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Gun Owners of America to Weigh in at Supreme Court on Gun Ban

By IRN News Editors

By now, you have probably heard the news which was delivered prior to Thanksgiving that the U.S. Supreme Court will be taking up the D.C. gun ban case.

Gun Owners of America's Foundation (GOF) will be submitting an amicus brief before the Supreme Court in support of the lower court's decision that the Second Amendment protects an individual right.

The case, *D.C. v. Heller*, resulted in nullification of the gun ban in the District of Columbia. Judge Laurence Silberman wrote the majority opinion for the D.C. Court of Appeals which decided that the D.C. law violated the individual right to keep and bear arms protected by the Second Amendment.

Silberman's opinion was based on an extensive review of the historical record, which makes it clear that the militia was intended to be a mandatory body composed of all military-aged males who were required to own their own military weapons. He found that the "state" referred to in the Second Amendment is a reference to society, not a political entity.

The city of Washington, D.C., is contesting the appellate court's decision in an attempt to preserve its draconian gun ban.

But the Gun Owners Foundation has commissioned one of the nation's top experts in constitutional law. The GOF brief will highlight recent legal scholarship which argues that the Second Amendment right to bear arms is as much an individual right as the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of speech. (Gun Owners Press Release, November 27, 2006)

GOF could use your tax deductible contribution to help fund this case. Please go to <http://www.gunowners.com/donate.htm> to donate online and help Gun Owners Foundation defend our Second Amendment rights in our highest court.

Senate Close to Confirming a Ted Kennedy-Style Liberal to BATFE

"We'll miss him in Massachusetts, but he'll be a strong leader at ATF, and I look forward to working with him on key issues on gun-control." – Senator Ted Kennedy

The above quote from a Gun Owners of America press release (Dec. 4, 2007) highlights all you need to know about Michael Sullivan, currently the acting director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATFE).

Sullivan was, unfortunately, nominated by President Bush to permanently take over ATF this year. Right before Thanksgiving, the Senate "hotlined" his name for unanimous consent approval. (Hotlining is a parliamentary maneuver which allows non-controversial bills or nominations to be unanimously approved by the Senate without debate or a vote.)

GOA immediately sent a letter to each Senator's office, urging them to oppose the Sullivan nomination. Thankfully, one senator subsequently objected to Sullivan's approval, and his nomination was put on hold. However, that legislator is now coming under fire from other senators, who are asking him to withdraw his "hold."

That's why it's important for gun owners to contact their two Senators. Under Sullivan's leadership, the ATF has gone berserk. Sure, the problems at ATF didn't originate with him, but Sullivan has certainly done nothing to put out the fire.

While discussing the agency's 2008 appropriations bill, the House Commerce & Justice committee issued a stinging rebuke for the ATF:

"The committee has heard reports that ATF has pursued license revocations and denials against firearms dealers based on violations that consist largely of recordkeeping errors of various types that are unlikely to impede tracing investigations or prosecution of individuals who use firearms in crime. The Committee encourages ATF to consider lesser gradation of sanctions for recordkeeping errors." [House Committee report on HR 3093]

The strategy, that was begun long before Sullivan arrived, has continued unabated under his tutelage. ATF inspectors try to find any violation they can, usually focusing on clerical mistakes.

The agency has turned their collective guns on Red's Trading Post in Idaho, among others. Even though one ATF agent told the manager that Red's was "one of the best small gun shops" he'd ever seen, the ATF has continued its assault on this gun shop (which has been in business for decades) for minor clerical mistakes and failing to put up a poster.

The agency holds a continuing animus against gun owners and dealers. Inspectors have no handbook under which to operate, and the absence of such written procedures allows them to be arbitrary and capricious.

Americans don't need an anti-gun cop from Massachusetts as the Director of the federal gun police.

Action: Contact your Senators immediately and ask them to oppose anti-gunner Michael Sullivan as the Director of the BATFE. You may go to the Legislative Action Center at <http://www.gunowners.org/activism.htm> (where phone and fax numbers are available).

Bush Urged to Free Ex-Agents

The *Washington Times* presented the latest bit of news pertaining to the Ignacio Ramos and Jose Compean case in its December 7, 2007, issue (UNWO reported extensively on the travesty involving these two U.S. Border Patrol Agents in its February 2007 issue.)

Rep. Bill Delahunt (D-MA) who heads the subcommittee on international organizations, human rights and oversight, said in a resolution on December 6 that the 11 – and 12-year sentences for Ignacio Ramos and Jose Alonso Compean, respectively, were "profoundly disproportionate" based on federal sentencing guidelines.

Ramos, 37, and Compean, 28, were sentenced in October 2006 for shooting a Mexican drug smuggler, Osvaldo Aldrete-Davila, in the buttocks in February 2005 when he was running from his van loaded with 743 pounds of marijuana near Fabens, Texas.

Delahunt called the sentences "a miscarriage of justice," saying serious questions have been raised about the manner in which U.S. Attorney Johnny Sutton in El Paso prosecuted the case.

Representatives who have signed onto the resolution want President Bush to free the two imprisoned agents. "President Bush can correct a gross miscarriage of justice with the stroke of a pen," Delahunt said, "and this resolution will put Congress on record demanding that he do just that."

Rep. Delahunt said that between February 2005 and June 2007, there have been 1,982 incidents in which Border Patrol agents have been assaulted. He said the numbers "support the premise that Border Patrol agents operate in a climate of tension, danger, and even fear for the safety of themselves and others." (Washington Times 12/07/07)

Action: Readers can contact their Representatives in Congress and urge them to sign onto the Resolution demanding that Ramos and Compean be freed.