



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

September 27, 2004

**"IF THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL CAN BE GUN FREE, WHY  
CAN'T WE?"**

HANNAH HAWKINS, CHILDREN OF MINE

**MAYOR TONY WILLIAMS,  
ALL 13 MEMBERS OF THE D.C. CITY COUNCIL**

**AND**

**HANNAH HAWKINS  
WHO RUNS CHILDREN OF MINE FOR THE CHILDREN OF WARD 8, THE CITY'S  
POOREST WARD  
SPEAK FOR THEIR CITY  
AND ASK YOU TO  
RESPECT THEIR LIFE AND DEATH LOCAL DECISIONS**

Homicides are down 24% from last year; yet 15 children have been killed by guns so far this year.

**SAVE D.C.'s LOCAL GUN SAFETY LAWS**

**TO  
SAVE OUR CHILDREN**

**VOTE NO on HR 3193**

Sincerely,

**Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress**



COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20004

September 21, 2004

The Honorable Tom DeLay  
Majority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
242 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative DeLay:

The Council of the District of Columbia writes to express strong opposition to the proposed legislation, the "District of Columbia Personal Protection Act of 2004." This bill proposes the repeal of the District's gun control laws and may shortly come to the floor for a vote in the House of Representatives. As the elected leaders of the legislative branch of the District government, we take exception to the substance of the bill and the fact that it would be an inappropriate intrusion into what is viewed all across this country as a local matter. We respectfully request that you take no action on this bill and instead continue to support the laws the District has put in place to protect the safety and well being of its citizens, workers and visitors.

As you know, an elected Mayor and 13 elected Councilmembers have governed the District of Columbia since 1975. During the Council's first legislative session in 1976, the District enacted a law that restricted the possession, use and transfer of handguns and semi-automatic weapons. No bill has been passed in the District to weaken our gun control laws since and the courts have upheld the constitutionality of the law.

The enactment of the District's gun control legislation was based on the premise that any increase in the number of guns in the District will increase the likelihood that a crime will be committed with that gun. Using a "mutually assured destruction" rationale, where crime is believed to be deterred because a criminal is not sure whether or not the intended victim is carrying a gun, is an assumption on which the District could not responsibly base our public safety policy.

The laws banning private ownership of handguns, prohibiting semi-automatic weapons, requiring registration for ammunition and other firearms, and imposing criminal penalties for possessing unregistered firearms were enacted in order to control crime and provide more safety for our citizens and visitors. In this year alone, homicides are down 24% and

overall crime is down 13%. With the need for heightened security in the Nation's Capital following the September 11, 2001 attacks on our country, it appears unconscionable for Congress to consider legislation that would make guns more available in the District.

The residents of the District of Columbia know all too well the human costs that guns and violence have had on our community. Eighty percent of the homicides in the District this past calendar year were committed with guns, all of which were brought into the city illegally. While the surrounding jurisdictions do not have similar gun control laws, the District believes that the city's existing laws are an essential tool in combating crime. Making assault weapons and other weapons more readily available will certainly have an adverse impact on the District's ability to fight crime.

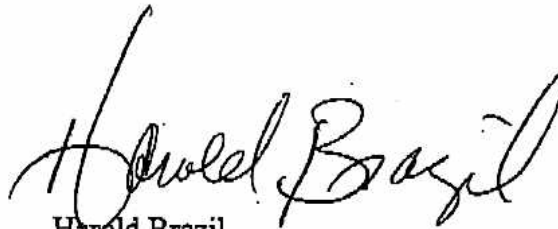
However, we also understand that as the Nation's Capital, you and your colleagues have an interest in the well being of the city. In response to that interest the Council and the Mayor have taken aggressive measures to reduce the number of homicides and violent crime in the District by increasing the number of sworn police officers to 3,800, restructuring our Patrol Service Areas, strengthening our investigative capacity, and improving 911 response times.

The Council of the District of Columbia requests that you take no further action on the "District of Columbia Personal Protection Act of 2004." Instead, we ask that you support the District's right to determine the laws most appropriate for providing public safety to all who live, work and visit the Nation's Capital.

Sincerely,



Linda W. Cropp  
Chairman



Harold Brazil  
Councilmember, At-Large



Carol Schwartz  
Councilmember, At-Large



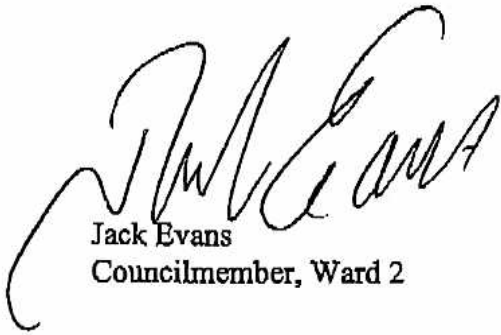
David A. Catania  
Councilmember, At-Large



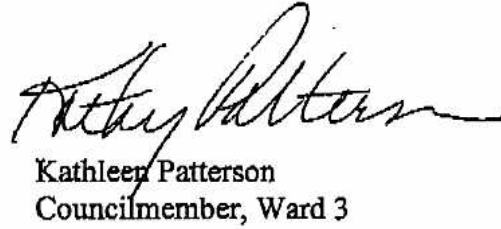
Phil Mendelson  
Councilmember, At Large



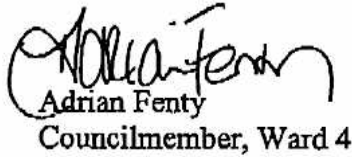
Jim Graham  
Councilmember, Ward 1



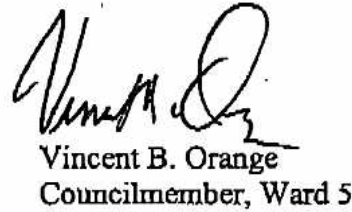
Jack Evans  
Councilmember, Ward 2



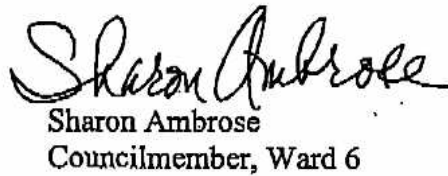
Kathleen Patterson  
Councilmember, Ward 3



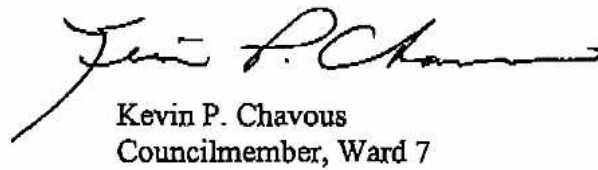
Adrian Fenty  
Councilmember, Ward 4



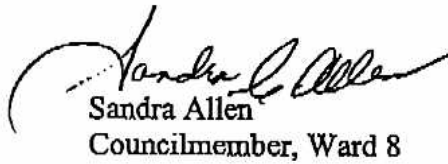
Vincent B. Orange  
Councilmember, Ward 5



Sharon Ambrose  
Councilmember, Ward 6



Kevin P. Chavous  
Councilmember, Ward 7



Sandra Allen  
Councilmember, Ward 8

cc: Speaker Dennis Hastert  
Representative Mark Souder  
Representative Tom Davis  
Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton