



Hoosiers Concerned About Gun Violence

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A Message to Hoosiers Concerned from former Vermont Governor Howard Dean

Via Dave Mason

Dave,

We can both protect our second amendment rights and keep our communities safe from illegal gun sales.

Guns and hunting are part of our way of life in Vermont. But I don't think any Vermonter or gun owners anywhere can argue against common sense changes to our background check system to make our communities safer and more secure.

And common sense changes are exactly what Mayors Against Illegal Guns is proposing that President Obama and Congress take action on right now. They have a two-part goal. First, we already have laws that make it illegal for guns to be sold to felons, drug abusers or the mentally ill. The problem is that states and federal agencies are not required to make sure these prohibited purchasers are included in the background check database. That must change.

□ Second, it's time to stop the sales of guns without a background check at all. Right now, anyone can go to a gun show and purchase as many guns as they want, no questions asked, no background check, nothing.

It's common sense to fix these two loopholes and make America safer from illegal gun sales.

Every day now it seems more news comes out about how these background check loopholes make America less safe. In the last week alone, the Federal government discovered that hundreds of guns bought in Arizona made their way to Mexico to help drug cartels destabilize the Mexican government. This

is not only a threat to the people of Mexico. When loopholes in our laws allow drug cartels in Mexico to stockpile guns we can all agree that it is also a threat to the United States. It is not just the conclusion of progressive Democrats, it's a conclusion drawn by Republican officeholders in the Southwest as well.

Now the Washington Post reports that President Obama is planning to speak out on guns in a special address soon, but it is not clear what actions he plans to take or goals he plans to set.

President Obama is listening. Now is the time to make sure the President and Congress know exactly where we stand.

— **Howard Dean**, *founder*
Democracy for America

From Mayors Against Illegal Guns:

Mayors Against Illegal Guns joined with Martin Luther King III and Kathleen Kennedy Townsend in taking out a full page ad in the Washington Post late in January urging the President and Congress to fix the nation's criminal background check system.

They called for (1) getting all of the names of all prohibited purchasers into the background check system and (2) requiring background checks for all gun sales.

The mayors said that 86% of all Americans and 81% of gun owners support background checks on all gun sales. What's more, 90% of gun owners support fixing gaps in government databases regarding checks.

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No. 42, editors: Bob Sanders, Bob Friedly

10 gun bills filed for the Indiana legislative session

Steve Dunlop reports on the legislative bills:

SB041—appears to permit concealed weapons in the work place.

SB094—appears to be a minor change bringing Indiana into compliance with federal law, but may increase Indiana role as source of crime guns.

SB131—bans weapons from refineries.

SB147—makes it easier to take a gun to a shooting range.

SB154—seeks to arm snowmobilers with loaded handguns.

SB292—appears to permit all kinds of weapons to be manufactured in the state, including large capacity ammunition clips and perhaps fully automatic guns.

SB319—makes it easier to take guns onto school property, and reduces the penalty for violators from felonies to misdemeanors.

SB434—extends terms of licenses of handgun dealers to six years, diminishing oversight.

SB0292—appears to block any attempts by local governments to regulate guns.

HB1153—would allow certain people to bring guns onto school properties.

Reports Steve: “All the Senate bills are assigned to the same gun-friendly committee, on which several of the authors sit. I would think we would want to oppose them all, except SB131, but with more attention to SB041, 292, 319, and 0292.”

HCGV’S PROSSER INTERVIEWED REGARDING ARIZONA TRAGEDY

Channel 13 called on HCGV vice-president Loring Prosser for comments about the sellout of Glock 31-bullet-size magazines in Indianapolis following the Arizona shootings.

Prosser spoke briefly about reversing the culture of violence.

“We still have kind of a Wild West mentality where anything goes,” Prosser said.

“Are we going to go to 50 or 75 (size of cartridge holders) in our utter refusal to consider reasonable boundaries on our firepower?”

FROM BOARD MINUTES:

Vice-President Loring Prosser of HCGV presided over the January 8 meeting of Hoosiers Concerned in the absence of the president.

Secretary Marian Towne shared a letter from State Sen. Scott Schneider in which he said that while “protecting children from becoming the victims of violence is very important to me,” protecting taxpayers during a difficult budget process currently tops his agenda.

Towne distributed a Christian Century editorial calling for “reasonable licensing” of guns.

Indy Homicides Total 100 in 2010; 76% gun deaths

The Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department recorded 100 criminal homicides last year, one higher than 2009, which was the lowest in 16 years, according to the Indianapolis Star.

More than three fourths of the deaths involved a gun.

The victims were 82% male and 64% Black. Firearms killed 87 people, stabbings eight, physical force six. Thirteen murders were listed as of unknown causes.

January, March and May were the deadliest months, summer and November being relatively quiet.

Indianapolis' murder rate was 12.3 per 100,000 residents, compared to 11.4, the average for midsize cities, according to FBI statistics.

Smaller Cincinnati, Cleveland and Columbus had higher rates, Cincinnati's being 21.6. Louisville, also smaller, had an 8.4 rate.

Chicago was 15.3, Los Angeles 7.5 and New York 6.2.

Murder rates are down and have been for a number of years in the U.S.

6000 VETERANS COMMIT SUICIDE EACH YEAR; 20% OF UNITED STATES TOTAL

Speaking of gun violence, two unwanted (in public polls) and undeclared wars rage on — the longest in our history — with no earthly chance of our “winning” them.

Now comes the Truth Commission on Conscience in War, created to address moral dilemmas in the U.S. Armed Services.

Six thousand war veterans commit suicide each year, 20% of all suicides, according the Rita Nakashima Brock, chair of the Commission's planning group and a Disciples of Christ theologian.

The Commission's next work will be to try to change military regulations to include “selective” conscientious objection to particular wars, and to educate religious leaders and communities about how they can help heal moral injury in veterans.

The Commission was launched last March at Riverside Church in New York City.



Arming Everybody is Not the Answer

The *Christian Century* magazine, speaking about the shooting of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, says the notion that simply arming the “good guys” is a dangerous fantasy. The magazine, in a Feb. 8 editorial, decried the Arizona Citizens Defense League immediately preparing legislation to arm politicians and their staffs. One Arizona legislator is reported to have said, “When everyone is carrying a firearm, nobody is going to be a victim.”

The fallacy in that kind of thinking was pointed up by the experience of Joe Zamudio, who was at the Tucson shopping center when he heard gunshots. Zamudio pulled his own gun and prepared to shoot a man he saw holding a gun, only to discover seconds before he pulled the trigger that the man had wrest-

led the gun away from the real shooter.

The magazine editorial said, “When everyone carries a firearm, we can be sure that a lot more innocent people are going to be victims. The debate over gun safety laws is notoriously strewn with statistics about what gun laws do and do not accomplish. But there is one statistic to which the gun lobby has never had a cogent response: the one showing that the murder rate per 100,000 people is 5.3 in the U.S., but only 0.47 for Canada and 0.07 for the United Kingdom.”