

THE Gun Owners

32 YEARS OF NO COMPROMISE – 1975-2007

GOA Moves to Defang the Veterans Disarmament Act

"For the first time [in history] the legislation, if enacted, would statutorily impose a lifetime gun ban on battle-scarred veterans."

*— Military Order of the Purple Heart,
June 18, 2007*

by Erich Pratt

For months, Gun Owners of America has been warning readers about a horrible anti-gun bill that has been introduced by F-rated Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY).

Her bill (HR 2640) will expand the 1993 Brady Law and disarm hundreds of thousands of combat veterans — and other Americans. While Patrick Leahy (D) of Vermont has introduced a similar bill in the Senate, the notorious Chuck Schumer of New York has become the chief backer of this legislation, having once sponsored this very bill in years past.

The bill, dubbed the Veterans Disarmament Act, is moving quickly. It passed the House in June by an unrecorded voice vote and was then sent over to the Senate. In August, the Judiciary Committee passed the bill, which means it can come up for a vote in the Senate at any time.

To combat this, Gun Owners of America delivered draft amendments to every Senate office in September, providing important changes that must be made to the Veterans Disarmament Act. Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK), among others, is prepared to offer some of

Continued on page 2

A Gun Rights Champion



Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) helped gun owners by (single-handedly) slowing down the progress of the anti-gun Veterans Disarmament Act in the Senate. He is also looking to soon introduce legislation that will repeal the gun ban in our National Parks. (See article on page 5)

GOA Pushing Bill to Rein in the Gun Police

by Larry Pratt

Video cameras have changed the world we live in. Most American squad cars are now equipped with dash-cams — a move which works for the safety of both the public and the police.

But the attempt to equip testing laboratories with videocams has not caught on, let alone the idea of publishing and enforcing procedures for the testing of criminal evidence.

This is certainly the case with the federal gun police, who are otherwise known as the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATFE). This agency has continuously refused to conform to scientific standards and has resisted increased accountability.

The gang at BATFE — which was

somewhat under control during the administration of Attorney General John Ashcroft — ramped up their assault on gun owners while Attorney General Alfredo Gonzalez was in office. The abuse committed by these agents increased to levels not seen since the oppressive days of the Jimmy Carter presidency.

Gingrey Introduces BATFE Control Bill

To combat this, Rep. Phil Gingrey (R-GA) has introduced H.R. 1791 to bring some overdue accountability to the BATFE. His bill would require the videotaping of the testing of all "crime" guns involved in BATFE cases.

BATFE has had no written procedures for determining what is a

machine gun or any other kind of gun. This has enabled the BATFE to accuse people of having converted semi-auto-

Continued on page 7

Inside:

- **GOA on Fox News (page 3)**
- **Where does Fred Thompson stand on gun rights? (page 4)**
- **How to give to the Gun Owners Foundation through the United Way (page 6)**

Disarmament bill promises false hope of relief for gun owners

Continued from page 1

these amendments whenever the bill comes up for a vote.

The most important amendment would make it clear that veterans suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) are *not* prohibited persons, and thus, are not to be denied the ability to purchase a firearm simply because of emotional problems resulting from their service to this country.

The Military Order of the Purple Heart is opposed to the Veterans Disarmament Act, having stated that the bill will “impose a lifetime gun ban on battle-scarred veterans.”

Military veterans are justifiably concerned that this bill will legitimize the very thing that President Clinton did over seven years ago, when his administration added 83,000 names of veterans — suffering from maladies such as PTSD — into the NICS background check system.

Unfortunately, the Veterans Administration still appears to be handing over names of military veterans for inclusion in the NICS system. One veteran called the GOA offices in September, complaining that his guns were confiscated

Strange Bedfellows Supporting HR 2640



“When the NRA and Chuck Schumer agree, that tells you it’s something worth doing”

— Schumer to the Associated Press on September 26, 2007.

The travesty is that in the name of stopping such people from owning guns, more veterans — like the one mentioned above — are going to lose their gun rights.

Consider what *AFP* news reported on March 12 of this year:

“A quarter of the Afghanistan and Iraq war veterans treated with US government-funded health care have been

“The Gun Owners of America [has] already launched a public campaign to block the legislation that the NRA supports, warning that the proposal could ‘block millions of additional, honest gun owners from buying firearms.’”

— *Newsweek*, April 24, 2007

by the local sheriff in North Carolina because the VA had diagnosed him with PTSD last year and because he had contracted with an individual to handle his financial affairs. He is petitioning the courts to return his personal guns, which were an inheritance from his father.

Should one-fourth of all veterans have their guns taken away?

Proponents of the bill claim we need the Veterans Disarmament Act to stop mental defectives from owning guns (as if more laws would actually do that).

diagnosed with a mental disorder, according to a study published Monday.”

Studies like this demonstrate how liberal anti-gunners will be able to strip away the gun rights from more and more law-abiding citizens, using the pretext that a shrink’s diagnosis proves these people shouldn’t own guns.

Proponents of the Veterans Disarmament Act counter that the bill gives veterans a mechanism for getting their names off of the prohibited person list. But these veterans would not legitimately be on the list unless the bill were to pass in the first place.

Well, if the proponents are right — that this bill will actually help gun owners — then surely they won’t object to our friendly amendments that are designed to make it unmistakably clear that military veterans or grownups who suffered with ADHD as children will never be denied the ability to purchase a firearm, simply because they once had a “determination” from an anti-gun shrink that said there was the *miniscule* possibility that they could pose a danger to themselves or others.

To swallow the idea that the Veterans Disarmament Act will bring relief for gun owners, one must first ignore the fact that gun owners would *not need relief* in the first place if some gun owners (and gun groups) had not thrown their support behind the Brady bill that passed in 1993 and were not pushing the Veterans Disarmament Bill now.

Law-abiding Americans need relief because we were sold a bill of goods in 1993. The Brady Law has allowed government bureaucrats to screen law-abiding citizens before they exercise their constitutionally protected rights — and that has opened the door to all kinds of abuses.

Walking with the Devil?



“In times of great stress, it is permissible to walk side-by-side with the devil to get to the other side of the bridge.”

— Statement made by Rep. Dingell to an NRA audience in September, as he was quoting his “hero,” Franklin Delano Roosevelt, as justification for why he and the NRA had teamed up with anti-gunners like Carolyn McCarthy in support of the Veterans Disarmament Act. FDR had originally made the statement in defense of his working together with Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin in World War II.

The McCarthy bill will open the door to many more abuses. After all, do we really think that notorious anti-gunners like McCarthy, Leahy and Schumer had the best interests of gun owners in mind

Continued on page 3

Disarmament bill promises false hope of relief for gun owners

Continued from page 2

when they introduced this Veterans Disarmament Bill? The question answers itself.

Trade-off to hurt gun owners

Proponents want us to think this measure will benefit many gun owners. But what sort of trade-off is it to create potentially millions of new prohibited persons — under this legislation — and then tell them that they need to spend thousands of dollars to regain the rights *that were not threatened* before this bill was passed?

Do you see the irony? Gun control gets passed. The laws don't stop criminals from getting guns, but they invariably affect law-abiding folks. So instead of repealing the dumb laws, the fanatics argue that we need even more gun control (like the Veterans Disarmament Bill) to fix the problem!!!

So more people lose their rights, even while they're promised a very limited recourse for restoring those rights — rights which they would never lose, were it not for bills like McCarthy's.

The legislation threatens to disqualify millions of new gun owners who are not a threat to society. If this bill is signed into law:

- As many as a quarter to a third of returning Iraq veterans could be prohibited from owning firearms — based solely on a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder;
- Your ailing grandfather could have his entire gun collection seized, based only on a diagnosis of Alzheimer's (and there goes the family inheritance);
- Your kid could be permanently banned from owning a gun, based on a diagnosis under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

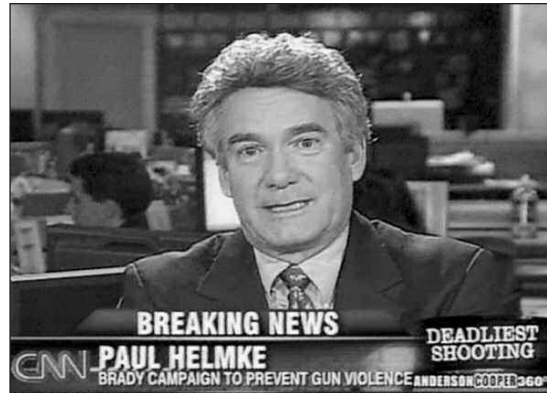
In his famous "Give Me Liberty" speech of 1775, Patrick Henry said he knew of "no way of judging of the future but by the past." Those words were true more than 200 years ago, and they are certainly true today — for the past has taught us that gun control fanatics and bureaucrats are continually looking for loopholes in the law to deny

guns to as many people as possible.

Gun Control's abominable record

A government report in 1996 found that the Brady Law had prevented a significant number of Americans from buying guns because of outstanding traffic tickets and errors. The General Accounting Office said that more than 50% of denials under the Brady Law were for administrative snafus, traffic violations, or reasons other than felony convictions.

Press reports over the years have also shown gun owners inconvenienced by NICS computer system crashes — especially when those crashes happen on the weekends (affecting gun shows).



"We're hopeful that now that the NRA has come around to our point of view in terms of strengthening the Brady background checks, that now we can take the next step after this bill passes [to impose additional gun control]." — Paul Helmke, head of the Brady Campaign, speaking to the CNN audience (June 13, 2007).

And then there's the BATFE's dastardly conduct in the state of Wyoming. The anti-gun agency took the state to court after legislators figured out a way to restore people's ability to buy firearms — people who had been disarmed by the Lautenberg gun ban of 1996.

Gun Owners Foundation has been

GOA in the News



In September, GOA's Larry Pratt debated the Brady Campaign on Fox News. At issue was whether a teacher in Oregon should be allowed to carry her gun to school to protect herself from her ex-husband. Pratt defended the woman, saying that, "The only thing we can be sure of in a gun free zone is the killer will have a gun, because he doesn't care about that law.... The group in our population that has the lowest crime rate -- and the lowest accidental firearms rate actually -- are those who have concealed carry permits."

involved in this Wyoming case, and has seen up close how the BATFE has *totally disregarded* a Supreme Court opinion which allows this state to do what they did.

In *Caron v. United States* (1998), the U.S. Supreme Court said that any conviction which has been set aside or expunged at the state level "shall not be considered a conviction," under federal law, for the purposes of owning or buying guns. But the BATFE has ignored this Court ruling, and is bent on preventing states like Wyoming from restoring people's gun rights.

More restrictions, not relief

Supporters, like the NRA, claim they were able to win compromises from the Dark Side — compromises that will benefit gun owners. Does the bill really make it easier to get your gun rights restored — even after spending lots of time and money in court?

Well, GOA has grappled with this question in a very lengthy piece entitled, "Point-by-Point Response to Proponents of HR 2640," which can be read at www.gunowners.org/ne0702.htm on the GOA website.

Continued on page 4

Fred Thompson: “Generally” Consistent

by Craig Fields

Director of Internet Operations

When a person can go on late-night television to announce his candidacy for President and find himself essentially tied with the frontrunner literally overnight, something has happened.

That something was a collective sigh of relief across America’s conservative base. Finally (it was thought), a high-profile candidate... without the liberal baggage of a Giuliani, Romney or McCain.

That’s because Thompson is relatively conservative in his overall philosophy. He has no need to convince voters that he has changed his ways and now sees the light, because he has been fairly consistent throughout his career.

He is in his own words “against gun control, generally.” And his voting record shows that to be true, generally. When he voted anti-gun, it was usually to expand federal authority. This is unfortunately consistent with his being a “law and order” conservative (pardon the pun).

Gun owners should also be aware that Thompson unabashedly favors the odious McCain-Feingold Incumbent Protection Act. This legislation, characterized by its proponents as campaign finance reform, severely limits the abilities of groups like GOA to inform the public about the gun rights voting records of politicians already in office. In many cases, it becomes illegal to even mention a politician’s name in on-air advertising the month before an election. Thompson — having voted in favor of the restrictions several times — thinks doing so is “not a non-conservative position, although I agree that a lot



Presidential contender Fred Thompson retired from the U.S. Senate in 2003 with a B- rating from Gun Owners of America.

of people have interpreted it that way.”

Fred Thompson was elected to the Senate as a Republican in 1994 — the 105th Congress — to fill the remaining two years of then-Vice-President Al Gore’s term. Thompson was reelected (handily) in 1996 to a full six-year term.

The timing was such that many of his “gun votes” on Capitol Hill came during the hysteria following the Columbine tragedy in 1999. It seemed that everyone in the country (except GOA supporters) considered it a foregone conclusion that something regarding gun control had to pass Congress that summer.

The Republican Leadership, especially in the Senate, adopted a “Gun Control Lite” strategy — hoping to preclude major gun bans by passing specific and less onerous restrictions that were largely extensions of current law.

Happily, GOA supporters rose up in

truly Herculean fashion that summer, and when the smoke cleared no new gun control at all had made it to the President’s desk. Thompson’s actions at that time were somewhat haphazard (he voted both for and against the “Lite” strategy at different points, while voting against most, but not all, anti-gun amendments brought by other Senators).

In total, GOA tracked 33 votes in the U.S. Senate while Thompson was there. He voted pro-gun on 20 of those — meaning he voted anti-gun more than a third of the time.

Some of his anti-gun votes were:

- In favor of the infamous Lautenberg Misdemeanor gun ban, which bars persons from owning guns (for life) if they commit offenses as minor as spanking their child in public or shoving a family member (09/12/96);
- Against a pro-gun filibuster led by Sen. Bob Smith of New Hampshire, thus helping to break the filibuster and allowing anti-gun legislation to advance (07/29/99); and,
- In favor of a young adult gun ban, which could put a parent in jail if his teen-aged son didn’t have a written permission slip on his person while the parent was teaching him gun safety at the range (05/13/99).

To read a fully-documented description of all 33 votes (and to obtain voting records of the other presidential candidates), please see <http://www.gunowners.org/pres08> on the GOA website. ■

Disarmament bill promises false hope of relief for gun owners

Continued from page 3

In brief, the McClure-Volkmer of 1986 created a path for restoring the Second Amendment rights of prohibited persons. But given that Chuck Schumer has successfully pushed appropriations language which has defunded this procedure since the 1990s (without signifi-

cant opposition), it is certainly not too difficult for some anti-gun congressman like Schumer to bar the funding of any new procedure for relief that follows from HR 2640.

Incidentally, even before Schumer blocked the procedure, the ability to get “relief from disabilities” under section 925(c) was always an expensive long shot. Presumably, the new procedures in the Veterans Disarmament Act will be the same.

Isn’t that always the record from

Washington? You compromise with the devil and then get lots of bad, but very little good. Look at the immigration debate. Compromises over the last two decades have provided amnesty for illegal aliens, while promising border security. The country got lots of the former, but very little of the latter.

If the Veterans Disarmament Bill passes, don’t hold your breath waiting for the promised relief. ■

Mike Hammond contributed to this article.

Rudy's Past Diatribes Against Guns Coming Back to Haunt Him

by Erich Pratt

When Republican presidential hopeful Rudy Giuliani spoke to an NRA audience this September, he tried to position himself as a states-rights candidate. Let each state decide what they'd like to do on the gun issue, he said.

But if this is the view he'd like gun owners to swallow today, he'll have a tough time distancing himself from many of the anti-gun statements he's made over the years ... thanks to old interviews with Rudy that have recently surfaced on YouTube.

After being labeled the "national spokesman for handgun licensing" by the *New York Times* in 1993, then Mayor-elect Rudy Giuliani appeared on *Face the Nation* to lobby for national gun control. (See the entire interview at www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZD-jGnGCygs.)

Giuliani, the then-Mayor elect for New York City, told the nation that the reason gun licensing has failed to work is that there is no national registration system. That's why New York City has problems, he said, because so many guns are coming into the city from the rest of the country.

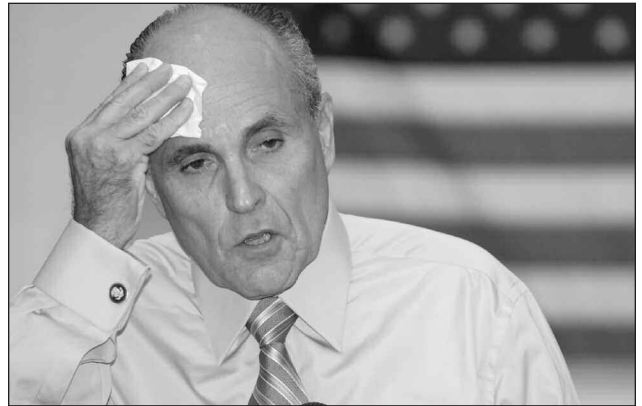
Rudy went on to plug some of the outrageous gun restrictions that were being offered at the time by anti-gun Democrat Senator Patrick Moynihan. "Some of the proposals of Senator Moynihan to add taxes to a lot of the ammo to reduce the level of ammunition ... all of that will help," Rudy said.

Wow! Rudy supported the 1,000 percent tax on ammunition that Sen. Moynihan was sponsoring!

When asked about other proposals to reduce crime: "Certainly, gun control alone isn't going to turn this problem around," he said, "but we shouldn't ignore gun control, just because it isn't the perfect solution to the problem."

Rudy also spoke in favor of gun amnesties, where people come to a central location and turn in their guns. "Anything that gets handguns and automatic weapons out of streets, out of our cities, out of our states ... I'm in favor of."

Finally, he took issue with the then-



Republican Presidential candidate Rudy Giuliani

current practice of the New York City police, who would trade in or sell their old service guns -- which would eventually be resold to the general public. That's not good enough, Rudy said. The police should destroy those weapons.

"The more that we can reduce the large number of handguns in our society, the faster we're going to start moving this in the right decision," Rudy explained.

"It makes much more sense to have a program in which we take guns out of society, rather than add to the number of handguns that are already there." ■



CAPITOL HILL UPDATE

Sen. Coburn to introduce gun ban repeal

by John Velleco

Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) has told Gun Owners of America that he will soon be introducing legislation to repeal the National Park Service gun ban.

Under current federal regulations, firearms are completely prohibited on Park Service land, in contrast to Forest Service and BLM regulations allowing for the law of the state in which the property is located to govern firearm possession.

For over four years, Gun Owners of America voiced concern over the ban, urging the Interior Department to overturn the ban administratively. This year, the Department finally responded in writing in an outrageous, condescending letter insulting to all gun owners. (See the March 24, 2007 issue of *The Gun Owners*.)

GOA applauds Sen. Coburn's decision to take the lead in repealing this dangerous and irresponsible gun ban. ■

Do you have internet access?

If you do, be sure to sign up for the free GOA email alerts. These alerts take over where the postal mail alerts leave off. When there is no time to organize a postal mailing alert complete with postcards, email alerts can be in your inbox the day we learn of a legislative emergency. Rather than postcards, the alerts come with pre-written emails to Congress for you to send. Please go to <http://www.gunowners.org/ean.htm> to sign up. Remember, numbers are important, as shown by the famous quote of the late Senator Everett Dirksen: "When I feel the heat, I see the light."

In Memory of Rosemary Arnold

Rosemary Arnold was a faithful member of GOA for several years. This year, GOA received a bequest of \$83,000 from her estate. We deeply appreciate her confidence in GOA's defense of freedom. Her generosity greatly helps that work.



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** 10042 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.

GOA Pushing Bill

Continued from page 1

matic firearms to machine guns when no such thing had been done.

In *U.S. v. Albert Kwan*, BATFE accused Kwan of owning an illegal machine gun. It turned out that BATFE acknowledged that Kwan's rifle would not fire as a machine gun until BATFE made it one. Without written procedures, they almost got away with it. A jury found him NOT guilty. Kwan is out a lot of money, but he is free.

Another case where BATFE "experts" determined a firearm to be a machine gun almost literally blew up in their face. In *U.S. v. Glover*, the BATFE charged John Glover with having converted a semi-automatic rifle to a fully-automatic weapon.

BATFE claimed that the gun would fire more than one round with one pull of the trigger. Thankfully, Glover's attorney got the prosecutor to agree to a second test firing of the gun and for it to be videotaped. Using the right ammunition, the gun actually did fire automatically once or twice out of twelve tests.

The problem for the government's case was that the gun was malfunctioning and had come close to blowing up in the hands of the BATFE "expert" who test fired the gun. It turns out he had never looked inside the gun, so he was unaware that a spring had failed — often causing the firing pin to strike the primer when a round was chambered.

The US Attorney prosecuting the *Glover* case dismissed it with prejudice (i.e., BATFE can never bring the case again). This was only done because — just this one time — it was documented on video. Since BATFE has never put out written procedures for testing a gun, they thought they could get away with confusing a malfunction for an illegal conversion from semi- to full-automatic.

Manufacturers Feeling the Boot

Historic Arms designs specialty firearms and accessories. Interestingly, one of their attorneys, Len Savage, par-



Ryan Horsley is the manager of Red's Trading Post.

ticipated in the *Glover* case by helping to expose the BATFE "expert" for the incompetent that he is during the videotaped test firing of the "illegal" gun.

While Savage's assistance benefited Glover, it brought down the wrath of the BATFE upon him. So a product that Historic Arms had been marketing (an accessory which allows a machine gun to fire cheaper ammunition) was subse-

quently redefined by the BATFE as a machine gun. Both determinations — first the accessory is not a machine gun, but then later is redefined as a machine gun — were put into writing.

The Historic Arms case demonstrates the whimsical nature of BATFE determinations, which can change from one year to the next. This is a huge problem, and is one of the reasons why it is imperative that the agency be held accountable to a set of written regulations. There are simply too many manufacturers who are getting hassled and prosecuted for engaging in activities which the BATFE had, at one time, said was legitimate.

The same lack of written procedures zapped another manufacturer, Akins, which had been marketing an accessory for six years. Their letter of determination initially said their product was not a machine gun. Six years later, another letter said it was.

Or consider the case of Rick Celata, who owns KT Ordnance. Celata makes kits that customers can use to make their own firearms, as people may legally make their own firearm — and not register it with BATFE — if the gun is made for their own use.

Nevertheless, the BATFE raided Celata's business last year and took all of KT Ordnance's merchandise and business records. But when the US Attorney in Montana learned that the Celata's lawyer was going to demand proof of what written regulations had been violated by Celata, the case was never taken to trial. Celata has not been prosecuted, but nei-

ther has his merchandise been returned.

Gun Owners Foundation defending gun retailers

BATFE has also been putting dealers around the country out of business based on paperwork errors that are not spelled out by any written procedures. They put one dealer out of business because he had over 60 "willful violations" where his customers had abbreviated Baltimore (City or County) with "Blto." Pretty serious crime, right?

GOA's Gun Owners Foundation has been supporting the Houston Ammo Dump and the Twin Falls Red's Trading Post in defense of their federal firearms licenses. These cases are full of examples like the Baltimore abbreviation.

While Rep. Gingrey's bill only demands that the test firings of guns be videotaped, this requirement — to quote the phrase that Sarah Brady has used in justifying incremental gun control — is a "good first step."

BATFE is opposed to the videotaping requirement. No wonder. If each defendant had a tape of the test firing by a BATFE "expert," and had been briefed that the test firings are governed by no written procedures, a lot of phony BATFE cases would be thrown out of court — if they even got taken to court.

How much waste, fraud and abuse will the American people stand for? How many millions of dollars could



Rep. Phil Gingrey (R-GA) has introduced legislation to help rein in the BATFE and prevent their abuses.

have been used to go after "real criminals," or repair bridges, secure our borders, or whatever? Bottom line is Rep. Phil Gingrey's HR 1791 will prevent BATFE waste and abuse. ■



Veterans Disarmament Act to Bar Vets from Owning Guns

by Larry Pratt

Hundreds of thousands of veterans — from Vietnam through Operation Iraqi Freedom — are at risk of being banned from buying firearms if legislation that is pending in Congress gets enacted.

How? The Veterans Disarmament Act — which has already passed the House — would place any veteran who has ever been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) on the federal gun ban list.

This is exactly what President Bill Clinton did over seven years ago when his administration illegitimately added some 83,000 veterans into the National Criminal Information System (NICS system) — prohibiting them from purchasing firearms, simply because of afflictions like PTSD.

The proposed ban is actually broader. Anyone who is diagnosed as being a tiny danger to himself or others would have his gun rights taken away ... forever. It is section 102(b)(1)(C)(iv) in HR 2640 that provides for dumping raw medical records into the system. Those names — like the 83,000 records mentioned above — will then, by law, serve as the basis for gun banning.

No wonder the Military Order of the Purple Heart is opposed to this legislation.

The House bill, HR 2640, is being sponsored by one of the most flaming anti-Second Amendment Representatives in Congress: Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY). It is being championed in the Senate by another liberal anti-gunner, Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY).

Proponents of the bill say that helpful amendments have been made so that any veteran who gets his name on the NICS list can seek an expungement.

But whenever you talk about expunging names from the Brady NICS system, you're talking about a procedure that has always been a long shot. Right now, there are NO EXPUNGEMENTS of law-abiding Americans' names that are taking place under federal level. Why? Because the expungement process which already exists has been blocked for over a decade by a "funds cut-off" engineered by another anti-gunner, Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY).

So how will this bill make things even worse? Well, two legal terms are radically redefined in the Veterans Disarma-

ment Act to carry out this vicious attack on veterans' gun rights.

One term relates to who is classified a "mental defective." Forty years ago that term meant one was adjudicated "not guilty" in a court of law by reason of insanity. But under the Veterans Disarmament Act, "mental defective" has been stretched to include anyone whom a psychiatrist determines might be a tiny danger to self or others.

The second term is "adjudicate." In the past, one could only lose one's gun rights through an adjudication by a judge, magistrate or court — meaning conviction after a trial. Adjudication could only occur in a court with all the protections of due process, including the right to face one's accuser. Now, adjudication in HR 2640 would include a finding by "a court, commission, committee or other authorized person" (namely, a psychiatrist).

Forget the fact that people with PTSD have the same violent crime rate as the rest of us. Vietnam vets with PTSD have had careers and obtained permits to carry firearms concealed. It will now be enough for a psychiatric diagnosis (a "determination" in the language of the bill) to get a veteran barred — for life — from owning guns.

Think of what this bill would do to veterans. If a robber grabs your wallet and takes everything in it, but gives you back \$5 to take the bus home, would you call that a financial enhancement? If not, then we should not let HR 2640 supporters call the permission to seek an expungement an enhancement, when prior to this bill, veterans could not legitimately be denied their gun rights after being diagnosed with PTSD.

Veterans with PTSD should not be put in a position to seek an expungement. They have not been convicted (after a trial with due process) of doing anything wrong. If a veteran is thought to be a threat to self or others, there should be a real trial, not an opinion (called a diagnosis) by a psychiatrist.

If members of Congress do not hear from soldiers (active duty and retired) in large numbers, along with the rest of the public, the Veterans Disarmament Act — misleadingly titled by Rep. McCarthy as the NICS Improvement Amendments Act — will send this message to veterans: "No good deed goes unpunished." ■

Larry Pratt is Executive Director of Gun Owners of America, a grassroots lobby organization defending the Second Amendment on Capitol Hill.

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