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June 19, 2002

Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner
Committee on the Judiciary
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6216

Dear Congressman Sensenbrenner:

First let me say thank you for your response to my correspondence in reference to H.R. 218. I would also like to thank you for your honest and open letter explaining your reasons for not supporting this legislation.

I respect your view on the bill, but would like to offer the following perspective on behalf of the over 300,000 members of the National Fraternal Order of Police.

You state in your letter that this legislation would be an "an affront to state sovereignty and the Constitution." I would respectfully disagree. Congress has the power, under the "full faith and credit" clause of the Constitution, to extend full faith and credit to police officers who have met the criteria set by one State to carry firearms and make those credentials applicable and recognized in all States and territories in these United States. States and localities issue their police officers firearms and set their own requirements for their officers in training and qualifying in the use of these weapons. This legislation maintains the States' power to set these requirements and determine whether or not an active or retired officer is qualified in the use of the firearm, and would allow only this narrow universe of persons to carry their firearms when traveling outside their jurisdiction. We believe this is similar to the States' issuance of drivers' licenses--the standards may differ slightly from State to State, but all States recognize that the drivers have been certified to operate a motor vehicle on public roadways.

In your letter you state that consistency is vital on these issues and I would agree. Over a period of years, you voted in support of a Federal waiting period for the purchase of a firearm. Under your description of State's rights, this would be an intrusion to the sovereignty of the States and an infringement of the Second Amendment, which you say you strongly support. I assume that you felt your votes and your position were justified

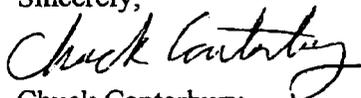
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by your concern for public safety. H.R. 218 in no way intrudes on the Second Amendment and would enhance public safety. The idea that trained, certified, and dedicated law enforcement professionals would be available to respond to public safety threats at any time, thus augmenting national security is another compelling argument for Federal action. It just makes good sense.

Mr. Chairman, I am not a politician, a lawyer or a Constitutional scholar. I am a police officer who has the honor to represent other police officers in every region of the country. I do not pretend to know all of the subtleties and nuances of lawmaking in Washington. One area of expertise that you and I share, however, is our knowledge of what constitutes good public safety policy. Philosophical issues aside, I am sure that you would agree that ensuring 500,000 police officers are better equipped to intervene on behalf of their fellow citizens in a deadly force situation is extraordinarily good public safety policy. I do not ask that you vacate your very principled position, I ask only that you put this bill to a vote. By doing so, you ensure that both principle and public safety get a hearing.

As Vice President of the National Fraternal Order of Police, I would welcome the opportunity to sit and discuss this bill further with you.

Sincerely,



Chuck Canterbury
Vice President