

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

September 27, 2004

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On Wednesday, Congress will consider H.R. 3193, a bill that would allow individuals to carry fully loaded assault weapons in the nation's capitol city. To many of us in Congress, this seems extremely misguided and dangerous given the latest threats to homeland security and the major efforts authorities have undertaken to protect potential terrorist targets such as the White House, the Capitol, international institutions like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, and the Metro system.

Earlier this year, you said that you supported the federal assault weapons ban, but stood by while it expired under the leadership of House Republicans. Now these same House Republicans are trying to repeal D.C.'s own laws on assault weapons. We want to know where you and your Administration stand on this bill.

Local and federal law enforcement have gone to great lengths to increase security in Washington, D.C. Streets have been closed off, checkpoints have been established, and surveillance has been increased. This has been expensive and inconvenient for many. But law enforcement authorities justify these costs by citing the level of the threat.

If Congress passes H.R. 3193, it will undo many of the security measures that have been put into place. We know that terrorists want assault weapons, and this bill would make carrying these weapons lawful throughout the District. H.R. 3193 repeals the ban on semiautomatic weapons, the requirement that guns be locked, disassembled, or unloaded, and the ban on armor piercing bullets. Under this bill, it would be legal to own and carry the Barrett M82A1 semiautomatic 50-caliber sniper rifle (which has a range of about one mile and is currently being used by U.S. troops in Iraq, Afghanistan, and worldwide to penetrate bunkers, disable armored personnel carriers, and take down enemy aircraft), the Bushmaster XM-15 (which was used by the D.C.-area snipers to kill ten people), and "cop-killing" ammunition (which is capable of piercing bullet-proof glass, cockpit windows, and 18 layers of Kevlar).

Consider these examples. If H.R. 3193 becomes law:

- Someone could legally possess a semiautomatic 50-caliber sniper rifle and armor-piercing ammunition in an apartment overlooking a major thoroughfare, such as Connecticut Avenue, a common route for motorcades.

The President
September 27, 2004
Page 2

- Ice cream and hot dog vendors on Independence Avenue could be armed with assault weapons, which could then be used against visitors to the Smithsonian museums, or passing armored limousines.
- A Capitol Hill resident who lived across the street from the Supreme Court could sit on his porch with a fully-loaded semiautomatic Uzi Carbine.

We urge you and Homeland Security Secretary Ridge to take an immediate stand against this extremist legislation.

Sincerely,



Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Government Reform



John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on the Judiciary