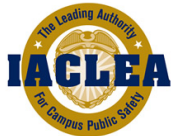


NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT PARTNERSHIP TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN JIM JOHNSON ON H.R. 367 AND S.59, THE HEARING PROTECTION ACT OF 2017

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On behalf of the National Law Enforcement Partnership to Prevent Gun Violence, I urge you to oppose H.R. 367, the Duncan-Carter Hearing Protection Act of 2017 in the House of Representatives, and S.59, the Hearing Protection Act in the Senate.

The Partnership is opposed to legislative proposals that would remove firearm silencers from regulation under the National Firearms Act of 1934 (NFA). These proposals, if enacted, would put police officers and the public at grave risk; The United States of America has more firearms in civilian hands than the next ten developed nations, and that fact alone causes our law enforcement personnel great concern for their safety. Ambush killings of police officers reached a 20 year high in 2016ⁱ – how many more will be sacrificed if assailants can fire at our police officers without fear of quick detection and rapid response?

An additional issue: suppressed guns absolutely defeat the only available state-of-the-art gunfire detection/location service whose use has become common in cities across the country. It's well documented that only 20 percent of gunfire is reported via 9-1-1 calls for service – how will the public know about, or police respond, to suppressed gunfire? Patrol units' response times will increase, detectives' window to locate critical evidence will narrow, and community members' willingness to offer actionable intelligence about "trigger pullers" will fade if firearm silencers become easily available.

The proponents of deregulation falsely claim that because silencers (also called suppressors or mufflers) are rarely used in crime, ipso facto there is no need for heightened regulation of these devices. The truth is that silencers are seldom used in crimes because, since 1934, their manufacture and sale has been tightly controlled. Transfers of the devices are closely tracked, and sanctions for using a silencer in a crime (registered or not) are severe. These facts lead to the inevitable conclusion that the current legislative/regulatory scheme has worked exceptionally well, just as it has with legally registered machine guns and other firearms listed on the NFA.

H.R. 367 and S.59 propose to weaken current law by eliminating the robust regulatory framework that has been in place for 80 years by allowing silencers to be treated in the same manner as firearms. This would expose silencers to other gaps in the federal law, the most concerning of which is the loophole that allows private sales of guns without a background check. This will flood the underground market for silencers whose distribution has heretofore been limited by the requirements of the NFA. Relaxation of these requirements will allow gang members, terrorists and domestic abusers easy access to these dangerous weapons. In most states and under Federal law, the transfer of firearms between unlicensed individuals is unregulated; based on the number of silencers currently registered with ATF, that equates to potentially more than 180,000 undocumented silencer transfers. Additionally, the proposed deregulation could result in a significant loss of tax revenue due to a mandated rebate of taxes paid by current silencer owners.ⁱⁱ

Before these ill-considered changes to existing firearms law, the primary target for silencer manufacturers has been military tactical teams who use silencers to confuse the sound of gunfire and confound an enemy's response to surprise attack. The widespread and uncontrolled distribution of silencers to an unwary civilian population, combined with the sheer number of firearms freely available in America, is a step in the wrong direction and will result in tragedy, including violence directed at police officers that will be difficult or impossible to investigate effectively.

The National Law Enforcement Partnership to Prevent Gun Violence urges you to defend the nation's police officers and the general public by opposing H.R. 367 and S.59. Thank you for your support.

The National Law Enforcement Partnership to Prevent Gun Violence (the Partnership) includes nine national law enforcement organizations dedicated to serving the Nation's more than 900,000 sworn and civilian law enforcement officers, executives, and professional staff.

The Partnership Includes:

Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA)
Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association (HAPCOA)
International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA)
Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA)
National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives (NAWLEE)
National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE)
Police Executive Research Forum (PERF)
Police Foundation (PF)

i <http://www.nleomf.org/newsroom/news-releases/2016-officer-fatalities-report-release.html>. Accessed Feb 22, 2017.

ii <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/367>; <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/59>. Accessed Feb 22, 2017.