year so far.

Several states are considering Emergency Protection Bills which will keep people's guns safe from confiscation during a state of emergency.

These bills have been introduced in a dozen states ... with several bills being introduced by legislators who are GOA members.

Mississippi, Virginia, Idaho and Kentucky and have already signed their bills into law. And several other states have passed bills out of the house or senate.

The final vote tallies have been overwhelmingly pro-gun.

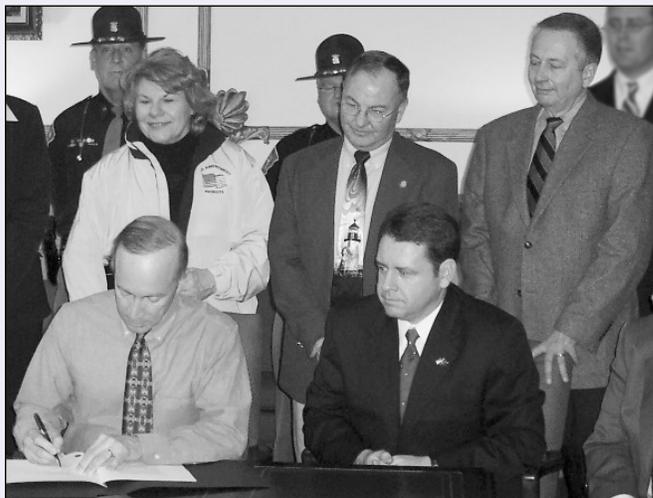
In the nation's capital, two congressmen have introduced federal versions of the Emergency Protection legislation. In the House, Rep. Bobby Jindal (R-LA) has introduced H.R. 5013 to prohibit the confiscation of firearms by any federal employee.

Likewise, pro-gun Senator David Vitter (R-LA) has sponsored S. 2599 to do the same thing.

Sen. Vitter has decried the gun thefts that "were carried out at gunpoint" in New Orleans and plainly states that these activities were done in "contravention of the Second Amendment ... rendering [citizens] helpless against criminal activity."

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## GOA Supported Bills Becoming Law!



GOA Executive Director Larry Pratt — standing in the second row on the far right — was on hand to see Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels (R) sign concealed carry reform in March. Other GOA-supported legislation was recently enacted in several states, including bills to prevent state officials from confiscating firearms during a state of emergency or to allow gun owners to "Stand their Ground" when attacked. (Other notable personalities in the picture include the house cosponsor of the legislation — Rep. Troy Woodruff (R) who is seated next to Gov. Daniels — and Margie Tomes of 2nd Amendment Patriots, who is standing right behind the governor.)

## Defenseless Decision: Why Were Guns Taken From Law-abiding Citizens in New Orleans?

by *John R. Lott Jr.*

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans' residents got an idea of what life is like without the rule of law. They had no telephones, no way to call 911. Even if they had, the police who reported for duty were busy with rescue missions, not fighting crime. Citizens had to protect themselves. This was made rather difficult by the city's confiscation of guns, even from law-abiding citizens.

After five months of denial in federal

district court, the city last week made an embarrassing admission: in the aftermath of the hurricane, the severely overworked police apparently had the time to confiscate thousands of guns from law-abiding citizens.

Numerous media stories have shown how useful guns were to the ordinary citizens of New Orleans who weren't forcibly disarmed. *Fox News* reported several defensive gun uses. One city resident, John Carolan, was taking care of many family members, including his

three-year-old granddaughter, when three men came to his house asking about his generator, threatening him with a machete. Carolan showed them his gun and they left. Another resident, Finis Shelnett, recounts a similar story that the gangs left him alone after seeing "I have a very large gun."

Signs painted on boarded up windows in various parts of town warned criminals in advance not to try: the owner had shotguns inside.

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## ***GOA Continues Efforts to Block Gun Confiscation***

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Readers of *The Gun Owners* may recall that during the post-Hurricane Katrina debacle, video documentation surfaced showing that officials were disarming law-abiding gun owners who were doing nothing more than keeping their self-defense firearms available to protect their property and loved ones.

One can view this disgusting footage at <http://www.gunowners.org/notb.htm> on the GOA website.

Gun owner outrage led the courts in Louisiana to insist that the practice cease, after the fact. But to keep it from happening again, officials need to be specifically prohibited from even *trying* it.

Most states have “emergency powers” laws, and *that* is the hook anti-gun officials use to take away people’s guns just when they need them most.

This year, one of GOA’s highest priorities at the state level is to address the problems with so-called “emergency powers” across the country.

GOA-supported bills that will make it absolutely certain that no state official could disarm the citizenry during an emergency are currently pending in several states.

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***Scalise told Gun Owners that, “I showed the DVD you sent me on our computer monitors during the debate, so all the members got to watch the confiscations — especially when they tackled that lady in her house on Magazine Street — while the debate was going on.”***

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### **GOA activists flood the capital in The Bayou State**

As this newsletter goes to press, Louisiana could very well become the fifth state to enact legislation keeping people safe from gun confiscation.

Gun Owners of America engaged in a massive grassroots campaign in the state to urge legislators to cosponsor Rep. Steve Scalise’s Emergency Protection Bill.

Scalise told GOA that the results were astounding.

“I’ve had a number of [Representatives] come up to me asking to co-author my bill because they heard from



**Louisiana State Rep. Steve Scalise (R) thanked GOA for helping him get 80 percent of the House to cosponsor his bill. “I’ve had a number of [Representatives] come up to me ...because they heard from members of Gun Owners of America,” Scalise said.**

members of Gun Owners of America in their districts in support of my bill,” Scalise said. “I appreciate all of your help.”

In the end, more than 80 legislators — out of a total of 104 — agreed to cosponsor Scalise’s bill!

Some Democrats tried to poke holes in the Emergency Protection legislation

during debate on the floor, but the images of guns being stolen by police were too difficult for opponents to combat. When the final roll call was taken, none of his opponents could even bring themselves to vote against the bill.

Scalise told Gun Owners that, “I showed the DVD you sent me on our computer monitors during the debate, so all the members got to watch the confiscations — especially when they tackled that lady in her house on Magazine Street — while the debate was going on.

“Thanks again for sending that to me because it was very effective in making

the point that this legislation is necessary,” Scalise said.

Both the senate and house passed Emergency Protection Bills by unanimous margins in April, which means they could easily override Gov. Kathleen Blanco (D) if she vetoes the legislation.

Of course, nothing is ever certain in a legislature. Consider what happened in Arizona this spring, when anti-gun Gov. Janet Napolitano (D) vetoed this exact same type of legislation.

She managed to peel off enough Democrats (who voted pro-gun the first time around) to sustain her veto by a



**U.S. Sen. David Vitter has introduced S. 2599 to keep federal agencies from confiscating guns during a state of emergency.**

single vote in the state senate. The issue is now dead for the year in the Grand Canyon State.

### **Federal cops helped steal guns**

At the national level, Sen. Vitter and Rep. Jindal are trying to enact a confiscation ban on federal police.

This is significant because press reports last September showed that it was more than just state and local police who were stealing people’s guns.

The *Associated Press* reported that “police and soldiers removed guns from houses after the storm flooded the city, and they confiscated guns from some evacuees.”

The *Washington Post* reported that U.S. Marshals were involved in the gun confiscations in New Orleans. JoAnn Guidos is the owner of a local bar who

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# GOA Helping Gun Owners to “Stand Your Ground”

by Erich Pratt

A pro-gun wave is sweeping the nation.

The ability of gun owners to defend themselves and their family from violent attack is on the rise.

Several legislators in the states have introduced bills that would emulate legislation that was passed in Florida last year — the so-called Stand Your Ground law which has been driving anti-gun fanatics crazy.

So far, there have been about a half-dozen states that have enacted these laws. Oklahoma will probably become the next state.

As this newsletter goes to press, both houses in The Sooner State have passed the bill. The chief sponsor, pro-gun Rep. Kevin Calvey (R), thanked Gun Owners of America for its help.

“Thanks so much for helping me push my Stand Your Ground bill through the legislature,” said Rep. Calvey, who is also running for Congress. “This bill will go a long way to protect the safety of law-abiding gun owners in Oklahoma.”

Similar to Florida’s bill, these measures would do several things to improve people’s safety, such as:

- Remove the “duty to retreat” if you are unlawfully attacked by another, hence, allowing you to “stand your ground;”
- Give a person the presumption of innocence if he or she shoots someone who had forcibly and unlawfully entered the gun owner’s home or car.

Based on either scenario, these Stand Your Ground bills would insulate gun owners from lawsuit or prosecution after using firearms in self-defense.

All too often in this country, law-abiding citizens who are attacked outside of their homes are required to first retreat before they are allowed to use lethal force in self-defense. This course of action can sometimes endanger the law-abiding, thus giving the criminals the upper hand.

Stand Your Ground bills would remove this “duty to retreat” and allow a person to immediately use a firearm



**Oklahoma Rep. Kevin Calvey (R) thanked GOA for helping him push a Stand Your Ground bill through the legislature.**

to ward off an attack.

GOA has also seen homeowners unduly investigated after using lethal force in their abode, as prosecutors have undeservedly required gun owners to prove their lives were in jeopardy.

These bills would dramatically change this standard of proof by giving the presumption of innocence to the homeowner, simply based on the fact that the intruder had forcibly and unlawfully entered the home.

## GOA working to get clean bills passed

While there is good news to report in seeing these bills become law, there is one disturbing trend. Some legislators have insisted upon protecting rogue cops who are defensively shot by homeowners.

GOA was successful in getting this harmful language removed in at least one state, but like a virus, the idea has spread to other places.

This is troubling because GOA has seen many cases where the police have either accidentally or illegitimately entered a person’s home, only to see the person — who was NOT engaged in illegal activity — shoot back in self-defense.

In many of these cases, the citizen had no idea he was shooting at police. Quite often, their shouts of “police” are either not heard above the cacophony, or such shouts are presumed to be a ruse. Again, this is not an unexpected response when the citizen is NOT engaged in criminal enterprise.

There is a current case in Mississippi where a homeowner, Corey Maye, fired at police, although the facts indicate that he may not have realized they were law-enforcement.

Apparently, the police were barging into the wrong home, and Maye — after being awakened from his sleep — grabbed his firearm and shot at people who he thought were intruders. (One can read more about it at [www.keith-boykin.com/arch/001705.html](http://www.keith-boykin.com/arch/001705.html) on the Internet.)

Unfortunately, this is not an isolated case, and there are many other examples where law-enforcement officers

have come crashing through the door, even though they could have served warrants in the traditional (more peaceful) method:

- DEA agents and the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department raided Donald Scott’s home near Malibu, California in 1992. When Scott emerged carrying a gun, a deputy sheriff shot and killed him. Although the agents claimed they were searching for drugs, none were found. An independent investigation by the Ventura County District Attorney’s Office concluded that the Sheriff’s Department was motivated, in part, by a desire to seize and forfeit Scott’s ranch.<sup>1</sup>
- That same year, Donald Carlson dialed 9-1-1 and grabbed his firearm to defend himself from intruders whom he thought were robbers bursting into his California home. They were, in fact, DEA agents. Carlson was shot three times. No drugs were found in his home.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2003, 11 officers were prosecuted after they killed 72-year old Richard Brown during a raid. Prosecutors made the case that the officers planted a gun in Brown’s hand to justify the fact that they had shot the elderly man 123 times.<sup>3</sup>
- In New York City, police killed a 57-year old woman when they accidentally raided the wrong apartment. Alberta Spruill, a long-time city employee, died from a heart attack after being subjected to a flash grenade and being handcuffed.<sup>4</sup>

GOA will continue lobbying to remove language that would insulate rogue cops from being protected under these Stand Your Ground laws.

But make no mistake, the advancing wave of legislation around the country is a plus. Assuring gun owners that they will not be punished for defending their families from criminal attack is definitely a good thing. ■

<sup>1</sup>GOA and NRA letter to Senator Judd Gregg, January 10, 1994.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>*Orlando Sentinel*, March 6, 2003.

<sup>4</sup>*Associated Press*, May 16, 2003.

# Only Professionals Should Have Guns?

by Craig Fields

The gun control mentality assumes the superior knowledge, competence and generosity of government employees.

It is assumed that — simply by their working for the government — employees who might otherwise be ignorant, incompetent and malicious are somehow imbued with the opposite set of qualities.

Well, meet Lee Paige, America's most famous DEA agent.

Paige was giving a lecture to a 4th grade class in 2004 when he ran into a little mishap. He was explaining to the class that he was the only one in the room who was professional enough to carry a gun, when his little listeners heard a loud bang.

Yes, the bang came from the front of the room, where Mr. Paige was standing. He had shot himself in the leg.

Everyone should go to [www.gunowners.org/op0516.htm](http://www.gunowners.org/op0516.htm) to see the actual video from that April 2004 lecture. One sees Paige saying: "I'm the only one in this room who is professional enough to carry this Glock .40...BANG."

The story would have been humorous enough had it ended there. But wait, there is more.

This undercover agent subsequently got in trouble for getting his face on camera, although not for his outrageous



**DEA Agent, Lee Paige**

behavior recorded by the video.

The video was used in training seminars with other government agencies, and it was from one of these that the video was leaked to the public domain

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***“Paige was giving a lecture to a 4th grade class in 2004 when he ran into a little mishap. He was explaining to the class that he was the only one in the room who was professional enough to carry a gun, when his little listeners heard a loud bang...”***

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— and it eventually made its way around the Internet.

So now the DEA Agent is suing the DEA for invasion of his privacy which has, he claims, hurt his job prospects. He complains that he has become the butt of jokes in restaurants, grocery

stores and airports ... and that he can no longer work undercover.

Imagine that.

His livelihood, he argues, has been ruined. And yet, he appeared on CNN to do an interview to discuss his lawsuit and the “invasion of privacy.” How this helps protect his privacy is rather difficult to fathom.

Paige is a rather bulky fellow who previously played for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, which makes one wonder if he took one too many shots to the head. He should be grateful for the press that he has received as they have tended to downplay his arrogant idiocy.

When CNN ran the video, the network chose not to run the sound track, so viewers missed the “I’m the only one

who is professional enough” boast that preceded his gaffe.

He should be counting his blessings. ■

*Erich Pratt also contributed to this article.*

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## ***GOA Continues Efforts to Block Gun Confiscation***

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was more than prepared to defend her establishment.

Her beer was cold; her ice was staying frozen — thanks to a generator that was keeping her refrigerated products ready for her customers, who were just beginning to return to the neighborhood.

But once her guns were stolen by the Marshals, she was forced to leave.

### **BATFE assisted in confiscation effort**

Another federal agency that helped

local police last September was the BATFE (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives). The agency assisted by warehousing hundreds of confiscated guns.

While the BATFE has begun returning these guns to their owners, they are first conducting background checks — that is, registering gun owners — to make sure they are not prohibited from possessing firearms.

The New Orleans police have also begun returning stolen firearms, although press reports indicate that only a handful of people have claimed their guns.

According to an April 20 report by the *Associated Press*, some owners have complained that it is quite difficult to

get their guns back, as they have to bring a bill of sale or an affidavit with the weapon's serial number.

Imagine that ... asking people who may have lost most of their earthly belongings to provide paper documentation that they owned the firearm.

Percy Taplet, 73, said that his shotgun was confiscated by the National Guard and state police. When he tried to get his gun back, local police told him he had to check with the state police.

Taplet is not hopeful. “I won't ever see that gun again,” he says. “It's gone like everything else in that storm.” ■

*Craig Fields also contributed to this article.*

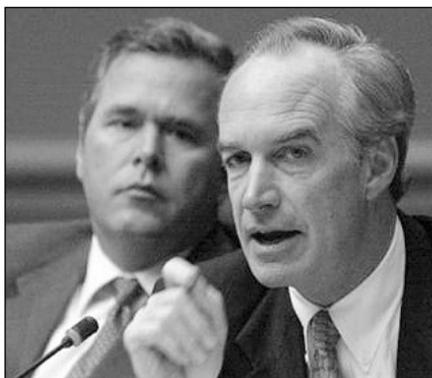
# Idaho Gov. Dirk Kempthorne Picked to Head Interior – Park Service Gun Ban Repeal Long Overdue

by John Velleco

(Washington) — In March, President Bush nominated Idaho Governor Dirk Kempthorne as Secretary of the Department of Interior.

Kempthorne's appointment and confirmation hearings give gun owners another opportunity to highlight a long-standing ban of firearms on National Park Service (NPS) land.

Unlike regulations for Forrest Service and BLM lands, which allow for the law of the state in which the land is located to govern firearm possession, NPS land is subject to a blanket gun ban regardless of state law.



**Idaho Gov. Dirk Kempthorne (R) is the new Secretary for the Department of the Interior.**

This policy is dangerous and irresponsible.

Carrying a firearm for self-defense in a wilderness setting is common sense simply due to the potential risks posed by animals. In today's environment, however, visitors might be more likely to run into a violent gang, drug smugglers, and illegal aliens than they would a rabid mountain lion.

National Parks have become so dangerous in recent years that the U.S. Park Rangers Lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police began issuing a list of the top

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## Why Were Guns Taken?

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Last September 8, a little more than a week after the hurricane, New Orleans' police superintendent, Eddie Compass announced: "No one will be able to be armed. Guns will be taken. Only law enforcement will be allowed to have guns." Even legally registered firearms were seized, though exceptions were made for select businesses and for some wealthy individuals to hire guards.

Undoubtedly, selected businesses and well-connected wealthy individuals had good reason to want protection, but so did others without the same political pull. One mother saw the need for a gun after she and her two children (ages 9 and 12) saw someone killed in New Orleans after the hurricane. The mother said: "I was a card-carrying, anti-gun liberal — not anymore."

John C. Guidos was successfully guarding his tavern on St. Claude Ave on September 7, when police took his shotgun and pistol; indeed, it was the only time that he saw any cops. Soon afterwards robbers looted the tavern. Wishing for a gun during disasters isn't anything new. Just a little over a decade ago, police stood by, largely helpless, during the Los Angeles riots after the Rodney King verdict. Yet, not all the victims were defenseless. Korean merchants stood out as one group that

banded together and used their guns to protect their stores from looting.

A similar lesson hasn't been lost on New Orleans' citizens. As one resident, Art DePodesta, told the New York *Daily News* shortly after the storm hit, "The cops are busy as it is. If more citizens took security and matters into their own hands, we won't be in this situation."

Not only do law-abiding citizens with guns deter many criminals from committing a crime to begin with, possessing a gun is the safest way to confront a criminal if you are forced to.



**In September, New Orleans Police Commissioner Ed Compass stated, "No one will be able to be armed. Guns will be taken. Only law enforcement will be allowed to have guns."**

Deterrence works. The United States has one of the world's lowest "hot" burglary rates (burglaries committed while people are in the building) at 13 percent, compared to the "gun-free" British rate of 59 percent. Surveys of convicted burglars indicate American burglars spend at least twice as long as their

British counterparts casing a house before breaking in. That explains why American burglars rarely break into homes when the residents are there. The reason most American burglars give for taking so much time is that they're afraid of getting shot.

Even without a catastrophe like Katrina, it would have been a poor strategy for would-be victims in New Orleans merely to call 911 and wait for help. The average response time of police in New Orleans before the hurricane was eleven minutes. The Justice Department's National Crime Victimization Survey has shown for decades that having a gun is the safest course of action when a criminal confronts you, far safer than behaving passively.

It would be nice if the police were always there to protect us, but we don't live in a utopia, and the police understand that they almost always arrive on the scene after the crime has been committed. What does New Orleans' Mayor Nagin recommend that people such as John Carolan and his granddaughter do the next time that have to fend for themselves? The city must know that there isn't much of a defense for taking citizens' guns; after all, it took them five months to admit to it. ■

*Mr. Lott, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, is the author of More Guns, Less Crime (University of Chicago Press, 2000) and The Bias Against Guns (Regnery 2003).*

# Just Listen to Our Words, Don't Watch What We Do

by Larry Pratt

*Foxes in the Henhouse* is a book of advice to the Democratic Party by Steve Jarding and Dave "Mudcat" Saunders, the authors of Democrat Mark Warner's 2001 winning campaign for governor of Virginia.

The Warner campaign sponsored a NASCAR driver (for one race), created a pro-Warner bluegrass tune and did not treat Virginia's 223,931 licensed hunters and 403,277 licensed fishermen as moral lepers. Those decisions, plus Warner's willingness to invest his own \$200 million fortune on his campaign and Republican incompetence, won Warner the governorship.

Gun Owners of America is nonpartisan and I would frankly welcome a sincere competition for the votes of gun owners by candidates of every political party.

But a sincere competition, or even a factually accurate campaign for our votes, is not quite what Jarding and Saunders are interested in waging. They treat the Second Amendment right to bear arms as a mere marketing problem for Democrats.

They note, correctly, that "the negative publicity on guns gotten by, for example, Michael Dukakis, Al Gore, and John Kerry has tended to hurt down-ballot Democrats on the gun issue."

For all John Kerry's public hunting, most Americans suspected that even his bird call had a French accent and that he might seek the permission of the United Nations before actually shooting

anything.

Just as the troubles of General Motors will reflect badly upon your local Chevrolet dealer, Democratic candidates will suffer so long as the top of the Democratic ticket treats the Second Amendment as a dead letter every four years.

The authors of *Foxes in the Henhouse* recommend that Democrats "should push to have gun laws and rules decided by states and not the federal government." They also urge Democratic candidates to argue that "enforcement of existing laws would solve virtually all our concerns about guns."

A reasonable question that all these "smart" political strategists avoid is that places where civilian gun ownership is all but legally impossible blame their dangerous streets and terrified citizens upon weaker gun laws anywhere else. One essential tenet of the gun control catechism is that gun control only works if it is universal.

Another problem the authors avoid is that a candidate elected upon this "enforce existing gun laws platform" will do nothing to roll back the many unreasonable gun laws already on the books.

Remarkably, Virginia Gov. John Warner signed every pro-gun piece of legislation that came before during his four-year tenure. But his successor has demonstrated the old school kind of "lip service" that makes so many people skeptical of politicians.

The new governor, Tim Kaine,



**GOA Founder and Chairman Sen. H.L. Richardson exposed the radical agenda of presidential contender, Michael Dukakis, for *Reader's Digest*, America's most-read magazine, in 1988.**

actively sought the gun vote in 2005. He even held a press conference on a skeet shooting range, and proclaimed "I'm committed to not violating the Second Amendment or infringing upon the gun rights of law-abiding citizens."

But this year, Kaine went back on his promises after the Virginia legislature passed a bill allowing people to keep a firearm locked in their car glove compartment without obtaining a concealed-carry permit. Kaine vetoed it, claiming there were public safety concerns.

In November, gun owners will be asked to once again choose our representatives in Congress. I expect many press conferences at hunting lodges and shooting ranges this summer. Candidates will talk of their love of the outdoors. Perhaps their orange vests will not be fresh out of the box.

But just because a politician says he



**While Virginia's new governor, Tim Kaine, actively sought the gun vote in 2005, he has already stabbed gunnies in the back by vetoing pro-gun legislation this year.**

likes to hunt, or that he owns a firearm, does not mean he has any interest in protecting your right to hunt or your right to own the firearms of your choice. Pro-gun talk is cheap. Pro-gun actions are valuable. ■

## Park Service Gun Ban Repeal Long Overdue

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ten most dangerous parks in the country.

At many National Parks, gone are the days when Park Rangers in broad-brimmed hats doled out fire safety advice and directions to lost campers.

Today, in parks such as Arizona's Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, on the Mexico border, rangers decked

in camouflage carrying automatic weapons regularly encounter illegal aliens and drug smugglers under the hot desert sun.

The actions of these men and women are commendable, as they labor on the frontline in the war on terror and illegal immigration. The average citizen, though, can take little comfort knowing that they might unwittingly stumble across the same dangerous situations without the means of self-protection.

It is obvious to society that the police

cannot be everywhere all the time to protect each individual, as on average the ratio of police officers to civilians is about 1,700 to 1.

On NPS land, the ratio is much more imbalanced. A 2005 report by the Government Accounting Office noted that "the department's law enforcement staff is already spread thin ... averaging one law enforcement officer for about every 110,000 visitors and 118,000 acres of land."

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## Death by a Thousand Cuts

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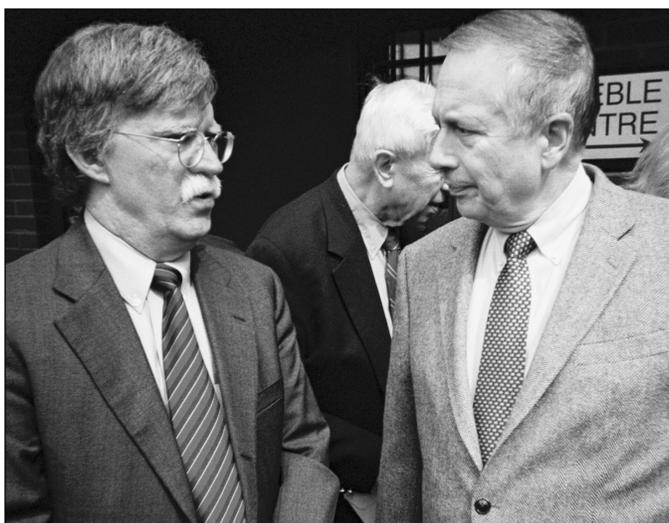
bureaucrats to arm the pilots, but their “vicious compliance” has almost completely thwarted Congress’ will. It should be added that the Congress has done little to hold the bureaucrats accountable, so it is business as usual.

Lately a new affront to the Second Amendment’s protection of the right of the people to keep and bear arms has been under way in the DHS. The Founders of our republic clearly viewed rights, including the Second Amendment, as universal rights which are inherent in all men. The Declaration of Independence even says that all men are “endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.”

It would be too lengthy to do so here, but an excellent collection of the Founders’ statements on the universality of the rights, and the right to keep and bear arms in particular, can be found in a friend of the court brief by Michele L. Lombardo, et. al. (available at <http://www.gunowners.org/fs0602.htm>).

The clear intent of the Constitution hasn’t bothered the folks at DHS any more than has the law telling them to send the pilots packing, so to speak. They seem to have taken a liking to an idea popular at the UN instead. The UN has been attempting to impose a gun control treaty on the US. It would require registration of all guns, and the stated intention of the promoters of this treaty, on the record, is to keep guns out of all private hands (or “non-state actors” in UN-speak).

That means that if your government is trying to wipe you and the rest of your minority group out (for example,



**GOA’s Larry Pratt (right) conferred with John Bolton, the US Ambassador to the UN, over efforts to get Department of Homeland Security to agree that using a gun in self defense is not terrorism.**

800,000 Tutsis in Rwanda), it is wrong for you to take up arms because you are not the government.

### Self-defense redefined as “terrorism”

The application of this amazing view at the Department of Homeland Security is to deny refugee status to minority groups in Burma who have been targeted for genocide. The immediate problem concerns 9,800 Karen refugees whose main crime, other than not being ethnic Burmese, is that many of them are Christians. To keep from being exterminated, some of them have taken up arms (as a “non-state actor!”).

The Department of State has given a green light to allowing the Karen refugees asylum status in the United States. The DHS refuses to issue a waiver (which is necessary under our PATRIOT and REAL ID Acts). The

DHS anti-gunners are holding to the UN view of the “right of the government to keep and bear arms” rather than the Founders view that “all men are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.”

Now that the Karen freedom fighters have actually been designated a terrorist organization by the DHS, which means “the US government” to foreign governments, the neighboring rulers of Thailand are getting

ready to scoop up these unwanted minorities (they are not Thai either) from the refugee camps along the border areas they have inhabited for some time and throw them into Burma.

If that happens, and when the Karen run out of their limited supplies of ammunition, the genocide will begin. All of which could be prevented if the folks at DHS were told by the President (their boss) to issue the waiver, declassify the Karen as terrorists, and let these freedom fighters enter the US. Other countries would also be willing (and have been willing) to admit Karen refugees, but this is coming to an end if the US continues to label these victims of oppression as terrorists.

Let’s hope that the Department of Homeland Security’s definition of self defense as terrorism will be changed — and quickly. ■

## Park Service Gun Ban Repeal Long Overdue

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Appeals by groups like Gun Owners of America and several U.S. Congressmen have fallen on the deaf ears of outgoing Secretary Gale Norton.

In response to an inquiry by Montana Senator Conrad Burns, an NPS official wrote that the gun ban “is designed to ensure public safety and provide maximum protection of natural

wildlife resources by limiting the opportunity for unauthorized use of weapons.”

The hapless anti-gun bureaucrats at the Interior Department apparently cannot see that disarming the public in no way enhances “public safety,” and, in fact, has the opposite effect.

The letter went on to ensure that the Department was reviewing the policy, though this controversy has been ongoing since at least 2003.

GOA has been working with other

pro-gun groups, notably Virginia Citizens Defense League, which has been taking the lead on the issue to get this bureaucratic rule rescinded. Gun owners can go to [www.vcdl.org](http://www.vcdl.org) to sign a petition directed at the Department of the Interior.

As Governor Kempthorne prepares for his May confirmation hearings and probable approval to the post, GOA and its members will urge him to finally rescind this ill-conceived gun prohibition. ■



# Death by a Thousand Cuts

by Larry Pratt

Anti-gunners, as with socialists in general, are very adept at taking only as much of our freedom and hard-earned money as they think they can get away with. If they find that they have overstepped, they will back off as much as is needed.

When the coast is clear, and nobody is watching, they come back for what they had to leave on the table — plus a little bit more.

The Left has typically been willing to play political hard ball and they are willing to confront their opponents with the attitude that “What is mine is mine, and what is yours is negotiable.”

Many gun owners, and conservatives generally, fail to admit that this is happening, and as a result, prefer to give in rather than be the target of the wild charges leftists make whenever someone disagrees with them.

As the founder and chairman of Gun Owners of America put it in his book, *Confrontational Politics*, “It takes Leftist Democrat legislators and confrontationally inadequate Republicans to pass socialist programs” (p.87).

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## ***The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATFE) is running out of control in a fashion not seen since the 1970’s.***

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This process has been quietly underway in the last several years in spite of Republican control of the Congress and Presidency. House of Representatives Judiciary Committee chairman, Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI), rammed through the Congress a renewal of a ban on (plastic) guns that do not exist.

He was eager to work with Senator Kennedy in the Senate so it could be said that Democrats are not the only ones who ban guns. Sensenbrenner was so eager, that he did not even negotiate a *quid pro quo*. The Democrats won it all on this one; the Republicans got nothing.

On another occasion, Senate Republicans agreed to the proposition that people should have their guns unavailable

for self defense. That is what they did when they agreed to force retail dealers to include a gun lock of some kind with each handgun they sell. This was embedded in a bill that hopefully will stop predatory lawsuits from being brought against the firearms industry for actions committed by criminals.

The House could have told the Senate that their identical bill — without the “lock up your safety” provision — should be voted on by the Senators, but instead, the House capitulated to the anti-gun demands of the Senate.

### **Old school abuse — BATFE style**

The latest contribution to chipping away at the right of the people to keep and bear arms is under way in Executive Department.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATFE) is running out of control in a fashion not seen since the 1970’s.

One example was their effort to jail a gun collector on a charge that he had illegally converted his rifle to a machine gun. It turned out that the BATFE “expert” had not even looked inside the gun. Had he done so, he might have seen that one of the old parts in the gun was deteriorating and causing the multiple firing. Defects are not illegal under federal law. (By the way, the “expert” was probably a few shots from having the gun blow up in his hands and kill or maim him.)

Other bureaucratic redefinitions of the right to keep and bear arms are under way at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). From the very beginning of its lamentable existence, the DHS has never had a moment’s thought for involving the people in homeland security, even though the Constitution clearly provides for the militia to be used for that purpose (Article I Section 8). They have preferred to concentrate police power in Washington in the hands of government employees, not average citizens.

### **Homeland Security’s assault on the Second Amendment**

It’s the DHS that has steadfastly thrown up as many obstacles as possible to keep pilots from being armed. As a result, only a small percentage of the 100,000 or so airline pilots have bothered to jump the high hurdles for obtaining a license to carry a gun in their cockpits.

Congress has twice passed legislation directing the

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