

STATEMENT OF KEVIN C. HAY, DEPUTY CHIEF, UNITED STATES PARK POLICE, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMITTEE, CONCERNING H.R. 6691, A BILL TO RESTORE SECOND AMENDMENT RIGHTS IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

September 9, 2008

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to address members of the committee today regarding H.R. 6691, a bill to restore Second Amendment rights in the District of Columbia, and its effect on homeland security and safety within the nation's capital.

The United States Park Police operate primarily in the urban areas of the National Park Service in Washington, D.C., New York City, and San Francisco, California. We have been serving the nation's capital since 1791. We have worked in the federal parklands of New York and San Francisco since 1974.

In 1883, the United States Congress granted the United States Park Police the same jurisdiction and authority as the Metropolitan Police of Washington, D.C. In 1948, Congress passed the Environs Act which granted the Force arrest authority on all federal reservations in nine counties in Maryland and Virginia that surround the District of Columbia. Under Title 16 USC 1a-6 (See also 41 Fed.Reg. 44876 (1976)), we have the same arrest authority as National Park Service Rangers in all areas of the National Park System. In addition, we have been granted state peace officer authority in Virginia, New York, California, and a more limited version in Maryland and New Jersey.

These authorities are necessary to allow us to safeguard over 125,000 acres of federal parkland in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in California, the Gateway National Recreation Area in New York and New Jersey and finally for the parks and parkways in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

The United States Park Police work closely with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies to maintain the peace on federal parklands and in areas on our jurisdictional borders. For example, in the Washington, D.C. area, the five federal parkways leading into the nation's capital border were, in some cases, built to connect federal facilities with the nation's capital. Most of these areas are now designated as Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources; they include areas along the George Washington Memorial Parkway – such as the Central Intelligence Agency, the Pentagon and Reagan National Airport. On the Suitland Parkway – we have responsibility for Andrews Air Force Base and the Southeast Federal Center. We also patrol the borders of Bolling Air Force Base and the Navy Research Laboratory. On the Clara Barton Parkway – there is the Naval Surface Warfare Center. On the Baltimore-Washington Parkway – there is Fort Meade, NSA, NASA and the Agricultural Research Center. Finally there is Rock Creek Parkway which is often used for Presidential Motorcades and foreign dignitaries going to the various embassies such as occurred during the recent visit of Pope Benedict.

In Washington, D.C., we patrol and handle demonstrations at Lafayette Park and the Ellipse on both sides of the White House, the National Mall which borders the United States Capitol building, and we are solely responsible for the protection of such National Icons as the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial and the Jefferson Memorial. In California, we

patrol the lands on both sides of the Golden Gate Bridge. In New York Harbor parts of the Verazzano-Narrows Bridge are likewise under National Park Service jurisdiction, as is the Statue of Liberty.

We maintain over sixty MOUs with allied agencies to enforce the law and keep the peace not only in these National Park System areas, but to assist our neighbors in protecting Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources required under Homeland Security Presidential Directives.

We make over four thousand arrests and deal with over 10,000 special events and demonstrations per year. We work closely on a daily basis with all local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies in the Washington metropolitan area. Our officers, and those of the other agencies, coordinate activities and in many instances provide backup to each other. We work closely with the Metropolitan Police and U.S. Capitol Police during special events and demonstrations, which occur on our areas of contiguous jurisdiction. We also work closely with the United States Secret Service in their dignitary protection mission, primarily around the White House complex or while their protectees are visiting other National Park Service locations. Currently we are already planning our part in the inauguration of the next president.

As a uniformed police agency, the United States Park Police serve a unique and active role in federal law enforcement. Since the 1930's ten Force members have been killed in the line of duty, eight here in the District of Columbia and two on the parkways in Virginia and Maryland. The Department of Justice's annual report on "Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted" also known as the LEOKA report, reveals that per capita, we are one of the most assaulted

agencies within the federal law enforcement community. On average we seize eighty-seven firearms annually in Washington, D.C. For example, last week we arrested a suspect with a loaded 12-gauge shotgun with a collapsible stock in Anacostia Park. The week before we seized a fully automatic Uzi sub-machine gun at 1:00 in the morning at River Terrace Park, from a couple involved in illicit activity in a playground. The far majority of weapons we seize are taken from suspects in public places, often resulting from traffic stops, or from contacts related to drugs and alcohol abuse.

In closing Mr. Chairman, again, I want to thank you and the members of the Committee for inviting me to testify today, and for your continuing work regarding public safety. I would be pleased to address any questions that you might have.