NEW YORKERS AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE

Working to Reduce Gun-Related Violence Since 1993

For Immediate Release

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ILLEGAL GUNS ARE KILLING NEW YORKERS CONGRESS RESPONDS WITH LAWS TO PROTECT GUN TRAFFICKERS

New York, New York, New Yorkers Against Gun Violence (NYAGV), New York's leading state-wide grassroots gun violence prevention organization stands with Bronx community leaders and calls for Congress to take steps to halt the tide of illegal guns that turn day-to-day altercations into deadly tragedies.

Just yesterday, the pain of two families was evident in the Bronx County Courthouse. The families of Naiesha Pearson, (shot and killed at the age of ten on Labor Day 2005) and David Pacheco Jr., (shot and killed at the age of two on Easter Sunday 2006) awaited word on the defendants in their separate homicide cases. Both youngsters were killed with illegal guns. While the families sat in the courtroom, Congress was busy working on several new laws that will allow MORE interstate gun trafficking and make it MORE difficult for police officers to find and prosecute gun traffickers. Jackie Kuhls, Executive Director, New Yorkers Against Gun Violence said, "We expect our elected officials to help us reduce the number of illegal guns that flood our streets. Congress has done the exact opposite, they are actually making the situation worse. They must stop acting as special legal counsel for the gun industry and start protecting Americans".

The dangerous bills under consideration in the US House Judiciary Committee are:

H.R. 5005, restricts the release of crime gun trace data maintained by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). The bill would expand the current restrictions on the release of such data that have been contained in ATF's appropriations legislation for the past several years. Access to the data is crucial to identify the sources of illegal guns. Restricting access to data detailing guns traced to crime scenes serves only to handcuff law enforcement and make it extremely difficult to crack down on illegal gun trafficking.

H.R. 5092, significantly raises the burden of proof for ATF to revoke the licenses of corrupt gun dealers. Yet corrupt gun dealers are the number one source of illegally trafficked firearms according to a 2000 ATF report.

H.R. 1384, ends the current ban on interstate handgun sales. This change would dilute states' ability to determine who is eligible to buy and possess handguns within their own borders and make it virtually impossible for states to enforce restrictions on assault pistols or handguns that fire armor-piercing ammunition. Loosening restrictions on interstate handgun transfers will simply make illegal interstate trafficking easier.

Kuhls closed, "The vast majority of New York City's crime guns come from other states, states with lax gun laws. This legislation would only bring more illegal guns and death to the streets of New York. Congress must reject these awful bills, we don't need more grieving families in our courtrooms".

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