**Letter to the Editor**

**Indianapolis Star, April 14, 2011**

**Mayor shows ignorance about role of weak gun regulation**

In his March 28 My View, Mayor Greg Ballard wrote that he is not going to "sign a gun show petition, especially one that does not remove a single illegally possessed gun from our streets." I believe he was referring to Melina Kennedy's statement that if elected she plans to join the Mayors Against Illegal Guns, an organization working to make cities safer by working for improvements in gun regulations.

Suggesting that joining Mayors Against Illegal Guns is like signing a petition for the gun show loophole shows that Ballard knows next to nothing about the organization or the role of weak gun regulation to gun violence.

In 2008, Mayors Against Illegal Guns released a report that identified Indiana as among the top 10 states that export crime guns to other states. The report links gun trafficking to a lack of state laws requiring background checks on handgun sales at gun shows, purchase permits for handgun sales, mandatory reporting of lost or stolen guns to law enforcement, local control of gun regulation, and state inspection of gun dealers. Indiana lacks all five. States with some or all of these had lower rates of gun trafficking. States with low rates of gun trafficking also had 37 percent lower gun homicide rates and 65 percent lower rates of fatal police shootings.

When gun-owning households in Indiana were polled, a majority supported requirements for reporting lost and stolen guns and requiring all gun buyers, including gun shows, to pass background checks. We don't have these laws because the only voice our legislature listens to is the National Rifle Association.

The moves Ballard is making with the police and prosecutor are useful and may help, but they are unlikely by themselves to have a serious and lasting impact in a state that does little to keep guns away from criminals.

**Stephen R. Dunlop, M.D.**