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NATIONAL DAY OF PROTEST

Reverend Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow PUSH Coalition will hold a national day of protest to focus the nation's attention on the problem of illegal gun trafficking on Tuesday, August 28. More information at www.rainbowpush.org.

NATIONAL DAY OF OBSERVANCE

Join faith communities across the country in a national day of observance and action to end gun violence on September 28 - 29, 2007. Download a Sabbath guide at www.godnotguns.org.

CRIME RATE INCREASES FOR 2ND YEAR

Attorney General Gonzales blamed gun violence and gangs for the increase in the crime rate for the second straight year. The Justice Department is especially concerned with 'straw purchases' where criminals buy their firearms through a legal purchaser. Justice plans to distribute \$18 million in grants to prevent and reduce illegal gun sales and other firearms crimes. Maybe the AG should talk to Rep. Tiahrt and save money.
www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18671013

Shooting at State Capitol

Our thoughts go out to the family of the gunman and the state trooper who had to make a split second decision to safeguard state employees and tourists from harm. It appears the gunman suffered from mental illness but wasn't ordered by the court for treatment and, therefore, was legally able to purchase a firearm. The July 21 Rocky an article detailing how difficult it is for families to get treatment for loved ones.

www.rockymountainnews.com/drmn/local/article/0,1299,DRMN_15_5639355,00.html

The Fort Collins Coloradoan reports that Tim Brough, owner of Rocky Mountain Shooters Supply in Fort Collins, refused to sell the gunman a weapon in March when the gunman said "he was the divine leader of the nation and as such felt he should have a handgun". He also notified Thornton police. We applaud his responsible action.

The gunman was able to purchase a handgun at Sportsman's Warehouse in Thornton a month later.

Questions of the Day

Why is support for the 2nd Amendment the first thing out of a politician's mouth after a tragedy?

We've seen Sen. Salazar's (D) response to a constituent, heard Gov. Richardson (D) and Sen. McCain (R) in presidential debates and the President (and countless others) all declare their support when discussing the Virginia Tech shootings.

Well, we support the 2nd Amendment, the one in the Bill of Rights not the NRA's truncated version. ***A well regulated Militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.*** In fact, we support all ten amendments! Something we fear both Senators and the President do not do with their passage and signing of the Patriot Act, its reauthorization and the Military Commissions Act which removes the right of habeas corpus.

On a recent MSNBC Countdown program, noted constitutional scholar, George Washington law professor, Jonathan Turley, explained habeas corpus as an important instrument for the safeguarding of individual freedom against arbitrary state action. Its loss makes the Bill of Rights—even the 2nd Amendment—meaningless.

And we wondered whether Wayne Lapierre, defender of freedom, was as concerned as we were. So we did Google searches with his name along with the unitary executive, warrantless wiretaps, habeas corpus, Military Commissions Act and the Patriot Act. We switched to Ask.com and found this: 'The NRA Board has specifically and conspicuously refused to endorse the Patriot Act reauthorization, and their EVP and chief spokesman Wayne LaPierre, speaking for the organization has been critical of the Act', on a blog. We wanted more. So we traveled to NRA's web site and viewed the federal legislation issue papers between 12/2005 thru 3/2006 for anything regarding a position on the Patriot Act reauthorization. We didn't find anything.

We did discover that the NRA is opposed to listing the polar bear as an endangered species. Poor Klondike and Snow!

House Passes Bill to Strengthen Background Checks

After languishing in Congress for over seven years, the House has finally passed Rep. Carolyn McCarthy's bill (HR297) requiring states to automate and share disqualifying records with the FBI's NICS database. The bill provides funding over the next three years to help states meet that goal. It also imposes penalties to states that fail to meet benchmarks for automating and supplying information to the NICS. All that remains to be done is for the Senate to pass this bill and the President to sign it.

It's a shame 33 people had to die at Virginia Tech for the NRA and our elected officials to support this bill.

Where's Your Head At?

Do you ever wonder if our elected officials use their heads or even try to protect the public interest? The Senate Appropriations Committee voted 19-10 against repealing the Tiahrt Amendment, first passed in 2003, that denies police and prosecutors access to information about guns used in local crimes. And on July 13, a House committee did the same.

Rep. Tiahrt, R-Kansas, claims his amendment protects the identities of law enforcement officials. He's not being honest. The identity of undercover cops has always been protected under FOIA restrictions concerning the release of sensitive data.

Just over 1% of federally licensed dealers account for over 60% of firearms used in crimes. Under Mr. Tiahrt's amendment, law enforcement is restricted to viewing only trace data for one crime gun at a time. This prevents them from identifying patterns of where the crime guns originate and to take action to shut down supply before more within their community are injured or killed by gang members or other criminals. In fact, International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Sheriffs' Association and over thirty other national and state police organizations, as well as the nation's Mayors, oppose the Tiahrt amendment.

But there's more, the Senate committee inserted new language threatening local cops with jail if they use federal gun-tracing data to track the general problem of illegal gun trafficking along with making current restrictions permanent.

It seems our Senators have it backwards, protecting criminals and corrupt dealers and throwing our law enforcement into jail. In the spirit of the American Revolution, it's time to throw special interests out of Washington. Check out www.just6dollars.org for public funding of elections.

Did You Know?

An article in the July 9 Washington Post reports a theory by Rick Nevin, economist, that lead poisoning accounts for much of the variation in violent crime in the United States. Mr. Nevin came to that conclusion by looking at studies linking children's exposure to lead with violent behavior later in their lives. www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/07/07/AR2007070701073.html?referrer=emailarticle

In June, the California State Assembly passed a bill to require all new semi-automatic pistols sold in the state to automatically stamp information on shell casings that could help police track down violent criminals.

A recent study from Garen Wintemute, a professor of emergency medicine at the University of California, Davis, shows a direct link from a gun sold at a gun show into a criminal's hands. He also saw an abundance of straw purchases. www.livescience.com/health/070611_gun_laws.html

Thanks to loose gun laws, Florida is experiencing a large jump in gun crimes, including murders, armed robberies and assaults. And that's with a multi-year downward trend in the state's crime rate. So, could it be that more guns = more crime? www.gunguys.com/?p=2272