

Altmire Fights to Protect Gun Owners' Rights

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Introduces Second Amendment Legislation Scheduled for September Vote

(Washington, D.C.) – U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) today introduced legislation with fellow conservative Democrats that will protect Americans' constitutional right to own firearms. On June 26, the Supreme Court ruled that District of Columbia residents have the right to own guns – overturning the District's unconstitutional ban on firearms that had been in effect for the past 32 years. In the wake of this decision, however, the D.C. City Council passed a new law which limits D.C. residents' right to bear arms and undermines Americans' constitutional rights.

“The U.S. Constitution clearly provides Americans with the right to keep and bear arms, and the Supreme Court recently reaffirmed this right by overturning the District's gun ban,” said Altmire. “The Second Amendment Enforcement Act that I introduced today will ensure that government does not infringe upon the rights of law abiding citizens in the District of Columbia. Further, it takes important steps to protect the rights of gun owners across this country by demonstrating Congress's commitment to upholding the Second Amendment.”

The Second Amendment Enforcement Act (H.R. 6691) – which is endorsed by the National Rifle Association – will protect D.C. residents' right to bear arms by:

- Restoring the Right of Self Defense in the Home: Current D.C. law requires gun owners to render their firearms inoperable, thus useless, unless they are in imminent danger of an attack or an attack is underway – an unrealistic and overly restrictive approach. This legislation would repeal that law and allow gun owners to keep their firearms stored in such a way that they would be readily available for self defense purposes.
- Authorizing Purchases of Firearms by D.C. residents: D.C. residents are effectively barred from purchasing a firearm because there are no federally licensed firearms dealers in D.C. and federal law prohibits individuals from purchasing firearms outside their states of residence. To fix this, the Second Amendment Enforcement Act will enable D.C. residents to legally purchase guns from a federally licensed dealer in Maryland or Virginia.
- Repealing Overly Restrictive Registration Requirement: The D.C. Council has created an overly restrictive registration scheme that unfairly restricts citizens' rights to legally own firearms. This legislation restores the Second Amendment rights of D.C. citizens by removing the lengthy and burdensome procedures put in place by the D.C. Council.
- Repealing the D.C. Semiautomatic Ban: Although the Supreme Court ruled that the D.C. government could not restrict the ownership of handguns, current D.C. law circumvents the ruling by defining most handguns as machine guns. To restore the right of D.C. citizens to own a handgun for the purposes of self defense, this legislation eliminates D.C.'s overly broad definition of machine gun and instead utilizes the definition that currently exists in Federal law.