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66: legal affairs -  
gun control

October 19, 1966

Mr. Ernest Henriques  
2814 Grandeur Avenue  
Altadena, California

Dear Mr. Henriques:

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to comment on this important issue.

I know there is a strong movement toward rigid control of the use and purchase of guns; however, any regulatory measure regarding firearms should be devised only after consultation with law enforcement officials and recognized sportsmen's associations.

First consideration is the Constitutional right of a citizen to own and bear arms.

The CRPA's point that illegal use of and not the ownership of guns should be the subject of legislative controls is a good one. Persons with criminal records or juveniles could well be subject to restrictions.

We need both education and safety laws to reduce gun accidents and the misuse of firearms while at the same time, protecting the traditional right to possess firearms. The legitimate use of arms in hunting, target shooting and gun collecting should not be forgotten, or the right for a person to protect his home and family.

A proposal to aid the hunter-sportsman by my running mate, Robert Finch, has merit. Requirement of mandatory hunter safety instruction prior to issuance of the first California hunting license would be comparable to our present regulations for a young driver.

I reiterate that laws aimed at reducing crime require careful consideration so that government does not infringe on legitimate ownership and use of firearms.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

RR:pw