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Working to Reduce Gun Violence Since 1993

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Law Enforcement Opposes Tiahrt

HUNDREDS OF LAW ENFORCEMENT LEADERS URGE CONGRESS TO REMOVE RESTRICTIONS ON CRIME GUN INFORMATION

(Washington DC) Police leaders from across the nation today urged Congress to repeal legislation that prevents police and local governments from having access to crime gun trace data that would help cities fight illegal gun trafficking in their communities.

In a letter sent to Congress today, 32 national and state police organizations and 200 individual law enforcement leaders urged Congress to rescind what has become know as the "Tiahrt Amendment," named after Representative Todd Tiahrt of Kansas, who drafted the legislation for the gun lobby. Furthermore, eight police leaders spoke at a press conference in Washington DC urging Congress to change the law. They were joined by Rhode Island Congressman Patrick Kennedy, who plans to introduce an amendment to the Department of Justice spending bill that would rescind the language.

The issue faces imminent action by the House Appropriations Committee, currently scheduled for June 18.

"It is time to stop hiding the evidence that the vast majority of guns used by criminals to prey on our community are coming from a small group of corrupt gun dealers," said Chief Scott Knight of Chaska, Minnesota, who chairs a committee of the International Association of Chiefs of Police that studies gun policy. "The only people benefiting from the hiding of this data are the gun traffickers and the dealers who supply them. And the losers are our city's efforts to stop illegal guns."

Pressure is building on the new Democratic Congress to reverse the Tiahrt Amendment, which has now been in effect for three and a half years. A broad coalition of 225 Mayors has argued loudly for repealing it, and the group is airing television commercials and funding billboards. And last week, U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) announced that she plans to strip the provision from the Senate bill funding the Department of Justice. "America's enforcement agencies work around the clock to keep this country safe. It is time to remove this provision to help bring corrupt gun dealers to justice," she said in a statement.

Jackie Kuhls, Executive Director, New Yorkers Against Gun Violence said, "The Tiahrt Amendments have kept vital information from law enforcement officers across the country. This data is critical to efforts to PREVENT gun crime by focusing upstream on gun traffickers. It is simply outrageous that Congress has protected criminals who traffic in illegal guns instead of protecting Americans."

The national organizations signing the letter include the International Association of Chiefs of Police; International Brotherhood of Police Officers; Major Cities Chiefs Association; Police Executive Research Forum; Police Foundation; Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association (HAPCOA); National Black Police Association; National Latino Peace Officers Association; National Organization

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of Black Law Enforcement Executives and the School Safety Advocacy Council. Twenty state chiefs' organizations and one regional chiefs' organization signed the letter as well.

A broad coalition of 225 Mayors also support repeal of the Tiahrt restrictions including Mayor Bloomberg and the mayors of Albany, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Yonkers, Mount Vernon and New Rochelle.

"New York needs Congress to get rid of the restrictions on the flow of information about illegal guns", said Edie Smith New York president of the Million Mom March. "Our state and city officials need to know the sources of guns used in crimes in our state."

For more information on the Tiarht restrictions, please see www.protectpolice.org

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