

THE Gun Owners

29 YEARS OF NO COMPROMISE – 1975-2004

2004: The Year in Review

Capitol Hill insiders credit GOA Members for Having ‘Torpedoed’ Gun Control

“[GOA’s] lobbying probably torpedoed the best chance for [renewing the semi-auto ban] this year.”

— *National Journal*, 7/17/04

by *Erich Pratt*

This has been a year unlike any other year.

A fresh breath of freedom has swept across the land.

The hated ban on semi-automatic firearms and magazines has now expired; and as Providence would have it, this victory was, in large part, thanks to your efforts.

In fact, you played a tremendous role in helping this onerous law fade into the sunset.

Your impact was so great that even our political opponents,



GOA Executive Director Larry Pratt debates the semi-auto gun ban in September with Catherine Crier on Court-TV.

like the gun grabbers at the Violence Policy Center, have taken notice.

The *National Journal*, a magazine that covers national politics, quoted the VPC on July 17 of this year:

Kristen Rand, the legislative director for the Violence Policy Center, which has been lobbying for the renewal of the assault weapons ban, agreed that [GOA’s] lobbying probably torpedoed the best chance for action this year. “I think

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Guns and the November Elections

by *John Velleco*

The 2004 election might be remembered as “The Year of the Gun Owner.”

Presidential candidate John Kerry, a liberal anti-gun Senator from Massachusetts, tried to morph himself into ‘The Hunter.’ Rarely a day passed during the latter part of the campaign without Kerry posing with a firearm and speaking about his strong support of the Second Amendment, in complete contradiction to his 20-year anti-gun voting record.

Kerry was not alone. All across the country, anti-gun politicians tried to hide behind gun-friendly photo ops and empty rhetoric about how much they support gun rights.

Gun Owners of America, through its candidate rating program and political action committee, was able to expose much anti-gun duplicity this year, and the results were extremely heartening.

Of course, the obstructionist anti-gun Senate Minority Leader, Tom Daschle, is finally deposed. Replacing him is former Representative John Thune, a strong pro-gun ally supported by Gun Owners of America – Political Victory Fund (GOA-PVF).

But while ousting Daschle was certainly one of the most crucial races this year, there were six open Senate seats that anti-gunners had their sights set on. GOA-PVF played an important role in thwarting that plan and helping to elect

strong pro-gun advocates to five of the six open seats.

Florida: Anti-gun to Pro-gun

In the Sunshine State, a former cabi-

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- **See why people are raving over GOA’s spokesmen (page 7)**

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their input was very significant,”

Rand said of the gun-owners group.

You should give yourself a pat on the back.

Because of you, Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) was frustrated all year long in her efforts to renew the ban on semi-automatic firearms.

She seemed to be on the verge of success in March, when she tacked her ban onto the gun makers’ protection act, by getting 52 votes in favor of her amendment.

But it was just at that time when the roar from GOA members was heard within the halls of Congress.

Senate office says, “GOA postcards killed the Feinstein ban!”

Senators were being pressed to pass the gun makers’ protection act, even though it had been saddled with amendments to effectively abolish gun shows, to renew the semi-auto ban, and to require Americans to “lock up their safety.”

The pressure was on. Senators were given the vague promise that if they voted for these anti-gun provisions, the bill would be “cleaned up” later — but this is a very dangerous strategy which has failed many times in the past.

At the same time, thousands upon thousands of GOA postcards were being dumped on Senators’ desks.

The timing could not have been more perfect.

Your postcards stopped these gun control restrictions — including the Feinstein semi-auto ban — from passing out of the Senate in exchange for very minimal Second Amendment gains.

The GOA postcards made it quite clear to Senate offices that, in the words of one Senate staffer, “no deals” were acceptable.

“GOA postcards killed the Feinstein ban,” he said, echoing the sentiments of many others on Capitol Hill.

The Senate listened to gun owners and defeated the entire anti-gun package by an overwhelming vote. Gun owners had dodged a bullet.

GOA educates the Senate Majority Leader

The battle was not over, however. Senator Feinstein said that she would look for any and every opportunity to get her gun ban passed.

To combat this, GOA worked hard to get Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist to use parliamentary maneuvers to keep gun control amendments from being



Democrat Senator Dianne Feinstein of California has promised to renew the fight next year to reinstitute the ban on certain magazines and semi-automatic firearms.

offered to other bills.

Senator Frist (R-TN) had refused to use those parliamentary techniques when the gun makers’ protection act was being debated in March. He said it couldn’t be done.

Of course, GOA knew that wasn’t true. So we posted the specific details on GOA’s website — at www.gunowners.org/a030204a.htm — and documented how Senator Frist can bring up a bill for a vote, while using parliamentary roadblocks that keep antagonistic amendments from being offered.

GOA then asked its members and activists to contact Senator Frist’s office — to make sure he not only read the document, but was prepared to use all the weapons in his arsenal to stop Senator Feinstein.

He listened to you. When Senator Feinstein threatened to attach her gun ban to a legal reform bill, Senator Frist blocked her amendment.

Democrats were furious. They protested the “undemocratic” spirit of Senator Frist. They were very upset they couldn’t offer the gun ban as an amendment.

GOA members help Sen. Frist “see the light”

But Senator Frist stood firm, as he was being encouraged by thousands upon thousands of e-mails and phone calls coming from GOA members.

Listen to what an outraged Senator Byron Dorgan (D-ND) had to say about Senator Frist’s actions:

“I know we have the class action reform bill on the floor of the Senate, but that bill apparently is going nowhere at this moment. My understanding is the majority leader [Frist] has ‘filled the tree,’ which is a fancy way of saying he is blocking everything. He puts a bill down, blocks everything, and creates a little gate in the majority leader’s office saying: Show me your amendment. If I like it, you can offer it; if I don’t, you can’t.

“That is where we are.

Because of that action, I assume very little is going to happen at the moment.”

[Source: Congressional Record, July 7, 2004, p. S 7726.]

Because of gun owners like you, Senator Frist had learned how to “block everything” — a strategy that succeeded in killing the Feinstein gun ban.

Grassroots lobbying had won the day in the Senate.

You guys also made the difference the House, as your postcards and phone calls continually applied the heat to Representatives in the Congress. Because of you, House Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R-TX) was able to say “we don’t have the votes to pass” the semi-auto ban.

They didn’t have the votes because you were holding your Congressmen’s feet to the fire. Thousands upon thousands of letters, e-mails, postcards and phone calls.

The victory won in the semi-auto battle was certainly the most high-profile triumph this year. It was not, however, the only success that pro-gun forces achieved.

GOA members kill the anti-gun education bill

Readers of *The Gun Owners* will

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GOA in the News

GOA Media Appearances in September 2004

Radio and TV

09/30/04 KIML, Wyoming	09/13/04 KCMN, Colorado
09/30/04 KGAB, Wyoming	09/13/04 WJBC, Illinois
09/28/04 WHP, Pennsylvania	09/13/04 KLPW, Missouri
09/28/04 CBS-9, Virginia	09/13/04 WPXI, Pennsylvania
09/27/04 WMCA, New Jersey	09/13/04 KMED, Oregon
09/22/04 KRLC, Idaho	09/13/04 WHO/WMT, Iowa
09/20/04 WIBR, Louisiana	09/13/04 American Family Radio
09/20/04 WBAI, New York	09/13/04 KOTA, South Dakota
09/20/04 WSAU, Wisconsin	09/13/04 Bloomberg Radio
09/17/04 KFTK, Missouri	09/13/04 Univision
09/17/04 WDMY, Virginia	09/13/04 CBS-9, Virginia
09/17/04 NewsTalk Radio	09/13/04 KFNX, Arizona
09/17/04 Radio Liberty	09/13/04 WJR, Michigan
09/16/04 WKRC, Ohio	09/13/04 WGIR, New Hampshire
09/16/04 WMET, Washington, DC	09/13/04 Radio America
09/15/04 GCN, West Virginia	09/13/04 WTMA, South Carolina
09/15/04 KSCJ, Iowa	09/13/04 KBKA, Pennsylvania
09/15/04 WTKF, Florida	09/13/04 KTKK, Utah
09/15/04 KAHJ, California	09/13/04 Comcast
09/14/04 WTKS, Georgia	09/13/04 KNZR, California
09/14/04 WFBL, New York	09/13/04 KQNT, Washington
09/14/04 KRSY, New Mexico	09/11/04 WIS, South Carolina
09/14/04 WNTA, Illinois	09/10/04 KLO, Utah
09/14/04 KFIZ, Wisconsin	09/10/04 WIZM, Wisconsin
09/14/04 KNOX, North Dakota	09/10/04 CNN/FN
09/14/04 WWIB, Wisconsin	09/10/04 KTAR, Arizona
09/14/04 WMAL, Virginia	09/10/04 Information Radio Network
09/14/04 The Jim Bohannon Show	09/10/04 KGEZ, Montana
09/13/04 WHYN, Massachusetts	09/10/04 Alex Jones Show
09/13/04 KJSL, Missouri	09/10/04 KTSA, Texas
	09/10/04 COURT TV



GOA's Larry Pratt (right) debates the semi-auto gun ban with an anti-gun spokesman on CNN-FN.

09/10/04 Liberty Broadcasting Network	09/15/04 Associated Press
09/09/04 Jeff Rense Program	09/15/04 Cottage Grove Sentinel
09/09/04 WDAY, Minnesota	09/15/04 The Frontrunner
09/09/04 KXOW, Arkansas	09/14/04 Knight-Ridder
09/09/04 WMUZ, Michigan	09/14/04 Orlando Sentinel
09/09/04 WIBA, Wisconsin	09/14/04 National Journal
09/09/04 WWCR, Tennessee	09/14/04 Kansas City Star
09/09/04 Republic Radio Network	09/13/04 Times Picayne
09/09/04 KSRO, California	09/13/04 News Record
09/09/04 KLIF, Texas	09/13/04 Journal & Courier
09/08/04 Radio America	09/11/04 Boston Globe
09/08/04 WMET, Washington, DC	09/11/04 Pittsburgh Tribune
09/08/04 KTAR, Arizona	09/11/04 Star Gazette
09/08/04 Nightline	09/10/04 Scripps Howard
09/02/04 KCUR, Missouri	09/10/04 Financial Times
09/01/04 Point of View	09/10/04 Peace Reporter
	09/09/04 WorldNetDaily
	09/09/04 Communications Daily
	09/08/04 Capital News
	09/07/04 The Telegraph
	09/05/04 Post Standard

Newspapers

09/20/04 Latresse
09/20/04 Oakland Tribune
09/20/04 Alameda Times Star
09/20/04 Tri-Valley Herald

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remember our year-long battle against an anti-gun education bill that would have authorized millions of dollars for anti-gun bureaucrats to train teachers in new history and civics standards that are being mandated by the federal government.

This is truly an amazing story which caught many Washington pundits off-guard. It is a story about a bill which, at first, enjoyed virtually no opposition on Capitol Hill.

But soon after GOA jumped into the fray, several House lawmakers began pulling their support from the education bill.

The Hill newspaper reported soon

afterwards that the bill is "not expected to reach the House floor this year ... [which] shows the effect that one influential lobbying group [GOA] can have on legislation."

Lawmakers were surprised. After all, the bill had sped through the Senate with a 90-0 vote. To quote again from *The Hill*:

Before [GOA's] lobbying effort, the bill was sailing through Congress. It has attracted more than 200 co-sponsors in the House and is supported by President Bush.

But the bill hit a major bump in the road. That "bump" was the members of Gun Owners of America. The outpouring of opposition from folks like you was so overwhelming that nine Representatives pulled their name from the bill.

With support for the bill waning in Congress, *The Hill* reported on October 29 of last year that there was only one way to stop the hemorrhaging:

Before the [anti-gun] legislation is voted on in the House, it must address the Gun Owners of America's concerns.

Those concerns were never addressed, and the bill recently died.

It's a significant victory, but there is more to do in this arena. Gun Owners will fight to declutter our children's education and remove the anti-gun indoctrination that is currently taking place.

GOA: On the offensive in 2005

This is not the only battle GOA will be waging next year. Senator Dianne

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GOA on the Front Lines



GOA's Larry Pratt appeared on Fox News with Judge Andrew Napolitano (left) after the Supreme Court upheld the campaign finance law — better known as the Incumbent Protection Act. Gun Owners of America was one of the plaintiffs that had helped bring the case before the Supremes.



GOA's Erich Pratt informs C-SPAN viewers how gun control can be very costly at the polls for politicians.



Gun Owners of America successfully pressed the Republican leadership in Congress to block all votes on renewing the Clinton semi-auto ban this summer. The end result was the sunset of the gun ban in September. Members also helped encourage Republican Senator George Allen of Virginia to oppose the semi-auto ban. Senator Allen had previously campaigned in favor of the ban in 2000, but changed his position after getting input from thousands of members and activists.



The White House contacted GOA headquarters and asked the organization to “call of the dogs” — as GOA activists had encouraged several Representatives to pull their names from an education bill that the President was supporting. Undaunted, GOA continued to pressure Representatives to oppose the bill. GOA had serious Second Amendment concerns with the legislation — concerns which prompted the defection of nine pro-gun members of Congress.

Defending Your Rights!



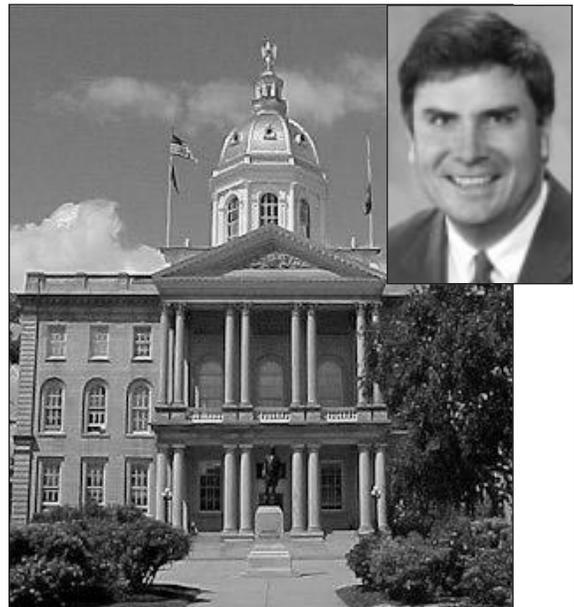
Rep. Marilyn Musgrave (R-CO) meets with GOA's John Velleco. GOA "pulled out the stops" in helping Rep. Musgrave get elected during her first term (in 2002) and, most recently, in her second term (last month). She is one of the fiercest defenders of the Second Amendment and was one of only seven Congressmen to earn an A+.



Larry Pratt appeared on ABC's *Nightline* this year.



GOA Communications Director Erich Pratt (left) sparred with a NY City Councilman in February over legislation that would protect gun makers from frivolous lawsuits.



GOA members helped push Vermont-style concealed carry through the New Hampshire Senate. But in an unusual move, the Senate sponsor of the bill (see inset) stabbed gun owners in the back. Trying to appease police groups that opposed the legislation, the Senate sponsor tried to kill his own bill. Gun Owners of America subsequently punished the flip-flopping Senator by helping defeat him in a September primary. His opponent, Rep. Peter Bragdon, is a committed supporter of Second Amendment rights, and a die-hard defender of real concealed carry.

Guns and the November Election

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net member for President George W. Bush, Mel Martinez, faced a formidable foe in anti-gun former state senator and state Commissioner of Education, Betty Castor.

As Secretary of Housing and Urban Development under President Bush, Sec. Martinez dismantled the Clinton-era "Communities for Safer Guns Coalition," a scheme to bring communities into the gun control agreement between then-President Clinton and the Smith & Wesson company.

Secretary Martinez narrowly won this race with 50% of the vote.

Louisiana: Anti-gun to Pro-gun

In Louisiana, pro-gun Rep. David Vitter shocked pundits by winning this senate race outright. In that state, all candidates, regardless of party, are placed on the November ballot. If no candidate were to break the 50% mark, the top two vote getters would head into a December runoff election.

Both major candidates, Vitter and Rep. Chris John (D), claimed to be pro-gun. Rep. John, though, had voted against arming commercial airline pilots and for the unconstitutional campaign finance reform law, earning him a "C" grade by GOA as opposed to David Vitter's solid "A" rating.

GOA-PVF was the only national gun rights group to jump into the race, contacting thousands of Second Amendment supporters highlighting the differences between the candidates. At the end of the night, Vitter had 51% of the vote and is now the Senator-elect. He replaces retiring anti-gun "F" rated Senator John Breaux (D).

North Carolina: Anti-gun to Pro-gun

The Senate seat in North Carolina was that of vice-presidential nominee John Edwards, a trial lawyer who earlier this year took a rare break from the campaign to come to Washington to help sink a bill designed to protect gun makers from frivolous lawsuits.

Running to fill this seat were pro-gun U.S. House member Richard Burr and former Chief of Staff to President Bill Clinton, Erskine Bowles. GOA-PVF

supported Rep. Burr, who won with 52% of the vote.

Oklahoma: Moderately Pro-gun to Very Pro-gun

One of the most exciting races of Election Day was the one to replace retiring Senator Don Nickles (R). Running were former Representative Dr. Tom Coburn and current Rep. Brad Carson.

Though Carson was often on the right side of the gun issue, he was a strong supporter of campaign finance reform.

This law is more aptly named the "Incumbent Protection Act," as it prohibits groups like Gun Owners of America from running certain types of advertisements which criticize politicians by name 60 days before a general election.

Since GOA represents hundreds of

"...there were six open Senate seats that anti-gunners had their sights set on. GOA-PVF played an important role in thwarting that plan and helping to elect strong pro-gun advocates to five of the six open seats."

thousands of gun owners, Brad Carson really voted to stifle your voice.

But Rep. Coburn consistently fought against the Incumbent Protection Act as a House member, just as he has consistently voted against any measure that would weaken our Constitutional liberties.

GOA-PVF was the only national gun rights group to make an endorsement in this race, helping Dr. Coburn to victory with 53% of the vote.

South Carolina: Anti-gun to Pro-gun

Senator Fritz Hollings (D), an anti-gun zealot who was especially antagonistic to the idea of arming pilots, retired this year.

To replace him, pro-gun House member Jim DeMint faced off against Inez Tenenbaum, State Superintendent of

Education. Tenenbaum had the advantage of having won statewide office in 1998 and 2002, while Rep. DeMint was widely unknown outside of his congressional district.

Rep. DeMint is a man of principle who clearly articulated his positions and stood by them. Tenenbaum, on the other hand, refused to make her Second Amendment positions known. Rep. DeMint, endorsed and supported by GOA-PVF, won with 54% of the vote.

GOA-PVF was also active in several important U.S. House races

One race that received little attention was in North Carolina's tenth district. GOA-PVF supported state Rep. Patrick McHenry in a Republican runoff election, which he won with fewer than 90 votes. Rep. McHenry had a much easier time of it in November, as this is a safe Republican seat. GOA looks forward to working with Rep. McHenry, a strong pro-gun advocate.

Geoff Davis, a former Army Ranger and solid Second Amendment supporter, defeated Nick Clooney, father of actor George Clooney, in Kentucky's fourth district.

In Washington's fifth district, "A" rated Cathy McMorris won the seat vacated by George Nethercutt, who ran for the senate.

GOA-PVF was also involved in three races in which squishy C-rated incumbents were defeated. In Texas' first congressional district, pro-gun candidate and former judge Louie Gohmert beat moderate Democrat Max Sandlin.

Another former judge, Ted Poe, defeated incumbent Rep. Nick Lampson in Texas' second congressional district.

In Indiana's ninth district, pro-gun challenger Mike Sodrel (R) defeated Democrat Rep. Baron Hill by fewer than 1,500 votes.

The Road Ahead

There is no question that gun owners made significant gains in the 2004 elections.

But many gun owners mistakenly believe the battle is won in the election. That is only half the battle. The harder work still lies before us.

Gun owners must stay engaged in the battle by calling, writing, and e-mailing elected officials, urging them to roll back unconstitutional gun laws. ■

HIT THE RIGHT TARGET! Give to Gun Owners Foundation

In many federal offices there are subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) pressures to give to the Combined Federal Campaign. Your boss may think his prestige depends upon getting everyone to kick in. The same thing happens in all too many corporations during the United Way fundraising drive.

You may have wanted to give but couldn't find a group that wasn't attacking your rights, let alone defending them, on the list of participating organizations. But that has all changed!

Federal employees now are able to designate **Gun Owners Foundation (GOF)** as the recipient of their gifts to the Combined Federal Campaign. Use **Agency Number 1054** for **Gun Owners Foundation** when you make your Combined Federal Campaign pledge or donation. Your gifts will go toward helping our legal assistance program protect the Second Amendment rights of Americans across the nation.

Also, if you work for a company that participates in the United Way, you too, may be able to designate that your gift be to **Gun Owners Foundation**. Many local United Way Campaigns allow **Gun Owners Foundation** to participate through their Donor Choice Programs. Some, however, do not. Check with your local United Way Agency. You will not only be helping people and protecting your rights, but you will also get a tax deduction.

Of course, anyone can always make a tax-deductible donation at any time to **Gun Owners Foundation** by sending the contribution directly to 8001 Forbes Place, Suite 102, Springfield, VA 22151.

One additional note. If you are employed by a corporation or organization which has a Matching Gift Program, please keep **GOF** in mind when making your donation. Thank you very much.



Still haven't checked out GOA's Streaming Video on the web? — See why the grassroots are raving over GOA's spokesmen

GOA's talking heads are constantly on the front lines, defending your rights in the media.

But because requests for interviews typically arrive mere hours (even minutes) before airtime in response to breaking news, it is usually not possible to alert our members before the broadcast occurs.

Now you can watch your GOA spokesmen engaging the opposition after the fact on GOA's website.

Just go to <http://www.gunowners.org/svtb.htm> and click on one of the streaming video shows.

Because of licensing restrictions, as well as our streaming budget, selections presented there are only a representative sample of numerous TV appearances.

But you will definitely get a feel for GOA's "no compromise" approach to defending the Bill of Rights.

In September alone, GOA spokesman appeared in more than 100



This is one of the recent debates that has been posted on the Streaming Video section of GOA's website at www.gunowners.org/svtb.htm.

radio, TV, newspaper and magazine outlets. (See page 3.) Many of these media appearances involved "mano a mano" combat with anti-gun representatives.

If you haven't checked the Streaming Video section recently, you should go back and see the newly posted debates. Comments from the grassroots indicate

this section is a hit.

Consider just one letter from a new GOA member:

Dear Gun Owners of America:

"Oh my God, Mr. Larry Pratt! I've known about GOA for quite some time, but I've only just now checked out the 'Streaming Video' section.

"Larry, you rock, Man! Will you run for President? I'll work for and donate to your campaign. I'm going to join GOA!

"You have just reached my top 10 list of favorite people on Earth. I hope some day to meet you. Keep up the good work!"

Sincerely,
One of GOA's Newest Members
Clearwater, Florida

Be sure to check out the website and see how your contributions are not only helping GOA spokesmen to fight the anti-gunners in the trenches, but helping to educate all Americans why the Second Amendment is important today. ■

What They're Saying About GOA

On killing the semi-auto ban:

"[GOA's] lobbying probably torpedoed the best chance for [renewing the semi-auto ban] this year."

-- National Journal, 7/17/04

On GOA's no-compromise approach:

"Gun Owners of America is the pit bull of the Second Amendment. They are relentless and never give any ground whatsoever to the gun grabbers."

-- John Hostettler (R-IN)

"GOA is the only no-compromise gun lobby in Washington."

-- Ron Paul (R-TX)



GOA's Larry Pratt with Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX).

On GOA's grassroots strength:

"Before the [anti-gun] legislation is voted on in the House, it must be amended to address the Gun Owners of America's concerns."

-- The Hill newspaper, 10/29/03

"The fact that the broadly supported bill has been put on hold shows the effect that one influential lobbying group [GOA] can have on legislation."

-- The Hill newspaper, 10/29/03

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Feinstein will, no doubt, make another attempt to renew the semi-auto ban. According to the *New York Times*, she has already made the threat.

"We will come back, and we will come back again," Feinstein said.

One has to admire her determination. Oh, that pro-gun Congressmen would have that kind of resolve when it comes to repealing gun control from the books!

In addition to fighting her efforts to renew the ban, GOA will continue to push for nationwide recognition for concealed carry permits, allowing citizens of one state to use their carry permits when traveling in another state.

GOA has also been active at the state level, pushing for Alaska and Vermont

style carry laws. These states allow their citizens to carry firearms without getting permission from a bureaucrat and without being fingerprinted like common sex offenders.

After helping push such a bill through the New Hampshire Senate this year, GOA members were surprised to learn that the sponsor of the bill, Sen. Andrew Peterson, stabbed gun owners in the back.

Attempting to appease police groups that opposed the legislation, Sen. Peterson tried to kill his own bill and actually testified against it on the House side!

Gun Owners of America subsequently punished the "flip-flopping" Senator by helping defeat him in a September primary by 268 votes. The winner, Rep. Peter Bragdon, is a committed supporter of Second Amendment rights and a die-hard defender of real concealed carry.

GOA will be fighting for expanded

carry rights and will continue to push the Citizens Self-Defense Act, which will protect the right of citizens to use a firearm in self-defense.

GOA wants to roll back gun control laws, such as the draconian ban in Washington, DC. The House of Representatives voted to kill the ban in September, but the Senate never took up the issue.

We would like to revisit this issue again, next year.

There is a lot of work to do. But as we reflect on this year, it's good to celebrate the positive.

Thanks to you, the gun banners have been blocked at every turn.

Thanks to you, firearms and magazines that were once banned are now legal.

And thanks to you, GOA will continue to be here in Washington, D.C., fighting for your right to keep and bear arms.■

**THE
Gun Owners**

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