

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on the Judiciary
Washington, DC 20515-6216
One Hundred Fifteenth Congress

October 2, 2017

Chairman Bob Goodlatte
House Committee on the Judiciary
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Goodlatte:

We write to you again, to request hearings and that you assert jurisdiction, concerning the firearms-related provisions in H.R. 3668, the so-called “Sportsmen’s Heritage and Recreational Enhancement Act.” Citing the public safety imperative concerning these provisions, on September 14, we wrote to ask that the Judiciary Committee assert jurisdiction on these provisions. Unfortunately, you declined to do so, clearing the bill for imminent floor consideration without a hearing or markup session being conducted. It is now clearer than ever that the Committee must assert jurisdiction over these issues.

Obviously, the tragic killing of more than 50 people, with more than 500 more individuals injured in Las Vegas last night, highlights the danger of proceeding with such provisions – particularly the weakening of current protections with respect to the sale and possession of silencers. In active shooter situations, law enforcement must respond quickly to locate the shooter in order to prevent the carnage from continuing. Silencing or muffling the sound of gun shots would make this more difficult, preventing quick response, such as the brave actions of law enforcement to quickly locate and take action against the shooter last night and those of the police officers that located and took down the man who shot and killed five officers in Dallas last year.

Information is still coming to light about the shooter, but whether or not he would have passed the background checks for a silencer is not the issue, but rather this situation illustrates the danger posed by the proliferation of silencers, particularly when the regulation of them is proposed to be weakened substantially – even allowing them to be sold with no checks whatsoever in some circumstances. Silencers must remain subject to appropriately strict regulation, given the unique dangers they pose. If some believe otherwise, they should testify to such before a hearing, and Members should explain their positions during legislative consideration in Committee.

This request applies equally to the other firearms-related provisions in the bill, such as those weakening restrictions on the interstate transportation of firearms, armor-piercing

ammunition, and importation of foreign-made, military-type firearms. These provisions, as outlined in our prior letter, would all make us less safe.

Additionally, we understand that the Majority in the House may similarly be pressured by the firearms industry lobby to adopt legislation to impose national concealed carry reciprocity, undermining state decisions as to who should carry concealed firearms within their borders. This too, would take us in the wrong direction, and we would hope that the Committee would not seek to adopt such proposals, particularly in light of the increasingly obvious need for Congress to enact measures to protect us from gun violence.

Because of the above concerns and the increasingly apparent dangerousness of these proposals, we ask that you assert jurisdiction over the firearms provisions in H.R. 3668, that you hold hearings on these issues before any such legislation is considered by the House, and that you take additional steps to ensure that we do not bring to the floor legislation that endangers us instead of reducing gun violence.

Sincerely,



John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary



Sheila Jackson Lee
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism,
Homeland Security, and Investigations

CC: Rob Bishop, Chairman, Natural Resources Committee
Raul M. Grijalva, Ranking Member, Natural Resources Committee