

042706_lettertoTaylor

From: Rick ***** [shutter+@pitt.edu]
Sent: Thursday, April 27, 2006 11:33 AM
To: earl.stewart@mail.house.gov
Subject: Intro info to Natl Park concealed carry effort

Hello Earl,

Thanks for taking the time to listen to my "pitch" on our project. As you requested I've contacted Brian Darling at the Heritage Foundation regarding getting a copy of the proposed legislation I mentioned. I spoke with Matt Wise from Sen. Conrad Burns' office a couple days ago regarding that legislation and he said it would probably be a week or two until they've drafted something to introduce. Hopefully I can get something useful to you from Brian in the interim. I left a phone message and am waiting to hear from him.

In a nutshell, after several preliminary meetings, the Virginia Citizens Defense League submitted a Petition For Rule Making to Paul Hoffman, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife & Parks at the Interior Department in February 2005. Our goal is simple: we want the Interior Department and the Park Service to assimilate state laws regarding lawful concealed carry of handguns. Essentially, no one gets anything "free" as a result of this. For example, there would be little or no impact on states that are traditionally restrictive of gun rights, such as Maryland, New York, New Jersey or California. What we proposed is that if you can lawfully carry a concealed firearm on the street across from a Park facility your Constitutional rights should extend to the other side of the street in the park. One particularly "risky" area is the George Washington Parkway. On a personal note (I understand you've gotten feedback regarding this project ;^) I live near the Flight 93 Memorial. When this officially becomes a National Park property, I would have to abide by 36CFR 2.4 to lawfully enter this vast wilderness area. I have a similar problem with the 1889 Johnstown Flood National Memorial. There are just two buildings on that 165 acre property. This would simply parallel the way the National Forests address concealed carry.

Dave ***** , VCDL Executive Member, has generated a comprehensive timeline that documents our efforts to this point. You can view the timeline at <http://bighammer.net/pages/24/index.htm> within the timeline are links to copies of documents and correspondence with various Congressional offices. A list of Congressional contacts involved in this effort is at <http://bighammer.net/pages/24/page24.html?refresh=1146095002755#Contacts>

Our main problem has been that Mr. Hoffman simply has refused - or at the very least is extremely difficult - to communicate with any Congressional level. Although Mr. Hoffman claims he will give the Petition a fair review in November - and has said so to several Congressional representatives - we have not been given the confidence that this will occur. This is why Sen. Burns has decided to introduce legislation to address the issue. While we are not attempting to bypass or alienate Mr. Hoffman and the Petition process, we think Mr. Hoffman may see the proposed legislation as further justification to his superiors for implementing the change. Sen. Burns feels legislation is appropriate at this point. Strategically, because it involves a simple regulatory amendment with virtually no new legal or budgetary impact, there appears little in the legislation that might induce any kind of floor fight if the legislation is introduced. Additionally, we believe it is not unreasonable to extrapolate the crime -reduction success with 39 states' right-to-carry legislation to the National Parks.

I've previously contacted the offices of Pennsylvania Reps. Don Sherwood and John Peterson, among many others, and have asked for their help and

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have updated them on developments. We have much strong Congressional support for this change. Just the other day Sen. Larry Craig wholeheartedly agreed to assist us. Everyone we've contacted realizes this is a common-sense approach and, in light of forthcoming budget cuts at the Interior Department, would only enhance public safety at the many vast national parks. My wife and I visited Skyland on the Skyline Drive in 1996 just days after two women were raped and murdered on the same trail we hike on and that my wife jogs on. Knowing you have no way to defend yourself against thugs and potential murderers is a very disconcerting feeling. My own representative, Congressman John Murtha, was an early and ardent supporter of this change.

We hope Congressman Taylor will be interested in sponsoring companion House legislation to help implement this simple change to Interior Department regulation 36CFR 2.4.

I will contact you again as soon as I hear from Brian Darling and can get a copy of his legislation.

Thank you very much for your time and interest.

Rick *****
Legislative Affairs Representative
Johnstown [PA] Rifle and Pistol Club
Co-Petitioner