

A word from the Nevada Sportsman about gun control

Ask a Nevada sportsman about gun control and you might get a myriad of answers, but first you might get some questions. Are you talking about hurrying up a steep hill only to get to the top with an accelerated heart rate and you want to know how to control the gun for a well placed shot? Other questions might be how do you control your gun when a covey of quail flushes from your feet? But the biggest question of all is the gun control being promoted by the legislature. Oh, **THAT** gun control!!

Nevada's sporting families are deeply concerned with the safety of our children, but they are also fearful of the legislature's efforts to control our guns. You see, we believe when the legislature makes a new law they are really saying the other laws they made didn't or don't work, so rather than repealing them, they just keep adding on more laws. And every law they add, makes a deeper cut in the liberties that you and I enjoy.

The sporting families of Nevada shake their heads every time someone moves to our great state and then wants to make it like the one they just left. Mayor Bloomberg, the head of Mayors Against Illegal Guns, has sent his own lobbyist to our great state so he can tell us how we should live. He must not have gotten the memo that said "The government's first duty is to protect the people, not run their lives."

Recently the Nevada legislature passed SB221 and sent it to Governor Sandoval to sign into law. The bill is wrong on so many fronts. First, it would require, with a few exceptions, every person to register any transfer of a firearm through a licensed dealer (like a sporting goods store or gunsmith). To conduct a transfer, both parties must jointly appear at licensed dealer and the dealer must comply with state and federal requirements as though he were transferring a firearm from his own inventory (in other words, the dealer would run the parties through the federal NICS system).

Second, the background check inquiry for private party transfers will be made directly to federal NICS system as opposed to those of regular dealer transfers that are conducted through Nevada's point of contact, the Department of Public Safety, thus overriding the state's own laws to prevent federal overreach on firearm ownership by Nevada citizens. The reason for the discrepancy in background check inquiries is due to the fee (\$25 for background check) assessed by Nevada's DPS, which would require a 2/3s vote for passage. By utilizing the "free" NICS system, the legislature is attempting to circumvent Nevada's constitutional 2/3s vote

requirement for raising taxes. Instead, the bill allows a dealer to charge a higher fee than a regular background check (\$30 maximum).

Third, this law punishes a person who fails to comply with the background check. If you fail to perform the required background check, you are guilty of a gross misdemeanor and prohibited from possessing a firearm for a period of 2 years. A second or subsequent offense is a felony.

There are “exemptions” to this bill which appear to accommodate common shooting and hunting activities. However these “exemptions” fail to cover all of the possible temporary transfers of firearms, thus leaving legitimate hunters and target shooters subject to criminal sanctions for simply donating a firearm to a sporting group for their chapter banquet or lending a hunting rifle to a friend who has the wrong license.

The sporting families of Nevada have recently seen their lives put on hold because of the highest construction unemployment in the state; the area hardest hit is Las Vegas. Now some sportsman selling or trading off some of their belongings -- even some of their guns -- just to make ends meet. Any such sale would now have to go through the cumbersome federal background check prior to making any such transfers. Otherwise, you go to jail.

These gun control measures will not prevent any of the past tragedies, as admitted by Senator Justin Jones, the senator introducing this new legislation. I’ll say it again....it would not have prevented any of the past tragedies. This leaves firearm owners speechless! Why spend all this time and money if this is just another bill that won’t prevent illegal shootings? Did the Nevada legislature not have more pressing and important matters to deliberate about this session? How about that deepening recession? How about the quality of education that all the elected officials seemed to talk about while they were running for election?

Perhaps the bill should have been about stiffer penalties for criminals. You say the jails are already overcrowded? Hmm. . . could it be that criminals have a low respect for society? Why are law abiding citizens being singled out?....even mentioning them in the same breath as the mentally ill. Could it be the government has a low respect for its citizens?

Surveys are used for a lot of statistics so Nevada’s legislature has setup its own way of getting true statistics. The legislature has created on its website a link where you can voice your own comment without having misleading questions asked of you. What a novel idea! Now the lawmakers can know who sent in the comments and what part of the state they live in, and hear in their constituents’ own words how they feel about the issues. Currently, 3620 residents have voiced their opinions on SB221. Of that number, 559 support the bill, while 3059 are against it. If my math is correct, ***roughly 85% of the people are against SB 221***, yet Senator

Jones relies on a cleverly-worded survey which claims that 86% of the people polled are for SB221. This sounds like some Enron accountant told him the figures.

Not only does SB221 trample on your Second Amendment rights, it poses a host of problems when you stop to consider how it will be implemented. For example:

- 1- How do you legally store a gun at your neighbor's home while you go on vacation? (Answer, you and your neighbor have to both go to a licensed dealer and have the federal background check run on your neighbor who has agreed to safeguard your firearms while you are away). ***Then you must go and have a background check on you to receive YOUR firearm back!!***
- 2- What about loaning a gun to friend when you go hunting together? (Answer, you have to both go to a licensed dealer and run the federal background check on your friend).
- 3- A group of Boy Scouts decide to earn the Rifle or Shotgun merit badge. They go to a shooting range or to a certified Scout Camp where they hope to use the weapons provided there to qualify. (Excuse me, the entire Scout Group and their leader have just violated the law unless ALL OF THEM go to a licensed dealer and run the federal background check on the entire Scout Troop).
- 4- How do you transport a firearm in someone else's vehicle such as on a hunting trip? (Answer, everyone involved gets a federal background check).

We could go on, but the absurdity of the law is patently obvious.

The governor possesses the veto power – a power that should be used sparingly, judiciously, and with caution. However, we feel this is one of those rare times when the governor must infuse some common sense into an area where well-meaning legislators have passed a measure which fails to meet the needs of their constituents. The word “governor” applies not only to the executive's stewardship over the general public; it also applies to his need to govern the legislature. We hope you will join us in urging Governor Sandoval to do the right thing and veto this intrusive and dangerous legislation.

---Southern Nevada Coalition for Wildlife