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# WHERE THE NRA STANDS ON GUN LEGISLATION

97-year record shows positive approach to workable gun laws

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"I think it is a terrible indictment of the National Rifle Association that they haven't supported any legislation to try and control the misuse of rifles and pistols in this country."

That flat assertion was made by Senator Robert Kennedy (N.Y.), Jan. 16 in addressing the New York State University law school in Buffalo.



The late Karl T. Frederick

Terming Kennedy's accusation "a smear of a great American organization," NRA Executive Vice President Franklin L. Orth pointed out that "The National Rifle Association has been in support of workable, enforceable gun control legislation since its very inception in 1871."

A few days later, Orth seconded the request of President Lyndon Johnson, made Jan. 17 in his State of the Union message, for a curb on mail-order sales.

"The duty of Congress is clear," Orth said, "it should act now to pass legislation that will keep undesirables, including criminals, drug addicts and persons adjudged mentally irresponsible or alcoholic, or juveniles from obtaining firearms through the mails."

The NRA position, as stated by Orth, emphasizes that the NRA has consistently supported gun legislation which it feels would penalize misuse of guns without harassing law-abiding hunters, target shooters and collectors.

Here is the record over the years:

*Item:* The late Karl T. Frederick, an NRA president, served for years as special consultant with the Commissioners on Uniform State Laws to frame The Uniform Firearms Act of 1930.

Adopted by Alabama, Indiana, the District of Columbia, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and Washington, the Act directly attacks the "mail order murder" to which President Johnson referred in his State of the Union Message. It specifically forbids delivery of pistols to convicts, drug addicts, habitual drunkards, incompetents, and minors under the age of 18. Other salient provisions of the Act require a license to carry a pistol concealed on one's person or in a vehicle; require the purchaser of a pistol to give information about himself which is submitted by the seller to local police authorities; specify a 48-hour time lapse between application for purchase and delivery.

*Item:* The NRA supported The National Firearms Act of 1934 which taxes and requires registration of such firearms as machine guns, sawed-off rifles and sawed-off shotguns.

*Item:* The NRA supported The Federal Firearms Act of 1938, which regulates interstate and foreign commerce in firearms and pistol or revolver ammunition, and prohibits the movement in interstate or foreign commerce of firearms and ammunition between certain persons and under certain conditions.



Senators Dodd (l.) and Kennedy

More recently, the spate of articles on gun legislation has spread the erroneous impression that the NRA has always opposed Senator Thomas J. Dodd's attempts to keep guns out of the hands of juveniles. This is simply untrue. The facts are these:

The NRA worked closely with the Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency, of which Senator Dodd was chairman, in its investigation into the relationship between juvenile crime and the availability of firearms.

The NRA supported the original "Dodd Bill" to amend the Federal Firearms Act in regard to handguns when it was introduced as S.1975 in August,

1963. Among its provisions was the requirement that a purchaser submit a notarized statement to the shipper that he was over 18 and not legally disqualified from possessing a handgun.

In January, 1965, with the continued support of the NRA, Senator Dodd introduced an amended version of his first bill, now designated S.14 and expanded to cover rifles and shotguns as well as handguns.



Senator Hruska

The parting of the ways came only when Senator Dodd introduced still another bill (S.1592) in March, 1965, which drastically intensified his earlier bills. The NRA opposed S.1592 and subsequent bills introduced by the Connecticut Senator. If passed into law, S.1592 would, among other things, have ended all interstate shipments of firearms except to persons holding a Federal firearms license. It also would have prohibited even a Federal licensee from selling a pistol to anyone residing in another State.

NRA support of Federal gun legislation did not stop with the earlier Dodd bills. It currently backs several Senate and House bills which, through amendment, would put new teeth into the National and Federal Firearms Acts. The essential provisions which the NRA supports are contained in 2 Senate bills introduced by Senator Roman L. Hruska (Nebr.) and House bills introduced by Congressman Cecil R. King (17th Dist.-Calif.) and Robert L. F. Sikes (1st Dist.-Fla.). These bills would:

1. Impose a mandatory penalty for the carrying or use of a firearm, transported in interstate or foreign commerce, during the commission of certain crimes.

2. Place "destructive devices" (bombs, mines, grenades, crew-served military ordnance) under Federal regulation.

3. Prohibit any licensed manufacturer or dealer from shipping any firearm to any person in any State in violation of the laws of that state.

4. Regulate the movement of handguns in interstate and foreign commerce by: a. requiring a sworn statement, containing certain information, from the



## WHAT THE LAWMAKERS ARE DOING

# U.S. GUN BILL SOLUTION SEEMS NO CLOSER

By NRA Staff

A brief prospect that the Administration might compromise on Federal firearms legislation acceptable to gun owners apparently vanished Feb. 7, leaving the issue still deadlocked.

The possibility of a compromise was seen by some when President Lyndon Johnson touched only lightly on gun legislation in his State of the Union message to Congress Jan. 17. In going from a discussion of narcotics and LSD to other subjects, he urged Congress to stop the mail-order gun trade "by adopting a proper gun control law."

Absence of any reference to a specific bill or law started the speculation on compromise. In his later message to Congress on crime, however, the President requested passage of what amounts to the Dodd-Celler Bills (S. 1-H.R. 5384), the Administration measures now pending in the Senate and House Judiciary Committees. Both Sen. Thomas J. Dodd (Conn.) and Rep. Emanuel Celler (10th Dist., N.Y.) supported the President's call in public statements.

purchaser to the seller for the receipt of a handgun in interstate commerce; b. providing for notification of local police of prospective sales; c. requiring an additional 7-day waiting period by the seller after receipt of acknowledgement of notification to local police; d. prescribing a minimum age of 21 for obtaining a license to sell firearms and increasing the license fees; e. providing for written notification by manufacturer or dealer to carrier that a firearm is being shipped in interstate commerce; f. increasing penalties for violation.



Congressmen Sikes (l.) and King

Through bulletins to its members, the NRA has often voiced approval and support of State and local ordinances designed to keep firearms out of the

The President asked for action to prohibit mail-order transactions except between licensed dealers, prohibit over-the-counter handgun sales to out-of-state buyers, and to curb all firearms sales to minors, among other things.

### Actions Taken

The New Jersey House of Representatives approved on second reading **Assembly Bill 174**, by Douglas E. Gimson (Hunterdon) and Robert E. Littel (Hunterdon) to repeal the 1966 New Jersey firearms Law that imposed police control of gun ownership and to enact firearms regulations supported by the Citizens Committee for Firearms Legislation, a bipartisan organization of thousands of sportsmen including many NRA members. The measure, after one more reading, would go to the New Jersey Senate for approval.

Moves were initiated in Massachusetts to tighten that State's firearms code, even to the extent of adopting a measure akin to New York's Sullivan Law. In Oklahoma, however, a bill was introduced to liberalize gun laws.

Meanwhile, measures to regulate handguns were introduced in the Legislatures of Delaware, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, and Maryland. All would require permits to buy. In addition, Delaware and Maryland bills propose registration of all handguns. The South Carolina and Virginia Legislatures received bills to ban sawed-off shotguns, reportedly as first moves in a series of gun control proposals. Georgia lawmakers were handed a bill to require identification cards for all firearms and ammunition purchasers. (For details, see under respective States.)

The Georgia Senate approved Senate Bill 240, by Dr. J. A. Minish, to permit discharge of firearms on Sunday at police-sanctioned target ranges operated by gun clubs, by law officers in line of duty, and by individuals for self-defense.

A measure by State Sen. Eugene J. McCaffrey that liberalizes Rhode Island's explosives law for the benefit of handloaders, with respect to possession, sale, storage and use of powders and primers, was signed into law by the Governor Jan. 31.

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hands of undesirables. A bulletin of Feb. 20, 1964 notified Virginia members of the introduction in the Virginia House of Delegates of a bill requiring a 72-hour waiting period for purchase of a handgun. In the bulletin, which outlined the provisions of the bill, NRA Secretary Frank C. Daniel commented as follows:

"A number of States and local jurisdictions have a waiting period of varying length for the purchase of a concealable firearm; and, where intelligently and reasonably administered, it has not proved to be an undue burden on the shooter and sportsman. . . . The bill from a technical point of view adequately protects citizens of good character from any arbitrary denial of their right to purchase a handgun. It should be judged on the basis of whether or not a waiting period for the purchase of a handgun is desirable for the State."

The bill was killed in the House Feb. 25, 1964.

When bills were introduced in the Illinois legislature in February, 1965, to provide mandatory penalties for crimes committed while armed with a firearm, the NRA expressed its opinion to Illinois members in these terms:



NRA Secretary Daniel

"The purpose of these bills is to penalize the criminal *misuse* of firearms and weapons, and not the firearms themselves. This is a sound and reasonable basis for regulation and is aimed in the right direction—that of criminal conduct when armed. Senate Bill No. 351 and House Bill No. 472 are worthy of the support of the sportsmen of the State of Illinois."

The bills were passed by the Senate and House but were vetoed by Gov. Otto Kerner a few months later.

Many other instances of NRA support for worthwhile gun legislation could be quoted. But these suffice to show that Senator Kennedy's "terrible indictment" of the NRA is groundless. ■