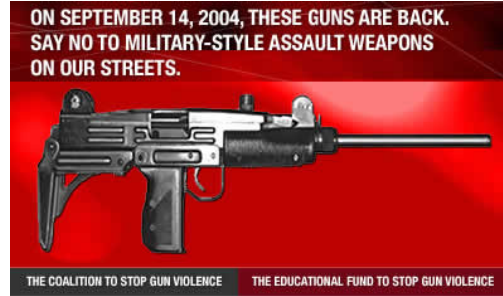




NORTH CAROLINIANS AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE EDUCATION FUND

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Assault Weapons Ban

Assault Weapons Ban (AWB) Expires. Despite efforts of NCGV members and advocates nationwide and President Bush's promise to support renewal, the AWB expired September 13 2004. NCGV plans to work with NC legislators and law enforcement to introduce a state Ban in the 2005 General Assembly and it is possible that a new federal Ban could be introduced.

What are assault weapons?

Assault weapons are designed to fire multiple bullets in a short amount of time and have no place in the hands of civilians or hunters. They can fire up to 6 bullets per second and frequently hold magazines holding 20, 30, or 50 rounds of ammunition. These are different than machine guns, which are the ones typically seen in movies. Machine guns automatically feed ammunition into the chamber so that bullets are continuously sprayed as long as the trigger is held and have been restricted since the National Firearms Act of 1934.

However, semiautomatic assault weapons are only slightly less deadly than machine guns. Pulling the trigger on these guns fires a single bullet, but also automatically loads the next bullet into the chamber, so that the user can fire up to 30 bullets in fire seconds by repeatedly pulling the trigger. The most well known semiautomatic weapons are the Israeli Uzi, the Chinese-made SKS rifle and the Soviet AK-47. All of these weapons were developed for military use. (1)

Assault weapons were used:

- to kill 5 children and wound 29 others in a Stockton, CA school yard in 1989
- to kill 8 and wound 6 others in a San Francisco law firm in 1993
- to kill 2 CIA employees and wound 3 others outside the CIA's Longley, VA headquarters in 1993
- to kill 4 Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms special agents and wound 16 others at the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, TX in 1993

What is the Assault Weapons Ban?

In reaction to an increase in crimes committed with assault weapons, President Bush stopped the import of a certain number of assault rifles in 1989. Within one year the number of imported assault rifles traced to crimes dropped by 45%.

In 1994, despite intense opposition by the gun lobby, the Assault Weapons Ban passed Congress as part of President Clinton's crime bill. The crime bill defines semiautomatic assault weapons both with a list of 19 specifically banned weapons, and with objective criteria designed to ban the further production of these weapons clearly intended and accessorized for military or criminal use. The crime bill also banned the future manufacture and import of large-capacity ammunition magazines holding more than 10 bullets. (1) This ban clearly reduced the number of assault weapons used in crimes. There were 18% fewer assault weapons traced to crimes in the first 8 months of 1995 than were traced in the same period in 1994, before the ban was passed.

What are the problems with the current ban?

The gun lobby was successful in making sure that this ban grandfathered existing assault weapons (if the assault weapons were made before September 1994, they may be legally bought and sold in the US today). One of these made before 1994 was used in the Columbine High School massacre. Many gun manufacturers have found ways around the ban by cosmetically altering their guns and then putting them back on the market.

The current bill is set to expire on September 13, 2004. President George W. Bush repeatedly promised to renew the Ban during his 2001 campaign. It now appears the President plans to break his promise and work with House leader Tom Delay to let the law die. If the ban is not permanently renewed and strengthened before it expires our communities will once again be flooded with these murderous weapons.

What is NCGV doing to renew and strengthen the Assault Weapons Ban?

NCGV supports the McCarthy-Conyers bill to renew and improve the Assault Weapons Ban. We will continue to educate citizens on the ban and what will happen if it sunsets without being renewed and strengthened.

How can you help?

Contact your members of Congress and tell them to cosponsor H.R. 2038 and S. 1431 to both renew and strengthen the Assault Weapons Ban. Tell them you do not want military style weapons in your neighborhood!

For More Information:
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