

# THE Gun Owners

32 YEARS OF NO COMPROMISE – 1975-2007

## Media, Democrat Congress Conspire to Ban Semi-Autos

by *Erich Pratt*

It didn't take long for it to happen.

No sooner had the Gun Ban Queen in the Congress introduced a bill to reinstate the ban on semi-automatic firearms, than media articles started appearing around the country — each reporter frothing at the mouth, citing the “need” to ban so-called “assault weapons.”

Rep. Carolyn McCarthy introduced her bill (H.R. 1022) in mid-February to reinstate the old Feinstein gun ban. Within a week, articles were cropping up around the nation.

First, there was the article in *USA Today* on February 20 entitled, “Police needing heavier weapons: Chiefs cite spread of assault rifles.”

The article gave no statistical support whatsoever for the delusional belief that certain semi-automatic firearms are now becoming the criminals' weapon of choice. Only vague rantings from anti-gun police chiefs were cited.

The AK-47 assault rifle has become “kind of a weapon of choice,” said one chief, “for warring gangs, major drugs distributors and immigrant smugglers.”

A “kind of” weapon of choice? Is that the best evidence the editors at

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## The Three Amigos



From left to right: Rep. Nita Lowey, Sen. Hillary Clinton and Rep. Carolyn McCarthy — three New York legislators who joined thousands of other anti-gun mommies by marching on Washington, DC in 2000. Rep. McCarthy, who has established herself as the Gun Ban Queen in the House, recently introduced legislation to reinstate the federal ban on scores of semi-automatic firearms.

## As Dept. of Interior Disarms Citizens...

# GOA Continues Fighting National Park Gun Ban

by *John Velleco*

For nearly four years, gun owners have voiced outrage over a gun ban on National Park Service (NPS) land.

Bureaucrats at the Department of Interior, which oversees NPS land, have finally addressed these concerns in writing. Their answer? The gun ban stays!

Under current law, land under the control of the NPS is subject to a blanket gun ban. Other federally controlled land, such as Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and National Forest Service land is governed by state law. Simply put, if you're on these lands with a firearm, you're ok as long as you're in compliance with state law.

NPS land is treated differently. Regardless of state law to the contrary, no citizen can carry a firearm on NPS

land.

Gun Owners of America and other groups have been pressuring the Interior Department for several years to overturn the ban (which can be done administratively). These requests have, until recently, been ignored.

In late January of this year, the Park Service finally responded.

In a letter sent to a state gun rights organization, the Virginia Citizens Defense League, an Interior Department official flatly denied the request to overturn the gun ban.

The letter, signed by Karen Taylor-Goodrich, Associate Director of Visitor and Resource Protection for the Interior Department, also made outrageous statements about gun rights in general

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- **GOA protests against New York City Mayor Bloomberg (page 3)**
- **Where is Mitt Romney on the gun issue? (page 5)**
- **How Second Amendment freedoms aided the civil rights movement (page 6)**
- **Why the Instant Background Check is a bad idea (page 8)**

## Media, Democrat Congress Conspire to Ban Semi-Autos

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*USA Today* can come up with?

No statistics were given to substantiate this chief's claim. It didn't even sound like he really believed his own statement. Either AK-47s are the criminals' weapon of choice or they're not. But a "kind of" weapon of choice? That sounds like the chief is just parroting politically correct pablum, but knows he doesn't have the evidence to back it up.

In fact, all the real evidence shows that semi-automatic "assault weapons" have never been commonly used by criminals. The Bureau of Justice Statistics reported in 1993 — before the original ban was enacted — that violent criminals only carried or used a "military-type gun" in about one percent of crimes nationwide.

And a N.J. deputy police chief said his officers "are more likely to confront an escaped tiger from the local zoo than to confront an assault rifle in the hands of a drug-crazed killer on the streets."

### So-called assault weapons are still not the weapon of choice for criminals

Aside from the fact that the Chiefs have hardly seen or confiscated a real assault rifle connected with crime, the *USA Today* article provided no data whatsoever to support their claim. It mentioned one officer in one Florida county who said that deputies "frequently" encounter assault weapons in local robberies and during simple traffic stops.

Really? What does "frequently" mean? And what were the nature of the traffic stops ... were they for suspected criminal activity or for minor infractions ... or even random stops?

*USA Today* tried to use a crime rise in one city, Houston, as "evidence" that assault weapons were to blame. The fact that the city's crime rise was the result of Katrina's New Orleans refugees moving to nearby Houston was excluded from the discussion.

The article also says that some 20 police departments have upgraded their weapons to higher-caliber weapons in the two years following 2004, when the original semi-auto ban sunset.

## Remember when...



**Sen. John Kerry (D-MA) was presented with a Remington shotgun as a gift in September of 2004, while campaigning in West Virginia? The problem was that his gun (pictured above) would have been banned as an "assault weapon" if a bill he had cosponsored that year had become law. The fact that Kerry's bill was introduced before the old law sunset shows that once the gun banners get their foot in the door with a comparatively moderate ban, they will then try to extend the ban by outlawing even more — such as standard shotguns, rifles and pistols.**

The implication was that their actions were a result of semi-autos being used in crime. What was not mentioned is that this upgrading of weapons was going on before and during the gun ban because the federal government makes these firearms available at bargain prices to local police agencies.

So, are the writers implying that the semi-auto ban was a failure and that police were buying "assault rifles" because they were facing them increasingly during the ban? Their own logic collapses their argument.

### McCarthy's ban far worse than Feinstein's ever was

The McCarthy gun ban (HR 1022) is a tremendous expansion of the original 1994 law. For starters, she includes a

much broader list of banned firearms than Sen. Dianne Feinstein ever did. But then she goes much, much farther:

- Her bill outlaws semi-automatic rifles that have any one of the following features: folding stocks, threaded barrels, pistol grips, forward grips or barrel shrouds. The original required a gun to have two of these features, not just one.
- HR 1022 bans most semi-autos with fixed magazines with more than 10 rounds and bans many frames, receivers or conversion kits.
- McCarthy outlaws semi-auto pistols which contain detachable magazines if they also have any one of the following features: a second pistol grip, threaded barrel, barrel shroud, or detachable magazine capacity outside the pistol grip. Again, the original ban required a banned pistol to contain two of these features, not just one.
- HR 1022 also bans semi-auto shotguns that contain a revolving cylinder or which have a folding stock, pistol grip, detachable magazine capacity or fixed magazine capacity in excess of 5 rounds. Once again, the original ban only banned shotguns if they contained two of these features, not just one.

Not content to just limit her bill to a simple gun ban, McCarthy would put you in jail for teaching your kids to shoot with any semi-auto (even one not banned) unless your child had a written permission in his pocket. It would not matter that you were standing right beside him.

McCarthy would also institutionalize and expand the presidential import ban to statutorily outlaw the import of semi-auto magazines. Incidentally, this is a ban which the Bush administration has done nothing to revoke.

HR 1022 would eliminate the private sale of semi-autos, requiring that all transactions be subject to the same federal registration system that is required at all gun stores.

And finally, any transfer of a grandfathered "large capacity ammunition feeding device" will have to be reported to the Attorney General if HR 1022 passes. In other words, it won't just be the gun store that has a record of your purchase ... it will also be the FBI.

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# Lawbreaking Mayor Thinks People's Guns Are Illegal

By Larry Pratt

Mayor Michael Bloomberg has repeatedly conspired to violate federal firearms laws. He has sent private investigators to other states to buy handguns using false identifications. He has had stores in New York City raided and then been forced to return the firearms he ordered his police to confiscate.

These illegal acts would result in the average citizen having the book thrown at him. Mayor Bloomberg has been allowed by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to break federal law in the name of the law.

There is a consistent pattern of disregard for the law in the name of disarming average citizens. It seems that Bloomberg's objective is to wipe out all gun stores so there can be no armed citizens.

When Mayor Bloomberg took office, he promised to make New York's already draconian gun laws even more restrictive. Getting a gun in New York City is next to impossible.

Clearly, Bloomberg thinks that all guns in the hands of the people are ille-

gal guns. Take the case of Ronald Dixon. Dixon was unable to get a legal gun in New York City, but he had a gun which he bought when he lived in Florida, a free state. The problem was that in New York, without the City's permission, ownership of the gun was illegal.

Ronald Dixon used his gun in 2002 to defend himself in his home from an invader. Dixon had spotted the thug about to enter the room of his little two-year-old boy. When Dixon presented his gun, the assailant turned on him, and Dixon shot him. Dixon did not get charged for shooting the punk, but he did go to jail — for having an "illegal" gun!

Not long afterwards, a New York City businessman, Steven Reed, fatally shot a career violent felon who was trying to rob him. He was charged with illegal gun possession.

Mayor Bloomberg is always well-protected by armed guards who are provided by the taxpayers. But he does not think that others should be able to protect themselves with firearms unless they can have a squad of police doing it for them.

## GOA in the News



**GOA Executive Director spoke out at a rally in January to protest the anti-gun antics of New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg.**

Virginia Delegate Scott Lingamfelter has proposed legislation to enable Virginia authorities to prosecute Bloomberg's thugs should they try to shake down additional Virginia gun dealers. Too bad the intellectual author of the crime can remain safely ensconced behind the doors of the well-guarded Gracie Mansion.

Bloomberg is being sued by two of the gun stores he has victimized. Perhaps that will provide a measure of justice that so far the federal government has completely failed to pursue. ■

## Media, Democrat Congress Conspire to Ban Semi-Autos

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### HR 1022 picking up steam

The gun banners have an ally not only in the Speaker's chair, which is manned by anti-gun Rep. Nancy Pelosi, but at the helm of each committee that has a say in whether the bill gets a final floor vote.

Judiciary Committee Chairman John Conyers (D-MI), first elected to Congress in 1964, is not only a strong sup-

porter of renewing the semi-auto ban, but he would ban handguns altogether. A

bill to ban semi-autos could move through his committee like a whirlwind.

Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA), Chairman of the Judiciary Crime Subcommittee — normally the first stop for gun related bills — also supports the gun ban.

And Chairwoman Louise Slaughter (D-NY) of the House Rules Committee (the last Committee to vote on a bill before it gets to the House floor for a vote) is consistently rated "F-" for her leadership role against gun rights.

The situation gun owners face is that even though there are several pro-gun

can easily help stop anti-gun bills.

In addition, if the Congress can quickly pass a bill to renew the semi-auto ban, it is very possible that President Bush would sign the measure. In his first run for the Presidency, Mr. Bush stated that he would sign an extension of the gun ban. Yes, it's true that HR 1022 goes much further than the original ban. But politicians often care less about the details than they do about outward appearances.

In other words, gun owners can't rely on George Bush to veto this legislation.

Gun owners must keep the pressure on their own Representatives not to buckle under the pressure of the invigorated anti-gun lobby, their allies in the media, and the bully tactics of the new leadership. ■

*John Velleco, Larry Pratt and Mike Hammond also contributed to this article.*

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## GOA Continues Fighting National Gun Ban

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and gun owners in particular.

For instance, in bullet point number 2, the Taylor-Goodrich letter states that, “‘Right to carry’ laws do not reduce crime.”

Researchers and actual experts on the subject would disagree.

Professor John Lott, in a landmark study which reviewed crime statistics in every county in the United States from 1977 to 1992, found that concealed carry laws have reduced murder and crime rates in the states that have enacted them. According to the study, published in book form entitled *More Guns, Less Crime*, the states that passed concealed carry laws reduced their rate of murder by 8.5%, rape by 5%, aggravated assault by 7% and robbery by 3%.

The Taylor-Goodrich letter continues: “In fact, armed citizens attempting to assist rangers create volatile situations, often putting the private citizen or ranger’s life in jeopardy.”

## Dept. of Interior bureaucrat lambastes gun owners

The letter does not cite any such incidents, however, and the argument is

## National parks becoming more dangerous

Another point made in the letter is that, “Parks are safe places.”

According to some law-enforcement officials, however,

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 ten most dangerous parks in the country.

Heading the list is Arizona’s Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, on the Mexico border. Craig D. Obey, Vice President for Governmental Affairs for the National Parks Conservation Association, testified before a House Subcommittee in 2005 that:

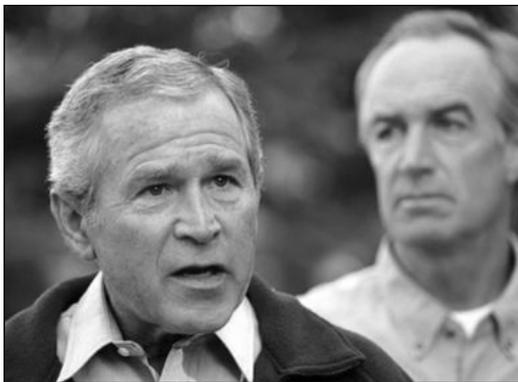
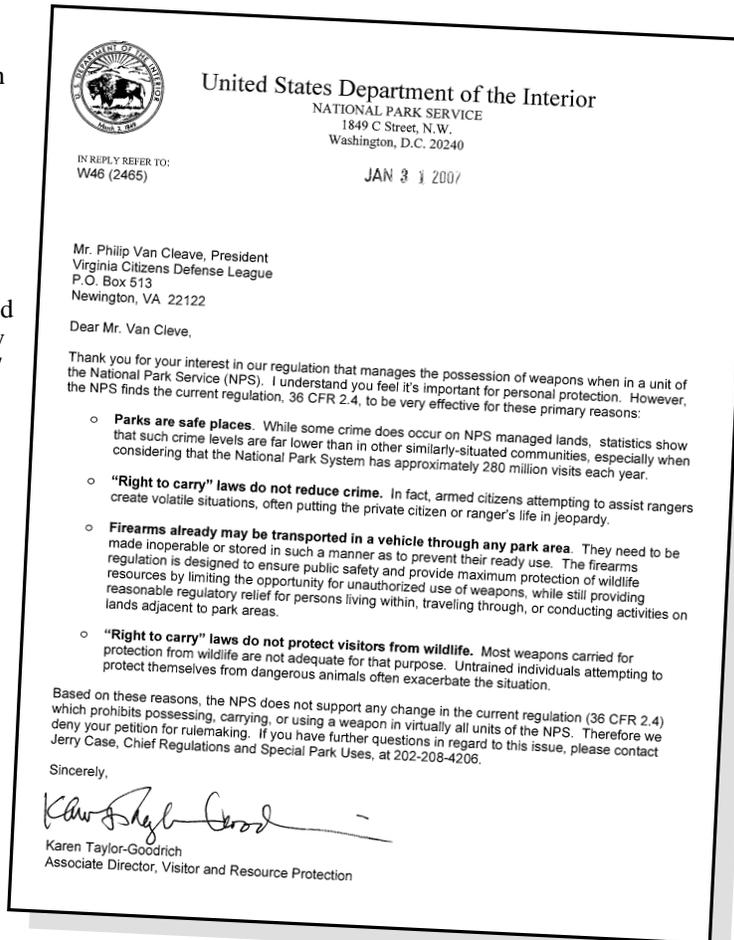
The situation at Organ Pipe is so dire that the very existence of the park is being threatened. A review board convened after the tragic killing of park ranger Kris Eggle at Organ Pipe in 2002 concluded that “Illegal smuggling activities... are threatening the existence of the park and the fundamental agency mission to protect its employees, visitors and resources.”

Mr. Obey also noted that Organ Pipe “had to close the third most popular trail in Arizona because the area is so unsafe for visitors or for park rangers.”

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. It is not uncommon for today’s Rangers to be decked in camouflage carrying automatic weapons, as they regularly encounter illegal aliens, drug smugglers and, quite possibly, actual terrorists.

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.

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When President Bush nominated Idaho Gov. Dirk Kempthorne (right) as head of the Interior Department last year, gun owners were hopeful that the gun ban in National Parks would soon fall. Unfortunately, a reversal of the ban has not been forthcoming. In fact, a bureaucrat in the department recently denied the request to overturn the ban and insulted gun owners at the same time — claiming that right to carry laws only make society more dangerous. (See the letter above.)

dubious on its face, since private citizens are not allowed to carry firearms on NPS land.

These talking points could have been taken straight from the discredited playbook of the anti-gun lobby. Whenever a state moves to relax concealed carry laws, the mainstream media — and those who are against self-defense in general — wail that minor traffic accidents will become gun battles, and arguments will erupt into shootouts.

These dire prognostications notwithstanding, it turns out the gun banners were wrong, as firearms in the hands of honest citizens create safer environments for everyone.

Still, Taylor-Goodrich uses the same lame argument against repealing the NPS ban.

# Will the Real Mitt Romney Please Stand Up?

by *Erich Pratt*

As he travels through the south — contemplating a run for the presidency — Mitt Romney sounds like the modern-day incarnation of John Wayne.

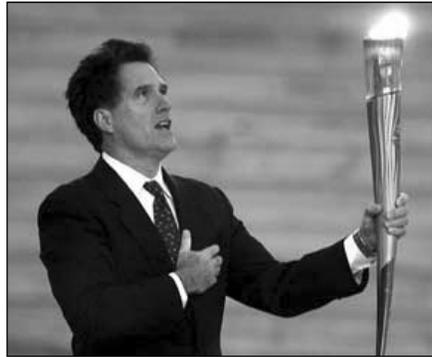
He tells shooters how he used to hunt rabbits as a boy. He visits with attendees at gun shows, impressing them with his knowledge of the Bill of Rights. He quotes the “right to keep and bear arms” language from memory and assures gun owners he’s on their side.

But wait, isn’t this the same Mitt Romney — the former governor of Massachusetts — who boasted that his view on firearms was “not going to make me the hero” of the gun lobby?

In fact, it is one and the same man. So what happened to the candidate who promised that he would not lift a finger to “chip away” at the gun laws in Massachusetts — a state that has some of the most draconian gun restrictions in the union?

When Romney ran for Senate in 1994, he told the *Boston Herald* that he supported the Brady gun control law and a ban on scores of semi-automatic firearms. Both laws were heavily supported by Democrats and, according to President Bill Clinton, were the reason that his party lost control of the Congress in 1994.

Ten years later, the federal ban on semi-automatic firearms was stripped from the law books. The banned guns became legal once again, and despite the Chicken Little cries from gun control advocates around the country, crime rates did not soar.



**Has presidential contender Mitt Romney finally seen the light on gun rights?**

This should not be surprising. After the semi-auto ban expired in 2004, the Congressional Research Service admitted there was no evidence to support the notion that the ban had actually reduced crime, especially since — and here’s a great admission — the “banned weapons and magazines were never used in more than a modest fraction of all gun murders” before the ban was implemented.

Likewise, the Brady gun control law has done nothing to curb crime, as was reported in one of the nation’s leading anti-gun medical publications, the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. The journal definitively stated in 2000 that the Brady law has failed to reduce “homicide rates and overall suicide rates” in states after they were required to impose waiting periods and background checks.

But despite the failure of these gun laws, Romney did not back off his support for gun control during his run for governor in 2002.

“We do have tough gun laws in Massachusetts; I support them,” he said during a gubernatorial debate with Democratic candidate Shannon O’Brien. “I won’t chip away at them; I believe they protect us and provide for our safety.”

Perhaps Mr. Romney knows something that the criminologists don’t know — the criminologists who have actually studied these issues and have reported that gun control has failed to make people safer.

What we do know is that even in Massachusetts, Romney has tried to appease both sides of the aisle. As governor, Romney supported legislation to ease restrictions on gun licensing in the state, but he only did so at the expense of gun rights, as he signed a draconian ban on common, household firearms that are owned by millions of Americans across the nation.

This is kind of like the thief who sticks a gun in your ribs and demands \$100, but then gives you \$25 back to “soften” the blow.

Seeing that Mr. Romney likes to frequent both sides of the legislative aisle, Americans are going to want to know where he really stands on issues that are important to them. And when they go to polls next year, voters are going to be asking, “Will the real Mitt Romney please stand up?” ■

## GOA in the News

This article first appeared in *Human Events* online on January 22, 2007.

## GOA Continues Fighting National Gun Ban

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Also, in the event of an emergency, how long will it take law-enforcement to arrive? Even in cities and towns, 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 Gov-

ernment Accounting Office noted, “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.”

### Guns vs. mountain lions: a stupid idea?

The final bullet point in the Taylor-Goodrich letter states that, “‘Right to carry’ laws do not protect visitors from wildlife. Most weapons carried for pro-

tection from wildlife are not adequate for that purpose. Untrained individuals attempting to protect themselves from dangerous animals often exacerbate the situation.”

GOA’s Larry Pratt noted, “That is about as dumb a statement I’ve heard from a bureaucrat in all my time in Washington. Does [Taylor-Goodrich] suggest that should I encounter a mountain lion on a remote trail I would be better off with a stick than with a small

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# Second Amendment Freedoms Aided the Civil Rights Movement

by Hon. Ken Blackwell

Prominent and indispensable among our rights is the “right of the people to keep and bear arms.” Second Amendment rights, never to be infringed, were posited by our nation’s founders as among the most essential tenets of the free and just republic they sought to establish.

The empowering freedom of law-abiding citizens to keep and bear arms is particularly timely during Black History Month, for its role in the victory of civil rights for all is sorely overlooked.

As the nation reflects on the struggles and achievements of our African-American citizens, we must celebrate the actions of heroic civil rights activists known as the Deacons for Defense. In the fight for equality, these brave men utilized their right to bear arms to protect their families, possessions and liberties.

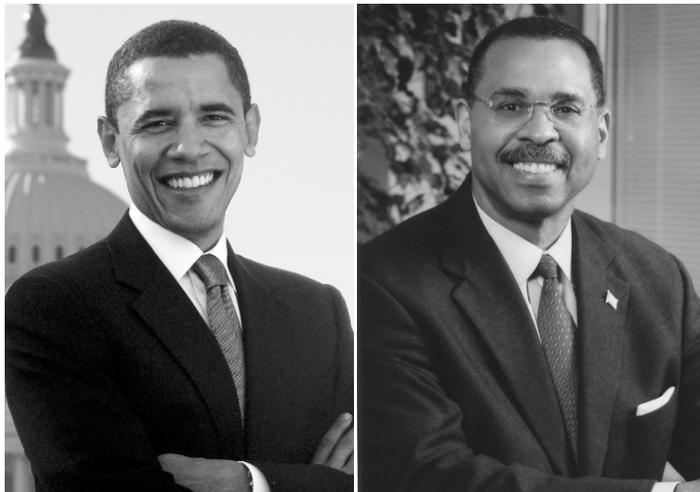
Unfortunately, *these* freedom fighters are seldom mentioned as an important part of African-American history.

Even prominent civil rights movement chronicler Taylor Branch gives the Deacons only passing mention in his three-volume work on the movement during the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. years.

But in the 2004 book, *The Deacons for Defense: Armed Resistance and the Civil Rights Movement*, Tulane University history professor Lance Hill tells their story. Hill writes of how a group of southern working class black men advanced civil rights through direct action to protect members of local communities against harassment at schools and polling places, and to thwart the terror inflicted by the Ku Klux Klan. He argues that without the Deacon’s activities, the civil rights movement may have come to a crashing halt.

The spring and summer of 1964 were landmark periods for civil rights. In growing numbers, Southerners marched against segregation. The battle over race

## Don’t Know Much About History



**Democrat presidential contender Barak Obama (left) has earned an F rating from GOA and, thus, seems to be ignorant of the lessons that were articulated by former Ohio Secretary of State, Ken Blackwell (right), in this article which appeared during Black History Month in February.**

lit Louisiana aflame. In response to civil rights activism, the Klan wreaked havoc on black neighborhoods, but soon found itself face-to-face with the Deacons.

Following a KKK night ride in Jonesboro, the Deacons approached the police chief who had led the parade and informed him that they were armed and

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***“As Gun Owners of America President Larry Pratt shared with me this summer and wrote in 2004 regarding the Deacons [for Defense], the history of gun control appears to have been one of controlling people rather than reducing violence.”***

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unafraid of self-defense. The Klan never rode through Jonesboro again. Local cross burnings ceased when warning shots were fired as a Klansmen’s torch met a cross planted in front of a black minister’s home. The initial desegregation of Jonesboro High School was threatened by firemen who aimed hoses at black students attempting to enter the building. When four Deacons arrived and loaded their shotguns, the firemen left and the students

entered unscathed. It was this series of efforts by the Deacons that caused the Klan to leave Jonesboro for good.

Similar work in Bogalusa, Louisiana drove the KKK out of that town as well, and led to a turning point in the civil rights movement. Acting as private citizens in lawful employment of their constitutional rights, the Deacons demonstrated the real social impact of the freedoms our nation’s founders held dear.

As legendary civil rights leader Roy Innis recently said to me, the Deacons forced the Klan to re-evaluate their actions and often change their undergarments.

Their actions in the mid 1960s had perhaps more impact on the progress of civil rights than did President Eisenhower’s 1957 dispatching of troops to Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas.

That gun rights have played such a pivotal role in racial equality makes the historical correlation between gun control and discriminatory policies unsurprising. From their beginnings, gun

control measures have worked to create legal disparities, granting unequal rights to members of various socioeconomic groups.

In fact, restrictive gun laws have long been employed to the benefit of a select elite while circumscribing the liberty of populations less popular or less powerful.

Gun control measures, from the slave gun bans of the 1700s South to the

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## Second Amendment Freedom Aided Civil Rights Movement

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Brady Bill regulations of the 1990s, have unfairly targeted black Americans and have worked to curtail a disproportionate number of their constitutional rights. Access to firearms was understood by our founders and many early American jurists as an essential aspect of full US citizenship, and it was for this reason that the *Black Codes* established after the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment — which constitutionally abolished slavery — prevented black freemen from owning guns.

In prohibiting blacks from exercising the freedoms granted other Americans in the Second Amendment, the *Black Codes* emphasized the notion that

African-Americans were not true citizens with full human rights. This point was raised by the Majority in *Dred Scott v. Sanford* in defense of the institution of slavery. By the 1870's, preventing Blacks from having access to guns had become one of the primary goals of the Ku Klux Klan.

As Gun Owners of America President Larry Pratt shared with me this summer and wrote in 2004 regarding

arms has been at the forefront of our nation's march to liberty and equality. The Second Amendment, which empowers Americans to embrace all of the freedoms and responsibilities their citizenship entails, has been the catalyst of tremendous social progress.

While some may dismiss the centrality of gun ownership to "progressive" ideals, groups such as the Deacons for Defense have shown us that citizens

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***"The Deacons forced the Klan to re-evaluate their actions and often change their undergarments."***

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the Deacons, the history of gun control appears to have been one of controlling people rather than reducing violence.

Examining both our nation's constitution and the history of gun rights in America, the right to keep and bear

who understand their right to bear arms are more likely to understand and defend our basic civil rights and the principles of equality and freedom. ■

*Ken Blackwell is the former Secretary of State of Ohio.*

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## GOA Continues Fighting National Gun Ban

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handgun? I'll take my chances with a firearm."

Not only does the gun ban leave law-abiding citizens virtually defenseless on NPS land, it can land a gun owner in serious legal trouble should he or she unwittingly violate the ban. This is more than just a hypothetical concern, as gun owners may not be aware that they are on NPS land.

For example, Virginia's George Washington Memorial Parkway is a major commuter route used by nearly 100,000 people daily. The Parkway is NPS land, and therefore subject to the gun ban regardless of state law. Several hundred thousands of Virginians have concealed carry permits and may not even realize they are in violation of the

## Mountain lion maulings of children have increased in recent years...



**But the Interior Department doesn't want you carrying a gun when camping with your family. They say doing so will only "exacerbate" encounters with dangerous animals!**

law should they drive the Parkway with a firearm.

The same situation can occur in any state in the country. A hiker in legal possession of a firearm on BLM or National Forest land can traverse an invisible line and unknowingly enter NPS land and thus be in violation of the law.

This gun ban not only places decent citizens in harm's way, it also can turn law-abiding citizens into criminals.

The Department of Interior should rewrite the regulations so that carrying a firearm on Park Service land is in compliance with the laws of the state in which the land is located.

Gun Owners of America continues to urge President Bush and Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne to overturn this ludicrous gun ban. ■

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## Why the Instant Background Check Is a Bad Idea

by Larry Pratt

Congress has legislation before it to expand the Instant Background Check, aka the Brady Law.

Rather than expand the program, it should be abolished.

Since the background check is mostly defended on its value

in supposedly “keeping guns out of the wrong hands,” let’s consider that idea.

If we were to do away with the Instant Background Check, the question is frequently asked, how would we keep guns out of the wrong hands. The answer is, we would be as successful without the check as with it. How do we know?

The Centers for Disease Control, an anti-gun federal agency, has examined several studies that focused on guns and crime. Their conclusion? They found that there is no impact from gun control laws, including the Brady Law, on crime.

More dramatic evidence comes from the “laboratory” of England. This island nation has banned handguns. They don’t need a background check because there are no legitimate sales. Following the confiscation of over 1.5 million guns, including all legally owned handguns in 1997, violent crime has skyrocketed. Illegal handguns are estimated by police to number over 3,000,000. According to a UN study in 2000, England is the most violent of all the world’s industrial countries.

Unless England can figure out how to keep guns out of the “wrong hands,” how does anyone expect an instant background check to do anything? Even if a criminal did not have a friend or a false ID, it would not be difficult to get a gun in other ways.

So, if the Instant Background Check is useless, why are we violating the Constitution which gives no authority to the federal government to regulate guns? Moreover, the background check is based on a presumption of guilt, requiring the accused (“Why do you need a gun?”) to prove his innocence — a total reversal of the presumption of innocence required in our legal system.

An equivalent to the background check to buy a gun would be to run a background check on people before they can become reporters or preachers — or before they can send letters to the editor. Well, some have argued, we have laws against shouting “fire” in a theater, so why not a similar prior restraint with the background check. Other than the fact that the background check does no good, there is no equivalence. The equivalent to shouting “fire” in a theater is to use a gun illegally. No background checks are run on those entering theaters and the legal consequences of shouting “fire” are only imposed after the deed is done.

Mission creep, a problem with all government programs, is evident with the Instant Background Check. In 1996, Sen.

Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) snuck a massive expansion of who is prohibited from owning a gun into law as an amendment on a spending bill. Thanks to Lautenberg, the rules were changed in the middle of the game — violating the constitutional prohibition on *ex post facto* laws.

People who had paid a minimal fine for a misdemeanor domestic violence violation — shouting or shoving, but not physically harming one another (which would be a felony) — all of a sudden became prohibited from owning guns. Cops and soldiers could no longer carry weapons, and many were discharged from service.

Now Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY) wants to radically build on Lautenberg’s law by sending a billion dollars to the states for scooping up even more names of people to send to the federal data base of prohibited persons. Included in this attack on liberty will be veterans who had the shakes after a battle and were sent to a psychiatric ward. That sure seems to fit the category of “no good deed goes unpunished.”

In order to satisfy the federales’ lust for prohibiting gun ownership, McCarthy’s measure would require that the states send the feds 90% of all relevant information needed to know

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***McCarthy’s measure (H.R. 297) will end up as gun registration on steroids. Not only will every gun owner be able to be tagged, but everybody’s personal information can end up in a centralized police data base. Now I know what the eye at the top of the pyramid on our one dollar bills is for — it’s keeping an eye on everything about everybody!***

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all who “should” be prohibited from owning guns. What is relevant? The bill does not say. Give a bureaucrat an inch and he will take a mile. In order to make sure that illegal aliens and other prohibited persons don’t own guns, you will watch all of your tax records, health history and much more go into the FBI’s computers in West Virginia.

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McCarthy’s assault-legislation is aimed at the privacy of every single American — whether they own a gun or not. Every single American should oppose Carolyn McCarthy’s bill (H.R. 297).

People should not be bedazzled by the mantra that “All we need to do is enforce the gun laws we have.” We should do no such thing — particularly when they are both unconstitutional and useless. ■