

# THE Gun Owners

28 YEARS OF NO COMPROMISE – 1975-2003

## Will the Sun Set on Semi-Auto Ban?

By John Velleco

Washington, D.C. -- With the extension of the Clinton-era semi-auto ban hanging in the balance, confusion, misinformation, and political considerations are the order of the day in the nation's Capitol.

The so-called assault weapons ban was enacted in September of 1994. At the time, the ban on more than 180 types of common semi-automatic firearms likely would have failed were it not for a sunset provision added as a compromise to secure more votes for the measure.

On September 13, 2004, the firearms ban is scheduled to sunset.

Voting gun owners are credited with giving control of the Congress to Republicans in 1994 (due in large part to the ban). In 2000, gun owners in democrat-majority states like West Virginia, Arkansas and Tennessee rejected candidate Al Gore's radical gun registration proposals and delivered the White House to George Bush.

For these reasons, gun rights supporters could be excused for thinking an extension has no chance of being enacted.

However, leaders from both political parties are voicing support for extending the ban, and, considering the amount of erroneous and biased news coverage the issue receives, its outcome remains uncertain.



GOA Executive Director Larry Pratt appears on MSNBC's *Hardball* with Chris Matthews in May. Pratt reiterated that there would be severe political consequences for politicians who support an extension of the semi-auto ban.

### Misinformation and outright lies

The news media, most notably CNN, oftentimes simply does not report factually on what firearms the original ban covers.

Recently, CNN twice reported that the 1994 ban covered fully automatic firearms, and thus, the extension would be legalizing such firearms. Those reports created such a public

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## GOA Lawsuit Going to the Supreme Court

by Larry Pratt

Gun Owners of America has launched a lawsuit against the new campaign finance law that will be considered by the Supreme Court, probably in September. The new law is clearly intended to gag our First Amendment rights, although in a somewhat convoluted way.

One thing that can be said about the legislators who crafted this horrendous law is that they have learned from the mistakes of their predecessors. Previous attempts at gagging free speech have not been so subtle.

The Sedition Act of 1798 is a case in point. It promised newspaper editors a jail term if they criticized a federal offi-

cial. A number actually went to jail.

The newspapers of the day had been instrumental in helping birth political parties, but some of our gentlemanly founders found public criticism to be distasteful -- especially when it came from those outside the gentry.

The Sedition Act was used to put critics of President John Adams and other federal officials in jail for writing, publishing or uttering "false, scandalous and malicious writing or writings" with the intent to bring such officials into "contempt or disrepute" or to excite the "hatred of the good people of the United States" against them.

Any criticism of an official could be deemed as bringing that person into

*contempt or disrepute.* Moreover, in today's context, how could one talk about former President Bill Clinton without the discussion being *scandalous*?

Happily, the law contained a sunset

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## Media distorting the facts on semi-auto ban

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outry from viewers that the network was forced to admit their huge error the next day.

Of course, as gun owners are well aware, the ban was actually a look-alike measure targeted at firearms that had the appearance of some military firearms, but in reality were functionally identical to common hunting rifles.

However, while the difference between full-auto and semi-auto firearms is clear even to the most novice gun owner, the scare tactics of the anti-gun proponents are effective. Now that millions of unsuspecting school children have been indoctrinated to fear firearms, it's no wonder that the products of the biased, government education system still believe the ban covers fully automatic firearms.

This is no accident. Recently, columnist Jacob Sullum dug up an old



**A Trenton, 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.”**

Despite all the evidence to the contrary, gun haters continue to spread the worn out deception that criminals favor these firearms.

“Assault weapons are the weapons of choice for criminals,” Sen. Dianne Feinstein said in a press statement this

Overall, taking into account the number of firearms and gun owners there are in this country and the number of times firearms are used in crimes, less than one half of one percent of all firearms will ever be used in a crime.

That fact alone suggests that gun control laws are about much more than supposedly reducing crime.

In addition, the anti-self defense lobby is loathe to admit any of the obvious benefits of firearms. Gun owners

actually use firearms, including the ones under the ban, in excess of one million, perhaps even two million, times per year successfully in self-defense.

Politicians, however, rarely let the truth stand in the way of bad policy.

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## “Recently, CNN twice reported that the 1994 ban covered fully automatic firearms.... The network was forced to admit their huge error the next day.”

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quote from one of the country's leading gun control zealots. Sullum wrote:

The anti-gun lobby decided to target firearms that look like military weapons for tactical reasons. As the [Violence Policy Center's] Josh Sugarmann observed in 1988, “The weapons' menacing looks, coupled with the public's confusion over fully automatic machine guns versus semi-automatic assault weapons -- anything that looks like a machine gun is assumed to be a machine gun -- can only increase that chance of public support for restrictions on these weapons.”

[As for machine guns, the unconstitutional ban on newly manufactured full-autos has been in effect since 1986, and unfortunately that measure contained no sunset provision.]

In addition to the misinformation campaign regarding which firearms are actually banned, there is also the anti-gun propaganda machine to contend with.

May.

Apparently reading from the same script, Joshua Horwitz, Executive Director of the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence also said in May that “Military-style assault guns are the weapons of choice for criminals and have no place in our communities.”

These are the same lines used ten years ago by Bill Clinton and Janet Reno when they were trying to implement the ban. But are these guns the “weapons of choice” for criminals?

### So-called assault weapons rarely used in crime

The data suggest the opposite. Comprehensive studies by Florida State criminologist Gary Kleck indicate that so-called assault weapons are used in a mere 0.5 percent of homicides a year.

One has a much better chance of being murdered by an assailant armed with a knife, or even with just bare hands, than by one of the banned rifles.

### Administration irks gun owners

The Bush Administration set off a firestorm of protest when spokesman Scott McClellan told reporters that, “The president supports the current law, and he supports reauthorization of the current law,” a position later reiterated by senior White House spokesman Ari Fleischer.

Gun Owners of America members and supporters flooded the White House with emails in response to a GOA alert put out the week of Mr. McClellan's statement.

Other political leaders also jumped in the fray. The House Majority Leader, pro-gun Rep. Tom DeLay (TX), told

reporters that there were not enough votes in the House to pass an extension of the ban and that it would not come to the House floor.

But later, the more moderate House Speaker Dennis Hastert backpedaled.

“The bill has not been discussed by the leadership yet, and I have not had a

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**Senator John McCain (R-AZ) has indicated he might support a reauthorization of the Clinton-Feinstein ban.**

## GOA in the News

# GOA Media Appearances in May 2003

### Radio and Television

5/27/03 Warren Duffy Show	5/8/03 Behind the Headlines
5/23/03 KIXO Radio	5/7/03 Mark Scott Show
5/22/03 WCRF Radio	5/7/03 KSCJ Radio
5/21/03 WHA Public Radio	5/6/03 WMIQ Radio
5/19/03 WMUZ Radio	5/6/03 Barry Brownfield
5/16/03 RNN-TV	5/5/03 WOR Radio
5/15/03 KSLR Radio	5/5/03 RNN-TV
5/15/03 Live from CNN with Judy Woodruff	5/5/03 AFR News
5/12/03 Crosstalk	5/1/03 KKLA (Los Angeles)
5/14/03 ABC Radio	5/1/03 Ken Hamblin Show
5/13/03 KTKK Radio	
5/12/03 WPXI Radio	
5/9/03 Radio America	
5/8/03 Chris Core Show	
5/8/03 MSNBC: Hardball with Chris Matthews	

### Newspaper and Internet

5/27/03 CNSNews.com
5/22/03 WorldNetDaily.com
5/21/03 Wisconsin Outdoor News
5/14/03 The Washington Post
5/13/03 CNSNews.com
5/9/03 CNSNews.com



GOA's Erich Pratt (left) appeared on CNN in May to debate the semi-auto ban with a representative from the Brady Campaign, the group formerly known as Handgun Control, Inc.

5/7/03 Las Vegas Review Journal
5/7/03 SFGate.com
5/7/03 Minneapolis Star Tribune
5/7/03 Associated Press
5/5/03 MSNBC.com
5/5/03 The Washington Post
5/1/03 The Sierra Times

## Bills Filed to Extend Semi-auto Ban; Uncertainty Lingers on Capitol Hill

*Continued from page 1*

discussion with the president yet. I am not ready to make that decision," the Speaker said.

Meanwhile, bills have been introduced in the House and Senate to extend the ban.

### House and Senate bills introduced to extend ban

H.R. 2038, sponsored by anti-gun extremist Rep. Carolyn McCarthy, not only would make the ban permanent, but also would expand it to cover even more semi-autos. McCarthy's bill has 82 cosponsors.

The Senate version, introduced by Sen. Dianne Feinstein, the author of the original ban, is not as ambitious as its House counterpart and seeks to make the ban permanent without expanding it to cover more firearms.

The Feinstein bill, S. 1034, has only 8 cosponsors from among the most radical of the Senate's anti-gun faction.

### The politics of gun control

The list of Senators not on the bill is significant and is telling of the political

realities of the gun issue in electoral politics.

Because Senators generally represent a broader cross section of the population than House members, it appears that many Senators from both parties, especially those who must face voters in 2004, are treading cautiously on this issue.

Pennsylvania Republican Sen. Arlen Specter faces a primary challenge from pro-gun Rep. Pat Toomey. Sen. Specter has been non-committal on the extension.

Anti-gun zealot Sen. John McCain (R) also faces the possibility of a pro-gun primary challenger. While the Arizona Senator voted against the original bill in 1994, he has since emerged as a leader for the anti-gun forces in Washington and said in 1999 that he might support such a ban.

On the Democrat side, Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (SD) will likely face pro-gun former Rep. John Thune in November of 2004. Senate



House Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R-TX) opposes the semi-auto ban.

Minority Whip Harry Reid of Nevada and Sen. Blanche Lincoln-Lambert (AR) also must be careful not to alienate voting gun owners.

These Senators and others who hail from states with large pro-gun constituencies will undoubtedly be watching this issue personally, as they privately hope it never makes it to the floor. If it does, however, Senators will be forced to choose whether to side with their anti-gun cronies in Washington or with their voters at home.

Although there should be enough votes in Congress to kill all attempts to extend the ban, thereby keeping it off the President's desk, it would not take very many turn-coats to produce the opposite outcome.

Gun Owners of America will be monitoring any action taken on this issue and reporting to its membership both recorded votes and happenings behind the scenes. ■

## GOA Lawsuit

Continued from page 1

which forced it to expire at the beginning of Thomas Jefferson's term. This fact alone suggests that the Sedition Act was nothing more than an electioneering gag for the opponents of President Adams in an attempt to win him a second term.

To his credit, Jefferson freed the imprisoned editors.

Well, two hundred years later, the federal election laws are equally intended to stifle debate, even if they are not quite so crude as the Sedition Act.

The Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA) of 1971 severely limits the ability of most people to support the candidate of their choice -- a limitation which does not apply to media corporations. FECA restricts individuals to a paltry \$1,000 (and certain groups to \$5,000) in support of their favorite candidate, while the media giants can spend limitless sums on their political publications in support of -- or in opposition to -- federal candidates for office.

The Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 (BCRA) also cleverly strangles debate without the bluntness of the old Sedition Act.

### New law squelches the voice of gun owners

Congress passed BCRA last year over the protests of many gun rights organizations. The new law, better known as the Incumbent Protection Act, prohibits advocacy organizations such as Gun Owners of America from even mentioning the name of a candidate for federal office 30 days before a primary and 60 days before a general election.

What a comfort for legislators who can now vote for an anti-Second Amendment bill and be immune from criticism from GOA!

The new law contains another gag rule that restricts the manner in which Congressmen can promote legislation they support and limits their ability to team up with groups such as GOA.

For example, the law now prohibits Gun Owners of America from mailing any letter signed by a Congressman that is designed to get GOA members to



**GOA's lawsuit challenging the Incumbent Protection Act will be heard by the Supreme Court, probably in September. The campaign election law passed last year restricts the ability of gun organizations like to GOA to expose the anti-gun votes of those in Congress.**

lobby their own Representatives or Senators.

Why is this ban on lobbying found in an election-related law? Well, the argument goes, such a letter might, even as far away as two years later, influence a voter's mind for or against a member of Congress when it's time for reelection.

Clearly, Congress has been expanding the web of restrictions over the years, making it enormously more difficult for watchdog organizations like GOA to point out just how bad incumbent federal office holders might be (or how good, for that matter).

### GOA's lawsuit takes a uniquely, constitutional approach

For this reason and many more, GOA is challenging the constitutionality of both the 1971 and the 2002 elec-

tion laws.

GOA's complaint is unique in that in addition to making a freedom of the press argument, we are also challenging the 1971 FECA law which put in place many of the free speech restrictions on an individual's ability to support candidates.

We argue that in the most recent law Congress has not only restricted the free speech rights of individuals, but also discriminated against them by exempting media corporations from the restrictions on mentioning candidates' names.

Ironically, the Brady Campaign has acknowledged that it depends on friendly media corporations to get its message out.

Not only is that free, it gets around the 60 day gag rule in last year's law.

*Congressional Quarterly* says this: "The Brady Campaign, for instance, relies on local chapters and affiliated groups to make its case to newspaper editorial boards."

In other words, they can attack or support politicians without limit because they push their message through the "media loophole" which was expanded in the recent law.

### Gun control organizations hailed the passage of the Incumbent Protection Act

There was a moment of candor when the president of Common Cause, Scott Harshbarger, greeted the passage of the Incumbent Protection Act last year by saying: "A vote for campaign finance reform is a

vote against the Second Amendment gun lobby."

The GOA complaint demonstrates how the 2002 law imposed prior restraints on our press activities through a licensing scheme, imposed improper editorial controls and imposed discriminatory economic burdens.

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**By signing the Sedition Act into law, President John Adams enacted the country's first, unconstitutional attempt at squelching opposition voices in 1798.**



## Baltimore Prosecutes Gun Owners for Acting in Self-Defense

By Larry Pratt

In Baltimore County, if the thugs don't get you, Mark P. Cohen and City State's Attorney, Patricia Jessamy, will.

O.K., maybe these prosecutors aren't household names. But Kenny Der and Darrell Kifer will never forget them. Baltimore Prosecutor Cohen and Attorney Jessamy cost the two men hundreds of thousands of dollars in combined legal fees. Their crime? Self defense.

Der and Kifer run a commercial refinishing business. They had been burglarized over 20 times, including the night of June 29, 2001, when they were working on a rush job.

About 9:30 p.m. they heard noise upstairs. They got their guns and climbed the narrow staircase to investigate. In the dimly lit area they encountered Tyrone Walker, who greeted them with an expletive and announced that he was going to kill them.

### Thug had a long criminal record

Walker was brandishing an unknown weapon, later discovered to be a maul, and it was learned later by the coroner that Walker was high on booze and morphine.

Der and Kifer fired, hitting Walker multiple times from both a handgun and a shotgun.

Given that Walker had a long rap

sheet, and he had been in the court system many times and had "earned" a PhD in criminal activity, one would think that Prosecutors Cohen and Jessamy would have been happy to see this thug's career ended prematurely.

Instead, they said that the two victims should have tried to flee onto a crime-ridden street and dialed 911. This would have entailed going single-file down the stairs and then fumbling for a key to open the deadbolt locking the door. All of this under poorly lit conditions, and exposed to the attacker.

The defense brought in Masaad Ayoob as an expert witness. Ayoob trains police and civilians in the use of force in self-defense, including lethal force. He showed how quickly an assailant who was as close as was Walker could attack his victims. His testimony gave great weight to the necessity of the self-defense plea made by Der and Kifer.

### Store owners vindicated, killing ruled self-defense

The defendants waived their right to a jury trial on the advice of Attorney David Irwin, who said, "If you have a winner, you take a judge trial, if you have a loser, you take a jury trial." Literally seconds after the final summations of the prosecution and the defense, Judge John Glynn pronounced

a verdict of 'not guilty.'

"This is a sad and disturbing matter," said the judge. "The state has the burden of proof, and I cannot find that the state met that burden of proof."

The good news is considerable. Kenny Der and Darrel Kifer were acquitted of murder and totally vindicated, ending a nightmare that lasted over 18 months. Also, they had managed to raise \$100,000 for their defense.

The bad news is that they still owe \$100,000 in legal bills.

Gun Owners Foundation has given assistance and made a contribution but would like to do more. If you would like to help defray the staggering costs of enduring this malicious prosecution, please make a check out to Gun Owners Foundation and write Der & Kifer on the memo line. It will all go to them. The checks can be sent to the GOA office.

Contributions to Gun Owners Foundation are tax deductible.

You can contribute online at [www.gunowners.com/derkifer.htm](http://www.gunowners.com/derkifer.htm). Credit card contributions can also be made by calling 703-321-8585.

You can hear the interview I had with Darrell Kifer by going to the archives of my show, *Live Fire*. They are on the GOA webpage: [www.gunowners.org/radio.htm](http://www.gunowners.org/radio.htm). ■

## Alaska Goes Vermont

by Sam Paredes

In this day and age when gun owners are fighting 24/7 to retain their Second Amendment freedoms, the State of Alaska has bravely stepped forward and passed a Vermont-style concealed carry weapons law.

Believe it or not, law-abiding Americans will actually be able to legally carry a concealed firearm in Alaska without the need of a permit.

No background checks, fees, waiting periods or fingerprints will be required. A permit system will continue to exist for Alaskans who want to carry in other states that have permit reciprocity or who wish to be exempt from background checks when purchasing

firearms.

Ardent, pro-gun State Representative Eric Croft (D-Anchorage) authored House Bill 102. "I object to the government putting a precondition on that right [to carry a weapon]," Croft said. "I'm presumed to be a responsible citizen until proven otherwise."

Major kudos to NRA/ILA State Liaison Brian Judy (a former Gun Owners of California staff member) for quietly and methodically shepherding the proposal through the legislative process and working closely with Rep. Croft. The bill had 33 co-



Alaska State Representative Eric Croft authored the Vermont-style carry law which became law in June.

sponsors and passed on a veto proof vote of 28 to 12 in the House and 12 to 8 in the Senate.

Alaska Governor Frank Murkowski (R) had no real choice but to sign the bill or face an embarrassing veto override vote during the next legislative session.

Gun Owners of America was able to mobilize support for HB 102 on two different occasions during the process and is pleased to congratulate the citizens of Alaska on their restored freedoms.

Alaska and Vermont now offer the best carry laws in the country ... 2 now, 48 to go. ■

Sam Paredes is a GOA Board Member and Executive Director of Gun Owners of California.

## Blood on DC Gun Grabbers Hand

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effect.

Healy has joined three other attorneys -- Alan Gura, Robert A. Levy and Clark M. Neily -- to file what is arguably the finest, most concise and compellingly documented defense of the "individual right" view of the Second Amendment I have ever seen.

They represent six plaintiffs who have gone to U.S. District Court in our Nation's capital to challenge Washington DC's anti-gun laws which blatantly infringe the Constitutionally protected right of private citizens to keep and bear arms.

I repeat: This brief is without a doubt one of the best I have ever read on this subject.

You can read it and other documents pertaining to this case online at: <http://www.alangura.com/parker>.

I urge you to read it closely, print it



**For more than 25 years, the draconian gun laws in Washington, DC have failed to reduce crime. Last year, the city once again gained the undesired distinction of being the murder capital of the nation.**

out and keep it as a reference document. It is excellent and the attorneys who put it together are to be congratulated.

But back to the question, is there any evidence that the DC gun ban has actu-

ally reduced crimes committed by people with guns. Perhaps the Feds know of such a study which points to the answer.

However, when this question is put to an official U.S. Justice Department spokesman, she says, after checking, "on background," asking not to be named: "I do not know of any study."

How about the D.C. Metropolitan Police Department? Certainly the MPD has some data showing the DC gun ban laws have worked. I mean, they enforce these laws, right? Wrong. No data. Here's the way the conversation went when Quinton Pearson, a Public Information Officer

was interviewed:

**Q:** What data do you have showing that the DC gun ban laws have reduced

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## If you have never visited the GOA website, look at all the great stuff you're missing . . .

- GOA Ratings for the entire U.S. Congress -- are your Senators and Representative pro-gun?
- Voting Records for all 435 Congressmen and 100 Senators, plus hundreds upon hundreds of state legislation vote reports
- Up-to-date alerts and bill analysis of current legislation -- where are the threats and opportunities *today*?
- Informative Fact Sheets and Opinion Editorials, including the famous Gun Control Fact-Sheet containing tons of statistics and 154 footnotes
- Free, low-volume E-mail Alerts (when you sign up for these, your e-mail address is kept confidential and is never shared with third parties)
- Extensive Links section connecting to large numbers of firearms-related websites
- Webcasts of Larry Pratt's weekly radio program, *Live Fire*
- Contact information for Congress, all 50 state legislatures, and a vast array of media outlets across the country

*This and much, much more. It's just a click away.*

**Go to <http://www.gunowners.org> and find out why the experts rely on Gun Owners of America for timely and accurate reports affecting your gun rights.**

### **Legal Times:**

"Using a sophisticated Web site, the Gun Owners of America has mounted a massive lobbying campaign to mobilize its members."

### **Dave Kopel, National Review:**

"The GOA's e-mail and fax grassroots network has become extremely effective. GOA was the most important organization behind the failure in the last two Congresses of Senator Orrin Hatch's [gun control] bill to federalize much of the juvenile justice system."

**Log on at <http://www.gunowners.org> and become a "keyboard lobbyist" today!**

## Blood on DC Gun Grabbers Hand

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crimes committed by people using guns?

**A:** What data do we actually have?

**Q:** Yeah. The laws have been in effect now for more than 25 years.

**A:** Hmmmm. I don't know that we do have any data that shows it's reduced crime. I don't think any study has ever been done.

Finally, you'd think that if anybody would have any information showing that the DC gun ban laws have worked, it would be Washington's Mayor Anthony Williams who has been one of the strongest supporters of these unconstitutional laws.

But, when asked if the Mayor had any evidence, or knew of any evidence, that the DC gun ban laws have reduced crimes committed by people with guns, his press spokesman Tony Bullock said: "No, I don't have any such information, no."

He refers the question to Peter Lavallee, Communications Director for the Office of the Corporation Counsel.

When interviewed, Lavallee says: "I don't know of any such data off-hand that I've seen." He says he'll call back after checking with his Criminal Division. He calls back.

**Lavallee:** "I checked with the four top people in our Criminal Division and they said this didn't ring a bell with them" (that is the question regarding whether there is any data showing that the DC gun ban laws have worked).

**Q:** Interesting, isn't it, that your gun ban laws have been in effect more than 25 years and you have no evi-

dence these laws have worked.

**Lavallee:** I see the point you're making.

But wait! I have, after a diligent search, found a specific mention of a specific study assessing the impact of the DC gun ban law.

This study is alluded to in a book by one of the pioneer, Founding Fathers of the gun-grabber movement, Pete Shields.

In his 1981 book *Guns Don't Die -- People Do* (Arbor House), on page 79, Shields, at the time chairman of Handgun Control, Inc., notes, proudly, that Washington DC, in 1977, passed one of the strictest handgun control laws in the nation.

The result? Well, Shields says that Edward D. Jones III, a former Justice



**Gene Healy of the CATO Institute is one of the lead attorneys in the lawsuit challenging the DC gun ban.**

Department analyst, made a study comparing handgun homicides in 1974 with handgun homicides in 1978, the first full year of the DC gun ban law.

And? And, among other things, "the study also showed that the new law had little impact on the use of handguns in street crime."

Why? Because, according to Jones, the criminal can follow his "single-minded intention to engage in criminality" by the simple expedient of buying a handgun elsewhere.

In other words, once again, we see the truth of the statement widely ridiculed by the gun-grabbers: "When guns are outlawed, only outlaws will have guns." Exactly. ■

## Will a Second Amendment Case Go to the Supremes?

Six residents in the nation's capital are challenging the unconstitutional DC gun ban in federal court.

Their case argues that the text of the Second Amendment plainly establishes that individuals have a right to keep and bear arms independent of state service, and that the Supreme Court itself has suggested the Second Amendment secures an individual right.

Another Second Amendment case could also be working its way towards the Supreme Court. That case, *Silveira v. Lockyer*, is challenging the California semi-auto ban and is also in federal court.

Gun Owners Foundation is closely watching both of these cases, and will submit briefs in support of the individual right to keep and bear arms should the Court agree to hear either of these cases.

## GOA Lawsuit

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Those interested in seeing the GOA briefs can find them at <http://www.gunowners.org/iptb.htm>.

It is a matter of record that three of the Supreme Court justices want to overturn the 1971 FECA (Justices

Anthony Kennedy, Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas). That leaves two to go for a majority, and the freedom of the press cases heard by the Supreme Court over the years offers hope that two more might agree with GOA.

Just recently, for example, the court ruled that requiring a religious group to register with a municipality before they go door to door was unconstitutional because it violated the freedom of press

of the door-to-door solicitors.

The Court, in other words, has consistently found that freedom of press applies to all kinds persons and organizations even though they are not media corporations.

Things could be looking up for gun owners in the courts. This lawsuit has been very costly and any support for GOA would help to reduce the financial burden. ■



# Gun Grabbers Have No Proof Washington, DC's Gun Ban Laws Have Worked

by Larry Pratt

Washington DC's unconstitutional gun ban laws have been in effect for more than 25 years.

But, I am not aware of any credible study which shows these law have worked -- by which I mean that they have reduced crimes by individuals using guns. And the gun-grabbers and their allies are unable to cite any such study.

One of the earliest backers of the DC gun ban laws was Charles Orasin.

In late 1978, when the District of Columbia's Court of Appeals upheld the District's gun ban laws, Orasin, at the time a spokesman for the National Council To Control Handguns, said: "This is a victory for all the residents of the District."

When called at his Virginia home recently and asked if he knew of any studies which shows that the DC gun ban laws have actually reduced crimes committed by people with guns, Orasin said: "I am not interested in discussing this subject."

He hangs up the phone.

Of course, that he would chose to live in the safety of Virginia which bristles with guns is perhaps all the discussion that is needed.

In his idiotically titled book *Every Handgun Is Aimed At You: The Case For Banning Handguns* (New Press, 2001), Josh Sugarmann, Executive Director of the Violence Policy Center (VPC), says (page 85):

"We know in the District of Columbia -- where we've banned handguns -- that if you minimize the number of handguns you are going to have less shootings, a pretty simple, straightforward concept."

Oh, really? And what evidence is there that shows there have been "less shootings" in Washington DC since private citizens were denied their Constitutional right to keep and bear arms?

Well, Matthew Nosanchuk, Litigation Director for the VPC, says, in an interview, he thinks that in the mid-1980s there was a University of Maryland study which showed the DC gun ban had "a positive effect."

What, exactly, Nosanchuk is alluding to is not clear because he had no specific date and

no specific name for the study which he mentions.

In 1991 there was a study published in the *New England Journal Of Medicine* by four authors -- one of whom was at the time at the University of Maryland.

The study, titled "Effects of Restrictive Licensing of Handguns on Homicide and Suicide in the District of Columbia," purported to show the 1976 DC gun ban law decreased murders.

But, this study has been exposed as a methodological mess and a fraud. In a review of this study, Dr. Edgar A. Suter, chairman of Doctors For Integrity In Research And Public Policy, notes the following:

- The supposed homicide drop -- asserted by the study -- was not only temporary and miniscule, it occurred two years before the DC gun ban law took effect.

- The study exaggerated the authors' misinterpretations by using raw numbers, rather than the more scientific approach of using population-corrected rates.

• The study conveniently stopped as Washington DC's overall homicide rate skyrocketed to eight times the national average and the black, male, teen homicide rate skyrocketed

to 22 times the national average.

Gene Healy, an attorney and senior editor at the CATO Institute, says the murder rate in Washington DC is 55 percent higher than before the DC gun ban laws went into

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***"Six plaintiffs have gone to U.S. District Court in our Nation's capital to challenge Washington DC's anti-gun laws . . . . This brief is without a doubt one of the best I have ever read on this subject."***

## THE Gun Owners

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