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## COOLING OFF HANDGUN HOTHEADS

K6

A modest attempt to control the proliferation of handguns among felons, \*drug\*addicts and others unfit to handle them responsibly will come before the House next week and deserves speedy enactment. The Brady Amendment to the 1968 Gun Control Act is named for James Brady, the White House press spokesman severely wounded in the attempt on President Reagan's life in 1981, and for

his wife, Sarah, who has led the campaign to regulate handgun use nationwide.

The handgun measure is attached to HR 5210, the \*Omnibus\*Drug\*Bill. It would not restrict any responsible adult's right to own a handgun, nor does it create a form of national registration, as the National Rifle Association falsely suggests in its high-powered campaign against the bill. It would simply require a seven-day waiting period before anyone could obtain a handgun from a licensed gun dealer, a period during which police and court records would be checked to ensure the applicant was not a convicted felon, certifiably mentally ill, a \*drug\*addict or anyone otherwise forbidden by law to own a handgun.

Similar laws already exist in 22 states, including California. What makes a federal law necessary is the ease with which traffickers, notably street gangs and \*drug\*dealers, can buy firearms in states with lax controls -- like Florida, Texas or Ohio -- and sell them for handsome profits, or use them, in places with stricter controls like California and New York. A number of convicted gun-traffickers now doing time admit that a waiting period would have hindered their operations.

None of that persuades the NRA, which now opposes the kind of bill it supported in 1975, when Wisconsin imposed a 48-hour waiting period. Worse, the NRA has so misrepresented the facts about the measure that Rep. James Sensenbrenner Jr., a longtime NRA supporter, has angrily denounced the organization's underhanded tactics. In one mailer to NRA members in Sensenbrenner's Wisconsin district, the NRA claims gun buyers "will be forced

to ask a government bureaucrat's permission" to purchase a handgun. Not true: The bill would forbid local authorities, who would administer the law, from denying a permit for any reason other than those already covered in federal or state law.

The Brady Amendment has widespread support from every major law enforcement association and even from President Reagan, who usually sides with the NRA. Congress should enact it, then turn to another growing menace: the spread of semi-automatic weapons, which are turning some urban neighborhoods into shooting galleries. It's scandalous that it's easier to buy these murderous weapons than it is to obtain a driver's license. The NRA rejects such logic, of course, but the death toll on the nation's streets cries out for speedy action by a more rational Congress.

KEYWORDS: LAW WEAPON CONGRESS BEE EDITORIAL

END OF DOCUMENT LIST

DATE: MONDAY \*September\*19,\*1988\*

PAGE: B6

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EDITION: METRO FINAL

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## GUNNING DOWN GUN SANITY

K6

If any gun control measure could have passed muster with a Congress that cringes every time the National Rifle Association raises its voice, it should have been the Brady Amendment, a modest plan to impose a seven-day waiting period for purchasers of handguns. Law enforcement associations gave strong support; even President Reagan endorses the waiting-period concept. Yet in the House on Thursday, the NRA won handily, 228-182.

The proposal had two major virtues: a cooling off period to deter disturbed people who buy guns and sometimes kill on impulse; and time for local authorities to determine if a would-be buyer had a criminal record, a record of mental illness or some other legal bar to handgun ownership. As a tepid substitute, the House simply called on the Justice Department to propose a national checking system that would weed out convicted felons only, a system that will be difficult at best to implement.

The amendment was named for James Brady, the presidential press secretary gunned down and permanently disabled by John Hinckley, an emotionally

unbalanced young man who probably couldn't have bought the gun he used had such a law been in force in 1981. Without a nationwide waiting period, the John Hinckleys can go on buying handguns in the 28 states that make it as easy as buying a bottle of whiskey; gun runners can continue moving their merchandise into the 22 states, like California, that have waiting periods.

California's 15-day waiting period helped catch some 1,500 felons trying to buy handguns in 1986, powerful testimony to the wisdom of such a law. Opponents say the Brady Amendment would be ineffectual because surveys show "only" 20 percent of those convicted of crimes committed with a handgun buy their weapons legally in a gun shop. But in a country where 20,000 or more people are killed by firearms every year, 20 percent is hardly insignificant.

What's most dismaying is that, once again, so many lawmakers were unable to overcome their fear of the well-heeled, bare-knuckled NRA, which blatantly misrepresented the amendment. What's encouraging is that so many House members -- 182, including Sacramento's Robert Matsui and Vic Fazio -- found the courage to stand up to the NRA's reckless barrage.

KEYWORDS: WEAPON CONGRESS BEE EDITORIAL

## THE SACRAMENTO BEE

DATE: SATURDAY \*September\*17,\*1988\*

PAGE: A9

EDITION: STATE FINAL

STORY 1

NEWSPAPER: THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE  
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 PAGE NUMBER: A26  
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 COLUMN: EDITORIALS  
 HEADLINE: Dear Congress Please Go Home  
 SUBJECT: US: CONGRESS: EDITORIAL:  
 KEYWORD-HIT

R-2 9/20

IT WOULD BE a good thing if Congress called it quits and went home, at least until election day is past. It could return to work then if it felt there was any unfinished business that couldn't wait until next year.

Twice during the past week, Congress demonstrated that in these pre-election days it sometimes stops thinking about good government when it passes laws. What the majority in both houses is doing instead is pandering to single-issue minorities.

First to fold was the Senate, where a majority cast a cowardly vote to deny federally funded abortions to poor women who are victims of rape or incest. Senators who would not hesitate to opt for abortion if their own wives or daughters were victims of rape expediently voted to consign other women to untold misery.

THEN IT WAS the turn of the House of Representatives, where a majority kowtowed to the National Rifle Association by rejecting a seven-day waiting period for handgun purchases. The week-long delay was designed to give angry customers a chance to cool off and let police see if they had criminal records.

Every member of Congress knows a majority of Americans have declared in poll after poll that they favor reasonable controls on handguns. But given a choice between voting the will of the majority - saving lives in the process - and obeying the orders of the NRA seven weeks before election day, it's no contest. The gun makers, the gun peddlers and the gun fanciers win every time.

\*\*END OF STORY REACHED\*\*

KL6

Two Ohio Democrats, Sen. Howard Metzenbaum and Rep. Edward Feighan have attached gun-control amendments to sweeping anti-drug legislation in both houses. They predict the provisions will prevent drug traffickers from buying handguns at the local gunshop. There is much that is laudable about the drug legislation in that it mandates the death penalty for drug kingpins. But the gun-control measures, which would impose a seven-day waiting period on all gun purchases, are unlikely to keep guns out of the hands of drug pushers.

The waiting period idea seems reasonable. After all, 20 percent of the nation's gun-toting felons purchase their weapons illegally from legitimate gun dealers. Supporters of Metzenbaum-Feighan argue that the measure would enable these dealers to prevent such purchases.

That's questionable, however, since the amendment doesn't require local law enforcement officials to conduct background checks of prospective gun purchasers during the seven-day waiting period.

The proposal requires all gun purchasers to sign sworn statements that dealers would turn into the authorities, who can keep them for 60 days, after which the law requires their destruction. Dealers must keep the forms for a year, long enough, one assumes, for the police to pick up on any mistakes. There is no penalty for police who decide to keep the forms or information on them more than 60 days, although they would violate the law by doing so.

In generating all this paperwork, gun merchants merely will duplicate efforts already required by federal law. Gun buyers now fill out form 4473, which includes all the information required by Metzenbaum-Feighan, and some it does not, including the serial number, make and model of a gun. Gun dealers do not turn 4473s over to the police, as required of the form to be submitted pursuant to Metzenbaum-Feighan, but they must keep them for 20 years in case the police need them for an investigation.

Presumably, local authorities who want to

do a background check under Metzenbaum-Feighan would use the FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC), a databank of information on felons available to local authorities. Since the amendment doesn't mandate fingerprinting, NCIC can be checked only for identical names. Felons soon will figure out that the best way not to get caught is by using someone else's name when purchasing a firearm.

With six million new and used guns sold annually, the NCIC would face a flood of new inquiries on top of the 7.7 million it must already process. Metzenbaum-Feighan won't decrease crime or drug trafficking, but will prompt local, state and federal authorities to waste an inordinate amount of time tracking down what in nine cases of ten will be useless leads, since most legally purchased handguns are not used in felonies or drug crimes.

The amendments raise a further troubling question. It imposes a waiting period on the majority of American states that have chosen not to have them. That is, it gives the local police powers that local citizens and legislatures deliberately have not granted them. Such congressional encroachment on local government represents a real threat to the sanctity of local government and to the concept of federalism.

Rep. Bill McCollum has introduced a reform that is at once less burdensome and more likely to work. He would require the FBI to compile a list of all known felons and make it available to gun dealers for instantaneous identification at the time and place of purchase. His amendment would also send directly to jail any parolee or felon who purchases a gun.

Gun control, as has been proven time and again, never achieves its laudable goal of reducing the supply and usage of handguns. It generally inconveniences law abiding citizens while failing to punish lawless creeps. If Congress wants to crack down on drug related criminals, it must concentrate on punishing criminals with sufficient vigor to deter further crime. Forcing citizens to fill out more forms won't do the trick.

## Minicams and Yoko

● **I'M DYING! QUICK GET A CAMERA:** After he was slashed repeatedly in the stomach Tuesday at the absurdist theatre called the polling place, a bleeding Jacques Chevalier quickly established his priorities. The Ward 2 D.C. Council candidate sent for the media. "Go get the newspapers and go get the television" stations, he screamed to his aides. He'd put his faith in a mini-cam van. Nonetheless, someone called for a D.C. ambulance. It came.

● **LENNON BIOGRAPHY 'TOTALLY FICTION,' YOKO SAYS:** Yoko Ono, John Len-

non's wife, says a new biography depicting the dead Beatle as a dope fiend, anorexic and bisexual who wanted out of his marriage is "totally fiction... It's amazing that somebody took such a poetic license. I don't see John in there..." The author, Albert Goldman, portrays Yoko as a heroin snorting, gold digging adulteress who wanted to dump Lennon as much as he wanted to dump her. Listeners to the radio station airing the interview were urged by the host, a Lennonist, to call a 900 number to 'vote' on whether they thought the book was true.

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con pro McCollum

Ben Jones won the Democratic nomination to the 4th District congressional seat, incumbent Pat Swindall vowed to wage a positive campaign against him. Then — scarcely missing a beat — Mr. Swindall challenged Mr. Jones to release his arrest and driving records. No wonder one audience laughed recently when the congressman prefaced his remarks, saying: "I don't believe in mudslinging."

In this race, as in all of Mr. Swindall's, the air is thick with mud and mendacity.

Rep. Pat Swindall should be voted out of office. Fortunately, Ben Jones offers 4th District voters an acceptable alternative. There are two broad concerns in this race, character and ideology, and Mr. Swindall fails spectacularly in both categories.

**Character.** Mr. Swindall was elected in 1984 after he falsely accused his right-leaning opponent, Elliott Levitas, of voting like "a New York liberal." The tactic — used by a religious-right challenger against a Jewish incumbent — smacked of anti-Semitism. Two years later, Mr. Swindall won re-election in a campaign in which he repeatedly changed his stories about an old DUI arrest and a palatial home he was building. This year, the congressman is in hot water because federal authorities say he was willing to borrow and help launder what he thought was drug money. He has adjusted his story about that several times, too.

But what about Mr. Jones? Wasn't he an alcoholic for some years? And didn't he have at least one minor scrape with the law after a barroom altercation? And doesn't he have several ex-wives? Yes, but Mr. Jones has conquered his demons. He says his last drink was in 1977. He can proudly point now to a stable marriage. He has not tried to hide past problems. In short, Mr. Jones has demonstrated the character to turn a destructive life into a constructive one.

**Ideology.** Mr. Swindall has suckered for most of President Reagan's pie-in-the-sky panaceas. He supports a balanced-budget amendment, the Strategic Defense Initiative and the no-new-taxes gimmick. Although his district is one of the region's most diverse, the congressman is partial to the agenda of the religious right, and is a particularly fierce opponent of abortion. His record is mitigated to a degree by his recent work on behalf of the Cuban detainees. Still, the 4th District's voters could do better.

Mr. Jones, untested as an officeholder, would have to learn on the job. But his moderate views would better serve the 4th District's myriad ethnic and religious groups. Mr. Jones is pro-choice on abortion, supports more low-income housing and is against the Strategic Defense Initiative and a balanced-budget amendment.

As a congressman, Ben Jones would serve with integrity and moderation — two qualities Pat Swindall knows little about.

## No Waiting Period for America's Gun Play

On Sept. 15, the U.S. House killed an amendment that would have imposed a national seven-day waiting period for the purchase of handguns, again bowing to pressure from the National Rifle Association (NRA). Within seven days of that vote:

■ A Lakeland, Fla., first-grader brought a handgun to school and waved it around at schoolmates.

■ Rioting was touched off in Shreveport, La., when a woman who allegedly was seeking to buy drugs retaliated for having her purse snatched by pulling a handgun and firing shots that fatally wounded a man.

■ In Los Angeles, a gunman who was up-

set that a neighborhood cat ate rabbits he raised to feed to a pet alligator wounded six people when he opened fire at passing cars. The incident ended when the man killed himself.

■ Five people, including a police officer, were killed when an emotionally disturbed man armed with a handgun went on a shooting spree at a Chicago auto parts store and a nearby school.

Will the Congress ever get the message from such incidents? Or will it continue to be so busy listening to NRA arguments against any gun control measures that it can't take note of the tragic havoc firearms are wreaking across this nation?

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ANOTHER HAITIAN president has now been loaded at gunpoint onto a plane headed out of the country, and another general has replaced him. There is little visible reason to think that the new leadership, under Lt. Gen. Prosper Avril, represents any great improvement over its predecessors. Haiti has now had four regimes in the past year, the last three, including the new one, ruling in open violation of the country's new constitution.

The reasons for the coup are, as usual, obscure. The Ton-Tons Macoutes, the armed irregulars who were the enforcers for the deposed Duvalier dictatorship, recently shot up a Catholic church during Mass and murdered a dozen people. Then, in the ultimate gesture of contempt for the law, they went on television to warn others not to displease them. The coup may have been, in some part, a reaction to those events by military units hostile to the Macoutes. But that may not be the whole story.

It is wrong to think of Haitian politics in modern terms. The country has no effective government, and has had none for some years. It has reverted to a much older pattern. Small bands of armed men, some in uniform and some not, follow their respective captains, fighting each other for booty and respect. The captain survives as long as he can provide his followers with those

rewards. Many are involved in smuggling, some in drugs. Col. Jean-Claude Paul, who has been accused by American authorities of international drug-running on a conspicuous scale, seems to have emerged from this latest change of command with his status undiminished.

The United States' influence in Haiti is now, unfortunately, minimal. When the Haitian army used its guns last autumn to disrupt a legal presidential election, the United States cut its aid to the barest minimum of humanitarian support. That has left nothing more to cut.

Haiti is a country of some 6 million people of whom the great majority are illiterate, utterly isolated from the world and impoverished. It is one of the few countries in the world where food supplies have diminished over the past generation. The diet there is now more meager than in India or most of Africa.

To make a real difference in these people's condition, a Haitian government—if there were one—would have to find the key to a rapid increase in foreign aid. That key is elections, and a return to the constitution. The armed bands resist it as a threat to their present activities. If the new president, Gen. Avril, is not prepared to move in that direction, the current anarchy is likely to continue and the present poverty will deepen.

## *The NRA's Hired Guns* K6

DISREGARDING the urgent requests of every major law enforcement organization in the country, 228 members of the House jumped when the National Rifle Association said dance the other day. They voted to kill the "Brady amendment," which calls for a seven-day waiting period between purchase and delivery of a handgun.

More than a few had a possible financial incentive for their votes in the form of \$1.2 million in contributions from the NRA's PAC, plus goods and services—media ads, for example—between Jan. 1, 1983, and July 31, 1988. In addition, the NRA's leading legislative lights offered them some political camouflage for killing the Brady amendment in the form of the McCollum substitute—an ineffective, expensive measure that would give gun dealers access to records they have no business seeing or using.

According to figures compiled by Common Cause, 176 House members who voted for the McCollum killer amendment had NRA financial support—an average of \$6,635 each. The NRA supported the campaigns of 48 representatives with more than \$10,000 each, and 43 of them

voted the NRA's way. Harold Volkmer of Missouri led the list with a total of \$80,376 in NRA PAC contributions and independent expenditures. Virginia's Frederick Boucher was right up there too, with a grand total of \$16,840 in NRA ammunition.

Mr. Boucher was not the only Virginian to vote that way: of the state's delegation, only Frank Wolf and Herbert H. Bateman voted against the McCollum monkey wrench. In Maryland, where the lawmakers have seen how a state waiting period can save lives, those who voted against the NRA line were Connie Morella, Steny Hoyer, Tom McMillen, Ben Cardin and Kweisi Mfume. Those falling for the McCollum amendment were Helen Bentley, Roy Dyson and Beverly Byron. Mr. Dyson received \$14,750 in NRA PAC contributions.

At least the gap is narrowing between NRA-approved votes and votes for public safety measures that do not abridge gun owners' rights. Police, whose lives are at stake here, are working on a campaign in the Senate to revive the Brady amendment and to overcome the resounding defeat in the House. The effort must continue until the forces of common sense prevail.

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attorney general to develop a system giving gun dealers access to arrest records on potential gun purchasers; the idea would be that the dealers could then keep on whipping out those over-the-counter handguns to people who didn't make the master list. Police already have blasted this proposal as not only an attempt to stall any serious measure but also a completely unworkable plan.

On behalf of the members and families of 11 national policing organizations, the Law Enforcement Steering Committee has labeled the McCollum Amendment "a sham that would kill a low-cost, common-sense bill"—the Brady seven-day waiting period. Law enforcement experts point out that there is no nationally automated system

chiefs, troopers, officers on the beats, sheriffs, union officials—are urging rejection of the McCollum Amendment as "an affront to the law enforcement community." They are asking House members to support the Brady Amendment as the "common-sense bill that would save lives and keep guns out of the hands of those who cannot be entrusted with them, who cause thousands of unnecessary deaths each year and create an atmosphere of danger and fear in our cities and towns."

Who's right on this one: those on the front lines in the battle against crime and drugs—or those in the top ranks of the NRA who put gun sales first above a simple and effective public safety measure? The Brady Amendment deserves support, not sabotage.

## Fiddling With Student Aid G11

**T**HE GOVERNMENT spends billions of dollars a year on college student aid. The allocation of this money—and the higher education it buys—and the total each year depend on a set of complex rules that have never been as widely debated or understood as they deserve. Two examples occur in the pending bills to reduce defaults in college student loans. Enormously important decisions are being made in footnotes, the wrong way to proceed.

There are two main student aid programs, one grant, one loan. The loan program, which is partly for the middle class, is an entitlement. Any student who qualifies can go to a bank for a loan that the government will guarantee and partly subsidize. The costs are automatically paid each year, without regard to the appropriations process.

The House bill would make the grant program for the poor an entitlement as well. Currently, the maximum grants authorized each year by the education committees can only be given if the appropriations committees provide enough money. They often don't, and the grants must be prorated down. The bill would lower the authorized maximums for the next few years, to bring them in line with recent appropriations, but seeks to change the rules so these authorized maximums would then control. The idea is, over time, to strengthen the grant program on grounds that the mix of aid in recent years has been allowed to tilt too far toward loans, and has fallen too far behind rapidly rising college costs.

The administration opposes the step for fear it would add to costs. Our own objection is less to the possible cost, which may be justified, than to the fact that this is patchwork in an area that needs to be much more systematically examined. Aides say the president will veto this otherwise modestly constructive bill if the entitlement provision is retained, and that alone should be reason to put it off until another time.

The second provision in both the House and the Senate bills involves the counting of family assets in determining a student's eligibility for a grant or loan. Currently such assets lower eligibility, on the theory that they can be borrowed against. The Senate bill would change this for both loans and grants to families with incomes under \$30,000 by not counting as assets principal homes or family-owned farms or businesses. The House bill would do the same thing, but only in the loan program and for all families, regardless of income. But that's a tilt toward loans and the middle class by the same people who have just told us the need is for a tilt toward grants and the poor instead. Except that it's an election year, why, in a time of enormous federal deficits, not count assets?

The higher education bills of the Reagan years have mainly been defensive. Congress has rightly spent most of its energy protecting the programs against proposed cuts. But before it next expands the programs, it needs to rationalize them. These bills should stick to their subject of defaults, which is problem enough.

### Fred Malek: 'Imp

I have known Fred more than a decade, and an ounce of bias or prejudice. Whatever demons d Nixon should not be Fred Malek's character and decency—impeccable.

PH  
Publi

Most high school taught in their civics cl modern-day phenomen "triangle": the impenetrability among Congress and special-interest groups. cent article by Jack W utive vice president of Hospital Association Them Ambush That A ed, Aug. 31], is a textb how special interests o legislation to meet their

The object of AHA's amendment to the AID cy Act of 1988. Th would require hospita test incoming patients ages of 15 and 49 for H states with evidence of infection rate. Far from bush," this amendment oughly debated in sub died on an evenly split been approved for intro the House by the C Rules.

Mr. Owen is joined leadership of the Ame Association and the An Association in his opp amendment. Nobod should be so naive as t of healthdom feels the. Owen is a political par the leaders of the AMA who promote a civil r to this serious public h Health care workers b very different views

convenience on a legitimate customer while giving law enforcement officials time to check for a criminal or psychiatric record. The measure, vigorously supported by police, would inhibit criminal gun running between places with tough gun laws and those without.

The N.R.A. waged a ferocious battle against the whole idea, but as a close vote neared it switched to a substitute amendment. This would order the Attorney General to come up with a plan for checking gun buyers' backgrounds instantly at the point of sale. That gave enough House members the fig leaf they needed yesterday to kill the waiting period.

The approved amendment is an exercise in fantasy. An instant system would give all 275,000 Federally licensed gun dealers access to confidential F.B.I. files, a dangerous thought, and could cost up to \$500 million. But fantasy was the point: while Washington ponders instant identification, gun running may proceed as usual.

N.R.A. cynicism no longer surprises police. The gun lobby, they might say, has a record:

**Rambo Guns.** The proliferation of semiautomatic military assault rifles, usually in the hands of drug gangsters, turns urban neighborhoods into zones of random terror. The guns are sold legally as semiautomatics, requiring a trigger pull for each shot, but are easily converted to fully automatic. Their rapid fire overwhelms standard police revolv-

**Plastic Guns.** Firearms manufacturers are eager to develop a new market for guns made of lightweight, rust-free plastics. But a wholly non-metallic gun could become the "terrorist special," invisible to a metal detector. The rifle association fought bills to require minimum metal content in guns, but caved in the end when passage appeared inevitable in both houses. The bill now awaits a conference.

**"Cop-Killer" Bullets.** Bullets made of hard alloys easily penetrate the Kevlar vests used by police officers. Yet when Congress mounted a drive to ban such bullets, the N.R.A. waged a determined counterattack, only to yield when it became clear that continued opposition was futile.

**Attacks on Police.** When the International Association of Chiefs of Police endorsed a Federal waiting period bill, the gun lobby urged gun lovers to complain to the Mayor of Nashville about their police chief, Joe Casey. Why Joe Casey? He's president of the Chiefs of Police. The N.R.A. has also conducted attacks on other well-regarded chiefs like Joseph McNamara of San Jose, Calif., and Anthony Bouza of Minneapolis.

**The N.R.A.'s recent behavior has motivated the police to unify in America's first national law enforcement lobbying group, the Law Enforcement Steering Committee. As yesterday's vote shows, it has plenty of work to do fighting crime — and the gun lobby.**

The United States, not tas, broke off bilateral r early 1985, just as it wa not the Sandinistas, the gotiations last June by package of non-negotia on the table and giving tas two hours to accept t Under the system of you recommend to Gov kis, the Sandinistas wou to carry out attacks aga schools and hospitals United States in order United States Governme gaining table.

Margaretville, N. Y.,

## In Welfare Sy

To the Editor:

Your Aug. 29 story on th of the New York City well is on target. More than 90 denials of benefits are ove judges on administrati something is wrong when repeatedly violates its own and puts the burden of pi poor and the disadvantages

The benefits affected by denials are not trivial. Th emergency assistance fo disaster, food stamps, coverage for medical ca care, nursing-home care, scription drugs. Even a s take could be the differenc life and death.

The people affected by t takes are generally those le ble of appealing an agency without outside help. Those are the poor, the sick, the children and the elderly. To some officials you quote d vocates for the poor cause hearings, puts the blame where it doesn't belong. If were made, there wouldn't need to appeal decisions.

The New York State Bar tion's task force on admi adjudication points to so remedies. We would urge t ing simple actions:

- The New York State De of Social Services is now only for overpayments, nev derpayments or other failu one-sided approach must be

- There wouldn't be any fair hearings if casework correct determinations of at application. Burdenson

## NBC's \$8 Million Contribution

It was regrettable that Vice President Bush and Governor Dukakis agreed to only two televised debates. This disappointed voters who hoped that a more expansive schedule would add substance to a campaign trivialized by long-distance mudslinging. Worse, the date for the first debate, Sept. 25, coincides with the Olympics.

NBC has now mitigated the damage by deciding to interrupt its Olympics coverage for 90 minutes to broadcast the debate. CBS and ABC, which are not covering the Olympics, had already agreed to broadcast the debate. NBC officials think that as many as 40 million viewers would have preferred the athletes to the candidates.

There's no guarantee that all 40 million will tune in. But NBC's decision is welcome. The network has invested \$550 million in its Olympic coverage. The 90 lost minutes may cost it as much as \$8 million. It still stands to profit handsomely from the Games, however, and now makes a contribution as well to democracy.

## New York's Board of Arrogance p12

What does it take to shame New York City's Board of Elections? The state Board of Elections has faulted its

## Topics of The Times

poor management and chronic inefficiencies. Governor Cuomo, Mayor Koch and the Rev. Jesse Jackson wanted it to undertake a national search for a new executive director to replace Betty Dolen, who retires later this year.

Yet the city Board of Elections arrogantly refuses to reconsider its abrupt appointment of an insider, Daniel DeFrancisco, to the \$72,000-a-year post.

New York City lags years behind most other big cities in replacing antiquated manual voting machines. Breakdowns are frequent, disenfranchising voters. A shortage of trained inspectors continues to jeopardize the integrity of elections. Low voter registration remains a scandal.

Whatever Mr. DeFrancisco's merits, the board owed it to the city's voters to conduct a serious national search for a candidate capable of restoring lost public trust. Mrs. Dolen doesn't plan to retire until the end of this year, making all the more inexcusable the board's rush to cronyism.

Board members are appointed by the City Council, and all are up for renewal in January. By their willful disregard of the interest of New York City voters, all those involved in this travesty have shown themselves unworthy of reappointment.

the National Rifle Association (NRA) when Congress goes back to work next month. Call the odds even, then, when the House of Representatives takes up legislation to require a seven-day waiting period for the purchase of handguns.

It is a common-sense proposal. Handgun sales are now made, in effect, on the honor system. Buyers sign a form saying they aren't drug addicts and have no record of criminal conduct or mental illness, and they walk out with their gun, or guns. By the time authorities check up — *if* they check up; most don't — it is often too late. It almost was for President Reagan, crazily wounded by a goof sulking because he couldn't get a date with an actress who had never met him.

\* The result of the current system is a wide-open, cash-and-carry traffic in handguns, adding to the violence of a society already saturated with some 65 million guns.

| This is very modest legislation. It will

Neither are sales, even of handguns between individuals; the requirement apply only to licensed dealers.

President Reagan announced this year for a national waiting period. Attorney General's Task Force on Violence Crime called in 1981 for a national waiting period. The legislation is supported by every — every! — major police organization. Yet its sponsors rate its chances at no better than even. The NRA has cranked out usual misrepresentations and hysterical position. It is calling in its IOUs from members of Congress it has supported financially and is intimidating the ones who have been unable to buy.

The issue here is not just the waiting period but whether the American political system is capable of acting for the safety if the action involves even the best gun control. The NRA is betting on guns and against the people.

## Help for Our Non-Jeffersonian President

55 Leaders of scientific and technological organizations representing 750,000 physicists, biologists, engineers and what-have-you are floating a worthy, non-partisan proposal past Vice President George Bush and Gov. Michael Dukakis. The societies' leaders want both candidates to pledge they will strengthen the office of the president's science adviser so America's science policy will be a guaranteed winner in November.

Some presidents have the benefit of excellent and accessible scientific counsel, as when Thomas Jefferson mulled things over in his own prodigious mind and when Dwight Eisenhower and John Kennedy took advantage of upgraded White House science and technology advisers of their own. Alas, the office was diminished by Richard Nixon,

on, in a snit over objections to his pursuit of a supersonic transport plane. It has not been enhanced since.

The scientists and engineers must point that's hard to argue against. National policy-making on the threshold of the 21st century must be bound inextricably to the soundest advice available on ominous environmental trends, on developments in tertiary technology, on fighting AIDS, on opening avenues to energy alternative productivity advances.

Thomas Jeffersons come along only once in a couple of centuries or so. Most of our presidents need the help that a science-powered science adviser with a respectable staff and level of authority could give.

8/29 R-21

ing period between a weapon's sale and its delivery would allow the police time to conduct background checks on would-be handgun owners.

Such a common-sense idea should, on its merits, breeze to victory as an amendment to Congress' anti-drug abuse bill. Yet next week's House vote is expected to be very close, due to a campaign of distortions and "killer amendments" by one of Washington's most powerful special interests: the gun lobby. The National Rifle Association is destined to continue losing credibility as an advocate for law-abiding firearms owners as long as it provides such covering fire for violent criminals.

In most states and cities, handguns are now accessible on the honor system: Buyers must fill out a federal application form, which is relegated to a filing cabinet while an over-the-counter gun is handed out immediately. The pending amendment—sponsored in the House by Rep. Edward Feighan of Lakewood and in the Senate by Ohio's Sen. Howard Metzenbaum—would require a seven-day waiting period between a handgun's purchase and its delivery. During the seven-day delay, local law-enforcement authorities would have the option of checking police files and court records to see if the purchaser legally is forbidden to own a handgun.

In its desperation to block approval of even such a sensible gun-control measure, the NRA is trying to

would not permit arbitrary denials of handgun purchases; it would deny guns only to people barred under existing laws. The estimated cost of enforcing the law nationwide would be \$10 million at most, spread among thousands of local police departments—a reasonable price to pay for crime control.

Twenty-two states and many cities, including Cleveland, already require a waiting period. Every major police organization says such a law helps protect public safety. But the patchwork of local laws allows guns to fall into the wrong hands; all one has to do is go to a jurisdiction where such laws are not enforced. For example, a national waiting period might have prevented the 1981 assassination attempt against President Reagan. Instead, would-be assassin John W. Hinckley Jr. lied on the federal handgun form in Texas, quickly received a gun and set out for Washington to shoot the president.

The "Brady bill"—named as a tribute to James Brady, the White House aide who was wounded in the 1981 shooting, and his wife Sarah Brady, who has championed the campaign for a handgun waiting period—deserves strong support from both houses of Congress. Ronald Reagan, himself a member of the NRA, has endorsed the concept of a waiting period. It's discouraging to see the NRA, which once supported a waiting period, so consumed by pro-gun absolutism that it ignores rational ways to protect citizens from crime.

## Burma, the new country

On July 29, Sein Win, an Associated Press correspondent in Rangoon, was thrown into jail on a trumped-up charge. At the time of his arrest, Burma was an authoritarian state. During Sein Win's captivity and unknown to him, the country erupted in political turmoil and bloodshed. On his release last Thursday, Sein Win reported: "I entered a new country. As I emerged from jail, I witnessed an incredible thing. For the first time in a quarter century, people—thousands and thousands of them—were chanting, crying for democracy, and there were no secret police, no soldiers with bayonets fixed and with fingers on the trigger to stop the demonstrators."

What an incredible transformation in a country that for 26 years had been ruled as a one-party, socialist state by a military government. Within a few short but eventful weeks the person who had run the country since 1962, Ne Win, was replaced by Sein Lwin, who also was replaced. His successor, Maung Maung, became the first civilian president since the military coup. Now Maung Maung has proposed a referendum to determine if Burma should restore democracy. He says he will quit if the ruling socialist party rejects his referendum plan. Yet even those concessions have failed to appease the growing numbers of people clamoring for democracy.

Who would have predicted such developments, especially just a few weeks ago when then-ruler Sein Lwin, already linked to an earlier massacre, had the

army fire on unarmed demonstrators, killing 112? It seemed the regime was prepared to use whatever force was necessary to crush student dissidents.

Then, suddenly, Sein Lwin resigned, to be replaced by Maung Maung, who set up a commission to consider public grievances. But protests continued, and students were joined by people from many walks of life—including government workers—moved both by disenchantment with socialism and a craving for democracy. Last Wednesday, Maung Maung lifted martial law. Boldly, he put his own political future on the line, not only threatening to resign if the government refuses to hold a referendum, but declaring he will not run if the people vote for multi-party elections.

The possibility of a referendum is doubtful. The popular movement for democracy demands faster action. On the other side, Maung Maung's socialist colleagues may rebuff him, just as they rejected calls for an earlier referendum. But can the regime ever rule again as it did for 26 years? Western observers think Burma, like the Philippines in 1986, is experiencing an unstoppable upsurge of "people power." They warn, however, that the regime's opponents must quickly identify leaders if democracy is to make headway and Burma is to avoid sinking into anarchy. Nonetheless, in a country forcibly isolated by its own rulers for a quarter century, it is impressive and inspiring to hear voices rise against a particularly inept brand of socialism and in favor of western-style liberal democracy. A new country, indeed.

sweltering summer.

THOMAS A. DI

## Praise for PUC

Thank you, Public Utility Commission of Ohio, for the Cleveland Electric Co. to raise our rates made a couple of bad in the Perry nuclear and the Beaver projects. CEI would like to cover all the local people's bad investments in this season.

WILLIAM

## Quayle's service

Having spent the last year trying to explain an decision in 1969 to the Army and volunteer force, I am amused by the Republican vice-presidential candidate Dan Quayle's decision of that year. His options were more numerous, since I was not the well-born, and I am any former commander of the National Guard.

I harbor no animosity toward those who chose to serve in the National Guard, or the National Guard itself. But I do have a dose of mistrust and skepticism toward someone who ducked out of war and now seems to want others to serve.

I survived a tour of duty as a corpsman in Vietnam, and I know as well as any the business end of war. Does Quayle know of the reality behind the scenes that make up the Pentagon and the numerous wars that he advocates?

It has been reported that he voted against readjustment benefits for Vietnam veterans, against compensation for Agent Orange, and has been reported that he consistently voted in favor of military intervention in Nicaragua, Afghanistan, and Angola.

What that all says to the 18-year-olds and their fathers better look out.

The Plain  
Letter  
and signature

# Congress Shouldn't Be Duped by NRA Propaganda

The National Rifle Association is apoplectic about Congress finally putting some teeth in the handgun control law it passed 20 years ago. Regrettably, some people — including vice-presidential candidate Dan Quayle — are evidently falling for the NRA's propaganda.

Earlier this summer, a sensible measure requiring a seven-day waiting period before anyone may purchase a handgun was attached to an omnibus drug bill pending in the House. The NRA calls it national gun registration and claims that Americans would have to "ask a government bureaucrat's permission" before purchasing a firearm.

Not so. The bill merely provides a mecha-

nism for enforcing existing law, which bans handgun sales to felons, those judged mentally ill, minors, drug addicts and illegal aliens.

The problem is that applicants can lie about their background and get a gun. A waiting period would allow local law enforcement authorities to review official records. If there's no problem, the form submitted by the purchaser would be destroyed in 60 days. That's hardly national gun registration.

A waiting period would also give a buyer with murderous intentions time to cool off.

Named the Brady Amendment after White House press secretary James Brady and his wife, the bill has the support of every major

law enforcement organization in the country. President Ronald Reagan has endorsed a waiting period. But Quayle is under the impression that present law is enough. Convicted felons, he said the other day, "can't just walk into a store and buy a gun. There are all sorts of restrictions, there are all sorts of state laws. I don't believe we should impose additional requirements on law-abiding citizens wanting to go in and buy guns."

That's the NRA line alright. But only 22 states require waiting periods. That means 28 don't. And that's where you would go to get a gun if you can't get one legally where you are. That's the practice Congress must stop.

# The 'New' Chile Seems As Despotic As The Old

A new society in Chile with a new style of "full democracy" is what Gen. Augusto Pinochet promised his country this week. But what actually was taking place in Santiago was pretty old.

The military officers who call the shots in Chile picked none other than Gen. Pinochet as their sole presidential candidate in a yes-or-no plebiscite scheduled for next month. Pinochet seized power in a coup 15 years ago. If he wins, he could occupy the president's office until 1997. Even if he loses, Pinochet would still be president for another year while presumably preparing Chile for multi-candidate elections.

And although the junta finally lifted the state of emergency it imposed in 1973 and, supposedly, Chileans no longer had restrictions on their constitutional liberties, military vehicles were still patrolling the streets

ing hundreds of government opponents with death threats, kidnapping and torture.

A coalition of 16 opposition parties has been in a quandary over whether to participate in the plebiscite and legitimize Pinochet's rule. But the plebiscite is the only instrument available for national expression.

# A New Habitat for Them — and For Us

It has no giraffes or elephants. Or even lions or tigers. And its 5.5 acres are stuck in the middle of the teeming concrete jungle called Manhattan. So what in the world is this renovated Central Park facility if not a zoo — like the legendary ones in the Bronx or San Diego?

It's a tiny miracle.

Just a half dozen years ago the zoo in Cen-

So they're taking part in the campaign, even under wretched circumstances. Access to the media is severely restricted, with only 15 minutes of television time allowed each night.

Pinochet tells his supporters, "If I govern, you govern." But Chileans understand what that means.

complete renovation. The ultimate price tag came to more than \$35 million, but the job was headed not by some unqualified bureaucrat but a certifiable genius named William Conway, the famed director of the Bronx Zoo who runs the respected New York Zoological Society.

The result, unveiled three weeks ago, is a

# Just Walk In and Buy a Gun

NR-3 K6 PR

How can you attack Michael Dukakis as soft on crime, Dan Quayle's news conference questioner wanted to know, when you oppose Federal laws to prevent a convict from walking into a store and buying a gun?

"They can't just walk into a store and buy a gun," the Republican Vice-Presidential candidate replied. "There are all sorts of restrictions."

He was wrong. In many parts of America, no one checks to see if gun customers have criminal or psychiatric records. But the mistake suggests that even a committed foe of gun control like Mr. Quayle accepts the rationale behind an important proposal for new gun regulation.

The amendment to the omnibus drug bill now before the House is named for James Brady, the White House press secretary who was severely wounded in the 1981 assassination attempt on President Reagan. The measure would impose a seven-day waiting period between purchase and delivery of a handgun to give police time to check the customer's background.

The National Rifle Association, stubbornly

resistant to gun regulation, has campaigned fiercely against the Brady amendment. But now the big gun lobby has a powerful opponent: a united law enforcement community, which knows something about the usefulness of waiting periods.

In 1986, state police in Maryland prevented 732 handguns from falling into the wrong hands; that year in California the police were able to prevent 1,500 illegal purchases. New Jersey counts 10,000 convicted felons caught trying to buy guns in the 19 years it has required a background check.

The lack of a national law exacts a deadly price, promoting lucrative gun-running between states with tough gun laws and those without. Thus drug gangsters in Los Angeles and New York pay huge markups to entrepreneurs willing to bring guns from lax states like Ohio, Florida and Texas. The Brady amendment would put an end to the interstate arms profiteering.

Members of Congress face a clear choice — voting for the N.R.A.'s obstructionism or for a gun control measure whose terms Dan Quayle finds so sensible that he assumes they are already law.

## The Editorial Notebook

### Like the Brain of a Bee

An intriguing computing structure known as a neural network is attracting a growing circle of fans. Darpa, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, is the latest recruit and plans a large investment in the field. The prize is better understanding of the human brain, and devices better able to mimic certain of its functions.

Neural networks are computing systems modeled after the brain. Unlike conventional computers, which are programmed with a precise sequence of instructions, neural networks learn by experience. They consist of electronic "cells" with thousands of interconnections, like the neurons of the brain. As the network learns a task, some of the interconnections are reinforced to a certain degree and others are weakened, according to a special formula. Networks show particular promise in recognizing patterns of shape or sound, a task that is extremely hard for conventional computers.

When the eye processes visual images, qualities like size, shape, color and position seem to be split up right in the retina and handled thereafter in separate channels. Researchers teaching neural networks to recognize a pattern or read a text have found that the cells spontaneously organize themselves in a similar manner, some handling vowels and others consonants. This unpredicted property of neural networks is a major source of their fascination to experimenters.

### The Pentagon Invests In Neural Networks

submerged rock and a cylinder, and recognize bad bank loans. The networks' striking parallels with what is known of visual processing inspire hope they will offer insights into the working of the brain. The likenesses are evocative, but may prove misleading if pushed too far.

Present neural networks consist of 100 or so cells with thousands of interconnections. They have a long way to go: the human brain is reckoned to have 100 billion cells. A study by M.I.T.'s Lincoln Laboratory suggests that in five years it should be possible to build a neural network as complex as the brain of a bee. Darpa is eager to start. "Bees are pretty smart compared to smart weapons," says an agency official.

The agency's support of the field will be helpful, up to a point. But if Darpa pumps in too much money, it could deprive business and academia of neural network experts or set the field up for overpromise, as some critics believe the agency's attention did to artificial intelligence, an attempt to program the rules of human thought into computers. Neural networks may turn out to be the very thing to put in every robot's head, or just an interesting approach to pattern recognition.

NICHOLAS WADE

Schlumberger's  
designed by  
Schlumberger  
Tiffany & Co.

worried that popular frustration in West Germany over the slow pace of conventional disarmament could weaken Chancellor Kohl's center-right coalition and strengthen neutralist sentiment.

PARIS, Sept. 6 — In a major policy shift, President Francois Mitterrand has decided to encourage a common NATO position on conventional disarmament and soften what many allied diplomats see as an attempt to delay an agreement on new negotiations involving the Warsaw Pact.

French officials and allied diplomats say France's more forthcoming position has been dictated in part by Mr. Mitterrand's concern that further delays could erode the domestic post-

Special to The New York Times

New York Times

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# Waiting Period Needed On Handgun Purchases <sup>K6</sup>

**A** MODEST piece of legislation designed to aid law enforcement in regard to handguns is meeting unreasoning opposition from the powerful gun lobby and its supporters in Congress.

The measure is called the Brady amendment after White House Press Secretary James Brady, who is still partially paralyzed from the handgun wound he suffered during the attempt on President Reagan's life in 1981. It simply calls for a seven-day waiting period when handguns are purchased, so that police will have time to check an applicant's background.

This is a common-sense provision that 22 states already have. It adds no new criteria that would prevent law-abiding citizens from owning guns; it only provides a means whereby police can check to see if an applicant to buy a handgun is eligible under current federal laws. For example, convicted felons or the mentally ill are at present barred from purchasing handguns.

The measure, an amendment to the omnibus drug-control bill, has passed the House Judiciary Committee with broad bipartisan support, and similar legislation is pending in the Senate. In contrast to other gun-control bills, this proposal for a waiting period is drawing support from many conservatives who have opposed firearms legislation in the past.

One such conservative is Rep. F. James Sensenbrenner, R-Wis., whose reasonable stand has come under strong attack in a letter to his constituents from the National Rifle Association. Despite Sensenbrenner's strong opposition to measures restricting gun ownership, the NRA lumped him together with other "anti-gun politicians" who it said were seeking "to impose total federal gun control on America."

Sensenbrenner pointed out that the proposed amendment merely helps authorities enforce the present laws. He also noted that the NRA had reversed the position it held in 1975, when it supported a waiting period.

The NRA's statement at the time said that a waiting period would be effective in "reducing crimes of passion and in preventing people with criminal records and dangerous mental illness from acquiring guns." The NRA concedes that it has changed its mind since 1975. It now says that the waiting period provision would create "red tape for honest people."

The waiting period, of course, is not aimed at honest people, but at criminals and others who are now barred by law from purchasing handguns.

The NRA claims that "you will be forced to ask a government bureaucrat's permission" to buy a gun. But actually you would have just as much right to buy a handgun as before — once the police had used the seven-day waiting period to make sure you had that right.

No such law was in effect when John Hinckley walked into a Dallas pawnshop and bought the handgun he used to shoot President Reagan and Jim Brady. Reagan last June announced his support for a waiting period and a background check on those seeking to buy handguns. Every major law-enforcement agency in the country also backs the proposed amendment, and 91 percent in an opinion poll favor the idea.

A study by the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms revealed that states without waiting periods or background checks were favorite sources of weapons for criminals. For example, it found that of all handguns used in crime in New York City, only 4 percent were purchased in New York State. Almost all the rest were purchased in states without waiting periods.

The Brady amendment is a reasonable provision to make it more difficult for criminals to acquire handguns. It is tragic that, shying away from anything that suggests gun control, some legislators are opposing this simple provision designed to enforce present laws and aid police in the war on crime.

...ers for City School

The Erie C Agency was with the state ola in locating new plant th Western New The impres former Weste have been the The devel have made th is subject to ben Foods, an Motorola's r pleased when site at Bowen since without jobs would ha possibly out c Simply sta tween the We Road. There between Bowe world. Based on employment i company, we Motorola proj We can o porters of th favor so that hear the full

legislators. This was the apparent climax to a sting operation; during a two-year period the FBI set up at least five bogus companies, made contributions in excess of \$64,000 to legislators and successfully won enactment of two bogus bills.

As Attorney General John Van de Kamp correctly cautions, nobody has been indicted or convicted. The legislators named should not be pre-judged. And yet...

Does anyone doubt that the legislators, more than ever, are preoccupied with building war chests for their own election campaigns? That the ticket to a fund-raising dinner often be-

point does influence peddling become outright corruption?

Is it only when there is a direct and proved quid pro quo between bribes and favorable legislation? Or does it come when legislators accept campaign contributions from special interests? Or so-called honorariums from special interest groups — more than \$700,000 was paid last year compared with \$52,000 in 1979?

It's ironic that the full-time Legislature, approved by voters in 1974 to increase professionalism and lessen the influence of lobbyists in Sacramento, has led instead to lawmakers seemingly more interested than ever in re-

And citizens certainly should expect the Legislature to take action to eliminate ambiguities in the law rather than pass reform off to the voters through the initiative process.

The current FBI investigation has struck at members of both parties. The sickly smell in Sacramento is being spread not by just Democrats or only Republicans. At fault is that biggest and strongest and most unified of all parties — the incumbents.

And unless the Legislature cleans up its act quickly, voters should do something about making sure that party's over in November.

pro

## Controlling handguns K6

Should convicted felons, drug addicts, and mental patients be allowed to walk in off the street and purchase handguns on demand from dealers? Plain good sense dictates that putting concealable weapons into the hands of such persons simply spurs more crime — from robbery and murder to drug abuse and suicide.

Indeed, the virtually unrestricted availability of small arms in most states explains why some 20,000 Americans die each year from handguns, including 12,000 victims of suicide. By contrast, handgun deaths in all of Great Britain, where such weapons are difficult to obtain, number only about a dozen annually.

A bill scheduled for a vote this week in the House of Representatives takes a modest step toward reducing the heavy death toll of handguns by imposing a seven-day waiting period on gun purchases. The prime aim of the proposed cooling-off period is to give law-enforcement authorities time to run background checks on potential buyers and block handgun sales to dangerous criminals and the mentally ill.

But the waiting period also would avert many shooting deaths



that occur in a passing fit of intense emotion, such as during domestic quarrels, neighborhood feuds, and despondency that triggers suicides. Psychologists testify to the fleeting nature of such volatile and dangerous moods, meaning that tragedy often can be prevented merely by giving persons time to calm down.

Dubbed the Brady amendment after White House Press Secretary Jim Brady, who was disabled by a bullet in the 1981 attack on President Reagan, the measure before the House simply extends on a nationwide basis the sort of waiting period already required by 22

states. (California has a 15-day waiting time, which enables police here to thwart about 1,500 attempted gun purchases a year by criminals, drug addicts, and mental patients.)

Judged on its merits, the Brady amendment ought to be enacted overwhelmingly. But the outcome of the vote in the House is uncertain, solely because of the rabid intimidation of the National Rifle Association during an election year. With its 2.8 million members, the increasingly radicalized NRA exerts enormous pressure on lawmakers to vote against nearly any form of handgun control.

The NRA's extremist position on the Brady amendment appears to impress Republican presidential nominee George Bush, who obligingly announced his opposition to the measure. Yet President Reagan, scarcely a proponent of strict handgun laws, supports the legislation.

This week's vote on the House floor will test the notion that, even during an election year, common sense and principle can prevail over one of the most potent of political forces — an incumbent's fear of losing his seat by alienating a noisy minority.

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Members of the U.S. House who like to talk tough about fighting crime now have a chance to back up their words with meaningful action. An effort may be made, perhaps as early as today, to block passage of much-needed legislation that would require a national seven-day waiting period for people purchasing handguns from dealers to give police an opportunity to conduct background checks. Representatives who are serious about curbing the high incidence of crime will vote to support the waiting-period provision in the omnibus drug bill.

The legislation is not as radical as some of its critics would have the public believe. Federal law already prohibits certain people — such as convicted felons, drug addicts and the mentally ill — from purchasing handguns. But as matters now stand, there is no way for sales people to screen out those who are ineligible. A nationwide waiting period of seven days would allow local police departments to do that, if they so desired. Twenty-two states already have laws requiring waiting periods ranging from two to 15 days.

Opponents of the federal bill argue that a waiting period would not prevent criminals from obtaining handguns because such people often get their weapons from sources other than dealers. What those critics ne-

do indeed purchase their weapons through dealers — in fact, more than 20 percent, according to a Justice Department study. New Jersey, which has required background checks for handgun purchases for 19 years, has caught 10,000 convicted felons trying to buy weapons during that time.

True, a nationwide waiting period for handgun buyers would be no panacea to the crime problem. But it would be an important step toward making our communities safer. Together with legislation that would toughen the penalties for those who use handguns in the commission of crimes, it could make a significant difference. Anyone who doubts the bill's importance only needs to ask the opinion of the 11 national law enforcement organizations that have lined up behind it — groups that include everyone from police chiefs to patrolmen. Dallas Police Chief Mack Vines endorsed the concept this week.

Our Founding Fathers placed a high priority on the right of individuals to bear arms — a right that must be preserved. But a seven-day waiting period would not unduly infringe upon that right. It merely would give law-abiding citizens the assurance that some criminals could not get their hands on handguns as easily as they do now.

## SMOOTH SALE-ING 019

### S&L transaction looks like a step forward

Let's see now. American Savings has \$30 billion in assets, and an investment group led by Robert M. Bass has just purchased 70 percent of American for \$550 million. The U.S. government, through the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corp., tossed in a \$2 billion note for 30 percent.

A bad deal? Actually, it is a very good deal. Good for Mr. Bass, good for the FSLIC and good for the nation. When you can pick up 70 percent of a \$30 billion financial institution with 186 prime branch locations throughout the booming California market and the government wipes the slate clean of bad loans, you have cut a good deal. By finding a private buyer, the FSLIC has avoided having to pay out billions to cover insured depositors.

In the case of American, the FSLIC had been forced to stop a run on the savings and loan by announcing it would stand behind all deposits, not just those over \$100,000, as the law requires. Had FSLIC been forced to liquidate American and pay the difference to

depositors, the cash outlay would have used up every dime of an emergency loan provided that agency by Congress last year.

Saving the government money, which this action may well do over the long haul, is good for the country.

But addressing the nation's largest pending S&L mess also sends a message to the public that the industry is getting cleaned up. Industry executives uniformly applauded the announcement.

However, simply cleaning up the existing mess doesn't mean any action has been taken by Congress to ensure that the mess doesn't recur. Healthy, well-run S&Ls and their depositors still are having to pay the freight for the poorly managed. And there is still no incentive to place deposits in healthy S&Ls, or even to manage an S&L well. A high priority for the next president and Congress should be structural reform of the S&L industry to make certain history does not repeat itself.

lieve AIDS victims got what serve. AIDS sufferers — whom have lost their job and, soon, their lives — been a popular cause for large bequests or charity made on their behalf, even their plight ought to be one of chief concerns.

Considering the relative number of AIDS victims

## DART



**RENA PEDERSON**

What connects between las Cow Texas and DA Right nothing that's problem What the biggest complaints about ington Stadium home of the Rangers? The rush-hour traffic on I-30.

What's one of the families about Cowboy Stadium in Irving frustrating waits to get in at the darn parking lots.

What's one of the most complaints about Dallas Area Transit? That its plans don't give much inspiration-excitement for the real needs of the community.

So along come three dramatic developments at once, all partly to the downturn in the DART's bond proposals getting by a skeptical public that's it's getting what it will have for. Texas Rangers owner Chiles, pressed by the oil price lapse, says he has to sell the team. Dallas Cowboys owner Bright, pressed by the bank's lapse, says he will have to sell the football team.

Whew. Dallas shock. Either area is falling apart or it's ready to regenerate itself in a new way.

But maybe the parade already moving the direction it needs. We just need to get in from DART board member Charles this week proposed a transit plan that would encircle downtown. Didn't someone think of this? Actually, several private groups including the McKinney Aven

U the obvious dangers there. Frank Carlucci, the secretary of defense, brought up the missile business in his talks this week with the Chinese. China's defense minister brushed off the subject with the familiar "Who, us?" response. That's not a promising sign.

China claims that it never sold Iran the Silk-worm missiles that Iran has now trained on the Persian Gulf shipping lanes. If that's true, it means that China has been selling the Silkworms to third parties with no conditions on resale—an implication that is, if anything, more disturbing than a direct deal with the Iranians. China has also sold Saudi Arabia missiles with a range of more than a thousand miles and the capacity to carry nuclear warheads. Other Middle Eastern countries also appear to have Chinese-built missiles. China doesn't seem to care much to whom it sells, as long as they are not within missile range of China's own borders.

It's getting harder to control the international traffic in high-technology weapons. Until recent-

rope. But those governments are becoming uneasily aware that as a threat the missiles rank second only to nuclear weapons. Last year the United States and six of its allies announced tight restrictions on missile sales, and the Russians have become increasingly cautious.

As a result, several Third World countries are finding that they can earn very large amounts of hard currencies by providing missiles to other Third World countries. China isn't alone. North Korea is reportedly helping Egypt develop missiles. Brazil, which is emerging as one of the world's leading manufacturers of armaments, has apparently sold Libya missiles, scheduled to be delivered in a couple of years, that by some accounts will be able to reach Cairo and Jerusalem.

But if China isn't the only purveyor, it is the leader. As long as the Chinese remain impervious to American concerns about their missiles, pressure will grow in this country to reconsider the sale of American military technology to them.

## 'Seven Days Can Save a Life' <sup>PRO</sup> <sub>KL</sub>

CAPITOL HILL is peppered with law enforcement officers this week. Chiefs, troopers and rank-and-file officers from more than half the states are covering the territory with an urgent message on behalf of some 400,000 colleagues and their families. They want votes for the Brady Amendment, a measure up for consideration in the House that would provide for a national seven-day waiting period between the purchase and delivery of a handgun. Their campaign is dead serious because, as they are noting to the lawmakers, "Cops know: seven days can save a life." They believe in the effectiveness of this simple protection—and any member of Congress who listens should recognize the importance of their effort.

The Law Enforcement Steering Committee, a coalition of 11 national policing organizations, lays it out in no uncertain terms in a statement: "Police can speak for themselves. They have seen too many officers killed, too many citizens

maimed or terrorized by the armies of drug traffickers overrunning our cities. Help is at hand. . . . The Brady Amendment . . . will help keep handguns out of the hands of drug addicts, convicted felons and others restricted by law from handgun ownership." The group notes, too, that a seven-day waiting period also may "help stem the rising tide of suicides and murders committed in the 'heat of the moment.'"

It's not a complex proposition. A dealer would send a purchaser's sworn statement to the local police chief, who then would have the option of conducting a check on the purchaser's background. That's all it would do. But as the coalition states, "Cops know waiting periods work. . . . Cops know it takes courage for Congress to vote against the gun lobby. . . . Yet police also know that if the House considers this measure on its merits—that is, would it improve public safety—the House will support police and vote for the Brady Amendment."

Police to House, do you copy? Ten-Four.

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A Post Sep on the Envir partly way o "left no imp policies since wrong. Witho al help, Con enacted the l Sportfish Res vides \$200 m ing grants to aquatic habit search. He creation of the Program unde helped create mission on whose recor ways, wetlan pledges to act

He has visit and refuges, h ness and has offered support ted federal la the wonderful enjoyed by each helped ensure protecting the

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Washington Post 9/18 N-5

Herblock is on vacation.

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had campaigned convicted Nazi death-camp murderer John Demjanjuk and belonged to a group that says the Holocaust never occurred.

The seventh and highest-up aide, Frederic Malek, was Mr. Bush's appointee to the Republican National Committee. He quit the other day after disclosures that as White House personnel chief in 1971, he had counted Jews in a Labor Department bureau under orders from President Nixon, who in his evident paranoia suspected a "Jewish cabal" there.

Absent any evidence of it — and there is zero — let's grant that Mr. Bush possesses no bigotry himself. Remove bigotry as the reason these people were brought into his campaign, and the question becomes judgment.

These lapses in judgment cannot be sloughed off as Bush aides' sloppiness in checking these people's backgrounds. The judgment question must be directed, properly and squarely, to Mr. Bush himself. If he does

under fire for alleged complicity in drug-smuggling, a "back-channel" avenue into the State Department. The fee: \$800,000.

In a related question of judgment, Mr. Bush's running mate, Sen. Dan Quayle, hired as his campaign manager the man who was a public-relations consultant to Panamanian dictator Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega. General Noriega later was indicted in Miami and Tampa for alleged drug trafficking.

Mr. Bush has headed the anti-drug South Florida Task Force since its inception. If elected, he says, he will name Mr. Quayle to oversee Federal drug-fighting efforts. Mr. Quayle concedes that he has had no role in Senate anti-drug legislation and didn't even know that Mr. Bush headed the task force.

Judgment: It's *the* indispensable trait that a President must possess. Mr. Bush would be well-advised, between attacks on Mr. Dukakis's judgment, to re-examine his own.

## School-b

To The Editor:

Re the Sept. 12 editorial on the Dade School Board runoffs and candidate Jeff Tucker: How do you know he is "utterly unqualified"?

When I voted for Tucker, I confess that I didn't know that he was a "contractor." I am sick of builders trying to kill all of Florida's fragile green environment with slabs of concrete. (Clara Oesterle's backing by the Latin Builders Association was the kiss of death as far as I'm concerned).

### 'Anchors' vs. 'floaters'

To The Editor:

As a *Herald* subscriber, I enjoy the game that I must play each morning trying to guess which section will carry the comics, the stock-market tables, and the television schedule.

I have found the comics in every section except the news Section A. They have followed the sports, regional news and Living Today sections.

Stock-market reports have been in every section as well. Television news and schedules have been in every section, except the main news section.

Why is there no consistency to where these features are placed? Why not put them in a specific section every day?

It's a nice game. But why?

IRVIN M. DISRAELLY  
Tamara

(*The Herald* would "anchor" its stand-out features in the same section every day if the number of pages in each issue were consistent. Page count varies widely with advertising lineage, however, and advertisers' preference for a given section further complicates the ability to anchor features. As a result, daily features must be "float-ed" in order to balance each of the four daily sections for printing.)

### Go, gators!

To The Editor:

Florida has 30,000 beautiful small lakes capable of providing healthful recreation such as swimming, water skiing, boating, and fishing. The lakes are swarming with vicious reptiles.

The age of reptiles is past.

The age of *homo sapiens* is present.

ADRIENNE MCGILLICUDD  
Key Largo

# pro. NRA shoots to kill

WHEN THE U.S. House of Representatives killed the Brady amendment, it chose ignominy over honor. House members voting against the amendment chose the National Rifle Association over saving American lives.

The NRA spent some \$4 million fighting the Brady amendment. As usual, the NRA used scare tactics, innuendo, and bald mis-statements to fight a sensible proposal that it once supported — that the majority of Floridians today support.

The amendment was named for White House Press Secretary James Brady, who was injured in a 1981 assassination attempt on President Reagan. It proposed a nationwide seven-day waiting period for handgun purchases. In that time a gun dealer would be required to send a local law-enforcement agency a form listing the purchaser's name, address, and birth date. Police would check criminal and court records and report results to the dealer. The amendment required that the forms be destroyed within 60 days.

The NRA called this an attempt at national registration of all handgun owners. What utter buncombe!

The NRA said that the Brady amendment would cost "billions" in tax dollars. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) found that there would be no direct costs connected to the waiting period because it didn't require a complete background check. The CBO also found that if every jurisdiction that does not now conduct background checks did so, the costs would total no more than \$10 million because the jurisdictions are so broad.

The NRA supported a mushy alternate amendment by Rep. William McCollum, Republican of Winter Park. The House obedient-

## BRADY AMENDMENT DEFEAT

ly approved it. Mr. McCollum, whose office reports one NRA campaign contribution of \$250 in 1984, says that he does not oppose a waiting period. But he says that he is concerned about whether a national system of background checks would work, and its costs.

The McCollum amendment directs the Justice Department to study the feasibility and costs of national background checks. The use of fingerprints as identification was mentioned, as were Social Security numbers. The Justice Department is supposed to get back to Congress on this — in good time.

Right. Tell that to the grieving spouses of slain police officers. Tell it to parents of murder victims . . . Go tell it to the NRA. That's the only receptive audience for the House's sellout of Americans' safety.

## A correction

IN last Wednesday's recommendations for Dade legislative races in the Oct. 4 runoff, *The Herald* identified candidate Luis E. Rojas as "a former assistant state attorney." In fact, Mr. Rojas was an intern in that office, not an assistant state attorney. The error was the writer's, however; Mr. Rojas did not misrepresent his credentials, and *The Herald* reiterates its recommendation of him to Republicans in Florida House District 109.

the land. Pointing to Yonkers' "bad luck" as the first city to have such a remedy imposed, sages at the Wall Street Journal wring their hands and wonder: Who's next?

Not us. In case they hadn't noticed, the Yonkers case is a replay of a drama that opened here 15 years ago. Who can forget? Mayor Richard Daley opposed scattered-site housing; he lost in court. The City Council refused to approve; it lost in court. The city appealed; it lost in court. The Chicago Housing Authority bungled management of the scattered-site program; the court handed it over to committed and competent private management.

However the details of the Yonkers and Chicago cases differ, the result is much the same, and that's where Yonkers and all others who get hysterical about scattered-site housing might learn from Chicago. The lesson is this: Despite the turmoil and anger—and Chicago had its full measure—scattered-site housing can work, if it is properly planned, financed and managed.

Some 900 scattered-site units in 275 buildings are operating in Chicago, including many in white, middle-class and ethnic neighborhoods. Alex Polikoff, the public-interest attorney who has lived with the case from the first, well remembers the initial hostility, but sees important strides in community acceptance. It takes careful site selection, as well as early and continuous involvement of community officials. Tenants must be carefully screened and themselves involved in management. The buildings should be designed sensitively, eliminating problem areas like common stairwells.

In the next few years, the number of scattered-site units is expected to double, but the hysterical reaction that characterized the early years of the program isn't. Someday, our friends out East will catch up with us.

## Sheep follow the NRA pro

*KL*

Both law officers and crime victims favored the sensible legislation that would have helped keep guns out of the hands of maniacs and convicts. But the National Rifle Association didn't. So, congressmen, in their usual sheepish way, went along with their NRA shepherds last Thursday, and killed it.

Numbered among the flock are these Illinois sheep, who voted against the bill that would have required a seven-day waiting period for handgun purchases (amount of NRA support they received from 1983 through July shown in parentheses): Republicans Philip Crane; Jack Davis (\$11,400); Dennis Hastert (\$6,107); Edward Madigan; Lynn Martin (\$2,500); and Robert Michel (\$6,527). Democrats Terry Bruce (\$7,450); Jerry Costello, and Kenneth Gray. A particularly shameful performance was

### Dent, Thorne

That provision continues to be enforced despite the lack of a new agreement following last year's strike. In fact, the labor dispute is in court, the NFL wants to sue the union, something strongly resisted by the union.

For the third year, the team was scheduled to follow the 1985 season by the NFL. The union, however, has refused to sign a new contract with the NFL. The union, however, has refused to sign a new contract with the NFL.

### NFL test

The team begins in Jan. ...

Under the terms of the new contract, the team will be allowed to sign free agents in the off-season. The union, however, has refused to sign a new contract with the NFL.



turned in by Rep. Hastert, who tried to portray as a threat to his children an emotional letter from the father of a child shot by Laurie Dann, pleading for the bill.

Only 24 more votes were needed to pass this landmark bill; it might have been 22 if Chicago Democrats Dan Rostenkowski and Cardiss Collins had shown up. But Rep. Rostenkowski was in Chicago on business that, according to a spokesman, was none of ours. Rep. Collins was at a Black Caucus planning meeting; she could have better served her constituents—among those most victimized by handguns—with less planning and more voting.

Voting with urban liberals were such suburbanites, Downstaters, conservatives and Republicans as Henry Hyde, Harris Pawell, John Porter, Richard Durbin and Lane Evans, testimony that handgun control is now less of a partisan and regional issue. The issue is whether innocent people should continue to be sacrificed in the name of the NRA's mistaken and dangerous ideology.

## Iraq should welcome probe

Iraq and fellow Arab states are not helping their cause by condemning efforts to look into charges of Iraqi use of poison gas against its rebellious Kurdish minority.

The joined Furth guilt against Uni tend device let th Iran, moral the K mover Was offer invest An Ameri persua own i Aft will co attain

# Scientists' 'human mouse' caught



**Raymond R. Coffey**

**B**uild a better mousetrap and the world will beat a path to your door.

But what happens if you build a better mouse—a somewhat "human mouse"—as medical scientists at Stanford University reported last week they have now succeeded in doing?

The better mousetrap wisdom, attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson in the simpler times of a century or so ago, has become embedded in the language, and in the American psyche, as shorthand for the values of ingenuity, invention and enterprise.

But we are going to have more difficulty, I suspect, learning to accept and live with the medical miracle of the new and improved mouse.

actually—was created by Doctors Joseph McCune and Irving Weissman by implanting what news reports called "stem cells and other building blocks of the human immune system."

These human characteristics made the mice "excellent stand-ins for people" in research efforts to develop and test new drugs and vaccines without exposing people to the perils of experimental treatment.

This "stunning achievement" of implanting the human immune defense system into living mice, as the New York Times called it, is now expected to play a key role in research on AIDS, hepatitis, leukemia and other diseases.

It is wondrous, indeed. But those implanted cells—human liver, thymus and lymph cells—came from aborted human fetuses.

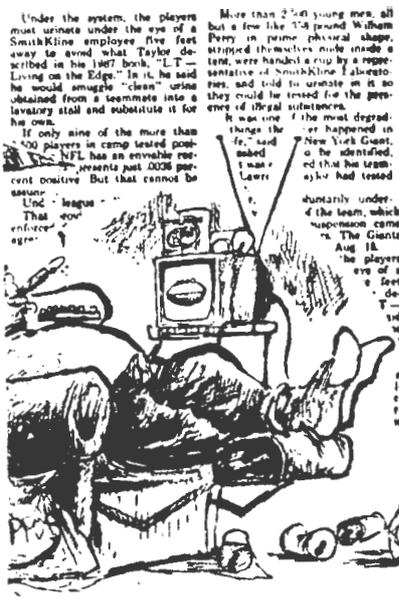
And thus the new and improved variety of laboratory mouse becomes still another focus of what is already the touchiest moral-political issue dividing the American citizenry: abortion.

Even as the new mouse was being put into use in California, a panel convened by the National Institutes of Health was taking testimony in Washington recommending a policy on human fetal transplantation research.

A moratorium was imposed on fetal tissue research last March and the Reagan administration, apparently out of concern over using human fetus tissue in such research and treatment projects would encourage appear to condone abortions, is now considering an outright ban on such research.

Dr. Lars Olson of Sweden, where experimental operations have been conducted, testified that transplanting brain tissue from aborted fetuses has shown such promise in treating Parkinson's Disease that it would be unethical to halt research.

Finding the answer to Parkinson's or other disease is, obviously, a noble objective. But the ethics, the morality, the matter are not as clear and simple as everyone as to Dr. Olson.



Under the system, the players must undergo the eye of a SmithKline employee five feet away to avoid what Taylor described in his 1987 book, "Living on the Edge." In it, he said he would smuggle "clean" urine obtained from a teammate into a lavatory stall and substitute it for his own.

If only nine of the more than 2,500 players in camp tested positive in the 1987 book, "Living on the Edge," he would smuggle "clean" urine obtained from a teammate into a lavatory stall and substitute it for his own.

### Controversial 'soft' stand on drugs

He and seven other players suspended for 30 days for second time violations—voluntary submission of urine as a first time. The ninth player, Tony Collins of Indianapolis, was suspended for the season for a third time violation.

For the first time this year, steroids were included with such illegal drugs as cocaine and marijuana as substances whose use would subject those who took them to league discipline.

The tests began in July and continued through August, usually at the union.

For the third year the NFL's drug adviser, Dr. Forrest Tencant, the NFL's drug adviser for the first time this year, steroids were included with such illegal drugs as cocaine and marijuana as substances whose use would subject those who took them to league discipline.

The tests began in July and continued through August, usually at the union.

### NFL reinstates 6 drug cases

Under league policy of first-time offenders, the convenience of the agreement between the NFL and the union.

Under league policy of first-time offenders, the convenience of the agreement between the NFL and the union.

... Speaking of Substance abuse.

letter to portray as a leader from the father leading for the bill.

to pass this landmark Chicago Democrats Dan had shown up. But on business that of ours. Rep. Collins eting; she could have g those most victim- ng and more voting.

such suburbanites, publicans as Henry Richard Durbin and n control is now less he issue is whether be sacrificed in the ldangerous ideology.

### ome probe

t helping their cause harges of Iraqi use of rdish minority.

They are particularly angry that the United States has joined the United Nations in demanding an inquiry. Further, the State Department says it has proof of Iraq's guilt and Congress is demanding economic sanctions against Iraq.

Unilateral sanctions, as we have said on other occasions, tend to be more an expression of outrage than an effective device to exact substantial compliance. Congress should let the matter be handled through the United Nations.

Iraq, having already admitted using poison gas against Iran, does not really have very much to lose in terms of its moral standing if it is found to have done the same with the Kurds. Its true concern is that the Kurds' secessionist movement not receive any external support.

Washington, and the United Nations, should therefore offer firm assurances to Iraq that their demand for an investigation does not mean support for the Kurds.

And the Arab countries, instead of denouncing "the American Knesset" and seeing a "Zionist plot," should persuade Iraq that a fair, single-purpose probe is in its own interest.

After all, if Iraq is not guilty, an impartial investigation will confirm that and put to rest the accusations that have attained such credibility.

## he' caught in ethical trap

as the new mouse was being public- produced in California, a panel con- by the National Institutes of Health icking testimony in Washington to end a policy on human fetal tissue antation research.

oratorium was imposed on such re- last March and the Reagan adminis- , apparently out of concern that human fetus tissue in such research atment projects would encourage or to condone abortions, is now consid- in outright ban on such research.

ars Olson of Sweden, where experi- operations have been conducted, d that transplanting brain tissues orted fetuses has shown such prom- reating Parkinson's Disease patients would be unethical to halt the h.

ing the answer to Parkinson's or any disease is, obviously, a noble objec- ut the ethics, the morality, of the are not as clear and simple to e as to Dr. Olson.

Would pregnancies, and subsequent abortions, be encouraged in order to provide fetal tissue for research or for treatment of diseased patients? Might a woman, as one news report last week observed, be influenced to become pregnant and then abort so that she might provide fetal tissue for the treatment of a relative or friend?

Might abortions be delayed to a point of greater risk, for instance, to produce more suitable research or treatment tissue?

Richard Doerflinger of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, one of the leading anti-abortion groups in the country, told the panel that it would be impossible for medical researchers to maintain a continuing supply of fetal tissue without entering into "a morally unacceptable collaboration with the abortion industry."

Are we, can we come to be, comfortable with the idea of using a potential human being to build a more usable mouse?

Raymond R. Coffey is managing editor of the Chicago Sun-Times.

## Should you buy wagon or a mini

Continued from Page 55

tend to be safer than smaller vehicles.

If you look at the recently released 1988 Highway Loss Data Institute statistics, which reviews insurance injury and collision loss for different categories of vehicles through the years 1985 to 1987, most station wagons and passenger vans had fewer injury claims than the average for all passenger cars. It's even better for repairs: The station wagons and mini-vans in the HLDI study all had lower repair claims than the average passenger car.

The best ranking went to the Pontiac Parisienne/Safari station wagon (\$16,164—1989 base price), which scored a 44 in the category of over-all injury. A score of 100 represents the average number of personal injury insurance claims for all passenger cars. This means the Pontiac Parisienne/Safari had 56 percent lower injury claims than the average for all passenger cars.

With that rating, "you have a very safe vehicle," says Dr. Ian Jones, director of engineering for the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

Additionally, all the major mini-vans produced in the United States, namely Dodge Caravan (\$10,887—1988 base price), Plymouth Voyager (\$10,887—1988 base price), Ford Aerostar (\$11,567—1989 base price) and the Chevrolet Astro Van (\$12,400—1989 base price), had scores also showing injury claims well below the average for all passenger cars.

But, Jones points out, the drivers of these kind of vehicles also tend to be heads of families and older and therefore statistically safer drivers.

The Big Three automakers make most of the mini-vans sold in the United States. Although the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration doesn't pass or fail autos or mini-vans for safety, it does test them.

NHTSA tests are based on a crash at 35 m.p.h. The

NHTSA Criteria (how a vehicle score over increased injury or below 1,000 increased risk)

The 1988 passenger van driver the passenger Aerostar the driver passenger. the Dodge below 1,000 501 passenger.

The Ford (the Taurus with a \$ price, would comparable yet with a driver and senger.

"I don't any real p mini-van on for th mini-vans nearly the dards as says Samu cle staff Auto Safe D.C.-based Ralph M "They're r wagons, y to meet th dards."

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## NRA shoots, Congress ducks

"Dear NRA member: EMERGENCY. URGENT! URGENT! URGENT!"

"... Anti-gun politicians such as Sen. Metzenbaum (D., Ohio), Congressman Feighan (D., Ohio) and Sarah Brady are attempting to scapegoat the drug problem on the backs of law-abiding American gun owners — to use it as an excuse to impose total federal gun control on America."

That distorted letter was part of a successful national campaign by the National Rifle Association to kill the Brady amendment, named after presidential press secretary James Brady, who was shot in the head during the attempted assassination of President Reagan in 1981. In point of fact the relatively mild measure would only have required gun purchasers to wait seven days to allow a check for possible felony offenses or mental health problems — and perhaps allow a homicidal frenzy to subside.

Nonetheless, the members of the

House of Representatives, who had voted in favor of a slew of get-tough anti-drug amendments all week, voted against including the mild gun-control measure to the anti-drug law, apparently cowering at the thought of crossing the NRA.

One of those appalled at his colleagues' profile in cowardice was Rep. William J. Hughes (D., N.J.), chairman of the House Judiciary subcommittee on crime. Mr. Hughes, a former Cape May County prosecutor, sportsman and one-time NRA political target, said after the vote: "This was a clear choice between supporting the police of this country who face the day-to-day threat of being shot, or the gun lobby, which is a very selfish, narrow-minded special interest group that cares about no other public concerns. I just regret that more courage wasn't displayed on the part of my colleagues in standing up to the NRA."

Well said.

### Ozone, beaches, radon

# Things may be bad enou

By George F. Will

WASHINGTON

Any widespread anxiety should have a political echo, and econophobia should serve

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# Helping Teachers to Grow in Their Jobs

G12

Elusive as good teaching may be, its components are readily identifiable. The best teachers are those who get students involved in classroom discussions, cover the right amount of material at the right speed, reinforce good performance and suggest ways to improve unsatisfactory work.

A teacher may do all these things and still fall short of greatness, but he or she will have gotten the job done — and that's the point of the teacher evaluations going on now in classrooms around the state.

Some teachers are not getting the job done, and those found lacking in certain skill areas will get detailed written evaluations, including concrete recommendations, to help them grow in their jobs.

That may be why many teachers, though skeptical of written tests, are actually looking forward to their observations, to be performed in four 15-minute segments by principals or other trained evaluators.

Their initial enthusiasm, and that of their sometimes combative teachers' associations, are signs that the education reforms launched by Georgia's Quality Basic Education Act (QBE) are working. Teachers ought to be looking for ways to be more effective and, more than ever, they are.

The evaluations will also give some of those who only squeaked by on their written tests the chance to demonstrate they are first-rate in the classroom, as some claimed after the state began testing veteran instructors.

Teacher associations worry about the competence of the people doing the evaluations and the fairness of the appeals process, since a failure to improve from one evaluation to the next could put a poorly rated teacher's job at risk. But state officials anticipated their concerns: The evaluators have themselves undergone a rigorous training and evaluating process at the Georgia Leadership Academy, and improper evaluations could put their own jobs at risk.

One of the most important planks of QBE has thus finally slid into place. The process deserves the cooperation and support of those being evaluated and, hearteningly, it appears to be getting it.

Teepen in response columns was because I laugh so hard I almost believe it was about the time I am writing he cry with sadness of Max Cleland is rece

I thank Teepen and sensitivity. I fe Teepen concerning right to privacy, his man being and his self, am very much Vietnam vet, a man Purple Heart, who v "dead at the scene" to come home with some that show, ma

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This is written appreciation for Tom umn regarding the

## Our Gun Pathology

26

School officials in Lakeland, Fla., have ordered psychological tests for a first-grade boy who brought a .38-caliber pistol to school and waved it around at schoolmates.

That seems appropriate, but curiously incomplete.

American society ought to be ordered to hop on the shrink's couch, too. There is something close to pathological in our indulgence of violence — and in our tolerance of a system, unique among developed nations, of wide-open gun sales. No other industrialized country has resigned itself to the level of deadly violence that ours lives with, and certainly no other makes the menace inevitable by so saturating itself with firearms that first-grade kids turn up at school packing heat.

The school officials are very likely right in their suspicion there is a screw loose somewhere in this situation, but they may have the wrong patient.

## Nicaragua's D

One letter writer's a Nicaragua is ruled by dictator" (Aug. 23) is tota

Nicaraguan President ga was elected for a six-solid two-thirds majority other candidates ran a candidates had equal, TV time as well as gov paign funds. Thousands nalists and observers a elections had been clear Meanwhile, the U.

Mr. Carter's Agency, approved, al cooling ber stamp, died then thousand and \$5.6

ments. ■ A bomb exploded in Johannesburg, South Africa, in a concrete trash bin at rush hour next to the main bus terminal for white commuters, injuring at least 19 people, authorities said. Most of the injured suffered leg and body cuts from glass fragments. There was no immediate claim of responsibility.

SHOP SUNDAY SUBURBAN 12:30-6; DOWNTOWN CLO USE YOUR RICH'S CHA

## ve for Dukakis in S

Mr. Teepen is editor of the Constitu- tion's editorial pages.  
Well, he can't have it, but I am not about to forgive him for trying. □  
me.  
take the Pledge of Allegiance away from a partisan bludgeon, something with which to beat Democrats. George Bush is trying to

The pledge was devised as a promotional device for a children's magazine in 1892 — and, incidentally, by a socialist, who may have seen the pledge as a subtle way to promote big government against those who were opposing any federal regulation of the economy.  
Mr. Dukakis's, were ever in doubt.  
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# THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION

*For 120 Years the South's Standard Newspaper*

*James M. Cox, Chairman 1950-1957—James M. Cox Jr., Chairman 1957-1974*

R-21

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PAGE 10A. TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1988

K6

## The House's Soft Line on Crime

The good guys lost a big one. Last Thursday, the House waved aside pleas from the nation's law enforcement leaders and decided not to require a seven-day waiting period for handgun sales. Which means the bloody carnage in our streets may continue undiminished and the people who trade handguns for drugs may heave a long, appreciative sigh.

So much for the House's hard line on crime. Its commitment to safer streets ends the moment the gun lobbyists clear their throats and open their briefcases. Only one Georgia congressman, Atlantan John Lewis, voted in favor of the waiting period. The others (except for Doug Barnard, who did not vote) rode small in the saddle with the National Rifle Association (NRA).

The waiting period was to have been part of the House's anti-drug package. The lag time between application and purchase would have enabled authorities to check a customer's background records and prevent felons (among others) from buying pistols. The measure was intended to help cool the guns-for-drugs market. It was meant to crimp the style of American dopers who are getting rich filling the illegal arsenals of thugs the world over.

But in truth, it would have done much more than that. The waiting period — also known as a cooling-off period — would have reduced the number of impulse killings in

this country. No longer could jilted lovers or suicidal students walk into gunshops and walk out minutes later with handguns.

Unfortunately, the House just couldn't muster the courage for such sweet reason. While backers of the plan made rational pitches, the NRA alerted the faithful by screaming about "backdoor registration of American firearms owners." It targeted the districts of carefully chosen House members for such appeals. Registration? The charge is nonsense. The measure merely would have required gun dealers to keep the names of prospective buyers on file for 30 days. That's all.

The sad fact is, this measure was but a weak gesture toward gun control. If the House had really wanted to sound tough, it could have considered stringent regulations for semi-automatic assault weapons, which are perennial favorites among dopers and neo-Nazis. Such rifles are bought and sold with fewer restrictions today even than handguns. (If pistols are sacrosanct to the NRA, rifles are twice blessed.) Strict new controls would give drug traffickers a major headache.

But House members — fearless warriors against drugs that they are — stuck with the politer issue. And even then, they couldn't summon the backbone to tell the NRA no. Instead, they voted for unsafe streets.



DEFICI



IRAN ARMS DEAL



MARLENE

## IBM's C

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I must say, tining sales products to So ing its "divest over a year ag and disappoint impression t leader in the partment, but. Eastman Kod

ing donations could come Colorado Tourism Board, Economic Development sion, the state Historical and the private sector. M might be raised through : on state income tax for donation box at the Capitu

# Bear cubs 1 killed, an

By Jim Gibney

Special to The Denver Post

COLORADO SPRING A black bear cub was killed Sunday night when he was crushed by a pickup truck while on U.S. 24 with his family west of Woodland Park.

A second 60-pound cub was killed Sunday night when he was crushed by a broken leg in the area of the road. The cub will have to be destroyed by Apker, district manager of the Colorado Wildlife Division.

"The cub would have been put in his leg bone would restrict his movement. I'm afraid we're going to destroy it."

The cubs' mother, a black bear, climbed a nearby tree

# Stafford was Episcopal women bishop

By Virginia Culver

Denver Post Religion Writer

Unity talks between Episcopalians and Anglicans could be a reality, Denver Catholic Bishop J. Francis Stafford said.

His statement was made a week after a meeting of Episcopal bishops' committee on religious affairs, which has been set up.

Episcopalians, the largest branch of world Anglicanism, are divided over the issue of women bishops. So far, only a few dioceses still have female priests.

Three years ago the bishops said no bishop could hold his consent to a bishop simply because of his son's gender.

This summer, the convention, chief governing body of the denomination, is expected to vote for those who don't want women bishops.

It will allow for "co-consecrators" to perform bishops in a diocese that has a bishop for those church members who cannot accept a bishop. Such occasions would be confirmations of members or ordinations.

National Rifle Association. The NRA, which once cooperated with the police, has seemed to go berserk in recent years. It lobbied to protect the public sale of "cop-killer" bullets — coated with Teflon and capable of penetrating the body armor worn by police. The NRA has also lobbied for easier access to machine guns and against efforts to improve airport security.

The NRA's extremism is eroding its clout in Congress. Where most lawmakers once groveled before the NRA, many now are heeding the overwhelming support of America's law enforcement community for a national seven-day waiting period for handgun sales.

The Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police last month voted 88 to 2 to support such a waiting period. As Patrick Ahlstrom, legislative affairs chairman for the group, noted, such a waiting period would give police time to screen out "felons, fugitives, those adjudicated mentally incompetent."

have uncovered some "evidence" record of mental illness — could well have kept Hinckley's twitching fingers away from the gun he fired at President Reagan.

Thursday, the House voted 228 to 182 to defeat such a plan, known as the "Brady amendment." While that vote did nothing to halt mayhem in the streets, it was close enough to also show that it has become politically respectable to oppose the once-mighty NRA. In Colorado, Republicans Hank Brown, Joel Hefley and Dan Schaefer and Democrat Ben Campbell voted to continue the carnage of unrestricted handgun sales. But Democrats Pat Schroeder and David Skaggs voted to curb any would-be John Hinckleys.

In an election year, lawmakers are known by the company they keep. We urge Colorado Sens. Bill Armstrong and Tim Wirth to support their local police — not gun-seeking felons and drug addicts — by voting to restore the Brady amendment in the Senate.

# The perils of playing cop

CATCHING a criminal in the act, or shortly thereafter, may be one of life's most satisfying experiences. But it can also be extremely dangerous.

The woman who rescued her 6-year-old niece from an alleged kidnapper atop Lookout Mountain last week, for example, could have been killed if the man had been armed. Or she could have injured the girl — or herself — if she'd mishandled the pistol she carried. Police said she was so unfamiliar with it she didn't even know how to uncock the hammer.

A similar fate could have befallen the Ohio couple who staked out a bus stop in Columbus for a year in an effort to nab a man who had raped their daughter. As it turned out, their persistence paid off last month when the victim's mother was attacked while acting as a decoy. But as the mother observed after the suspect was arrested, "It didn't happen the way it was supposed to. He wasn't supposed to

get his hands on me. I could have been killed."

People who take the law into their own hands probably become victims far more often than heroes or heroines. Their failures, though, don't often make the evening news. Moreover, vigilantes sometimes face charges themselves when their actions backfire. Ask the Adams County man who chased a fleeing shoplifter in his pickup truck a few years ago, then was convicted of vehicular assault for pinning the thief against a car and injuring one of his legs so badly it had to be amputated.

Anger, outrage and even a thirst for lip-smacking revenge are understandable. But emotions are no substitute for experience in a confrontation with a criminal. It may be tempting for a civilian to go out half-cocked, but it's more sensible to call the cops. They're still the ones with the badges, the guns and the know-how to put those tools to proper use.

# Fish-eye view

SOMETIMES the creativity that flourishes in Boulder seems — how shall we put it? — a

admission charge. The project, which opens officially Thursday, was built with do-

# Will again K6

**T**o its shame, this state had two of its eight congressmen — Democrat Tom Foley and Republican Sid Morrison — vote against the Brady amendment on Thursday when the gun-control measure lost in the House, 228-182.

The amendment, a modest federal attempt to curb violent deaths and crime, would have made a handgun-buyer wait seven days before receiving a weapon. The brief waiting period would have allowed time for law officials to check to see if the buyer were a felon, an illegal alien, a drug addict or mentally ill.

Twenty-two states already require waiting periods, including California, which nabbed 1,500 criminals trying to buy guns in 1986. The Brady amendment had the strong support of all of the major law-enforcement organizations, among them the Washington State Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs.

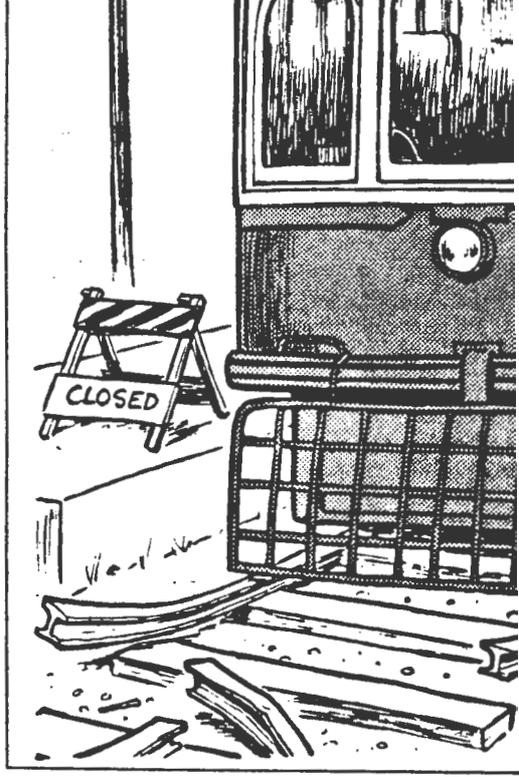
But the Brady amendment did not pass because the gun lobby, led by the National Rifle

Association, bankrolled a \$4 million campaign to make sure it didn't. Pro-gun organizations also contributed \$300,000 to congressional candidates last year.

Foley and Morrison should not have voted against the bill, even to avoid the wrath of some of their Eastern Washington constituents. Although he has a serious opponent in Democrat Dick Golob, Morrison is running comfortably for a fifth term.

Foley has no excuse to appease the gun lobby. He is House majority leader and stands next in line for speaker. He has served in the House for 24 years and faces an election opponent who is a political newcomer with a token \$6,000 in campaign funds.

From his powerful position, Foley could have helped convince Democrats, Republicans — and his constituents — that sensible restrictions on handgun sales can help reduce the number of suicides, accidental shootings, violent crimes and murders in this country. He did not do that. More's the pity.



# Criticism deleted 53

**T**wo of every five adults infected with AIDS are black or Hispanic — far in excess of these groups' proportional representation in the general population.

That's why, appropriately enough, there is a flap over the Centers for Disease Control's significant little omission in a report the agency made public assessing its performance in combatting AIDS.

The analysts hired by the CDC took it to task for having "no cohesive plan of action" for stopping the spread of AIDS among racial and ethnic minorities. They said the CDC lacks information about the "knowledge, attitude and behaviors" regarding AIDS in minority populations. And it said the agency has no idea how much of the money it sends to local health agencies for minority AIDS programs actually reaches the minorities for whom it was intended.

All of this criticism, however,

the CDC saw fit to delete from the report. But it left intact an 11-page discussion detailing the \$30 million minority AIDS program it administers, according to the Atlanta Constitution.

CDC officials offered the lame excuse that they had merely "condensed" the report. Unfortunately, the public already is all too familiar with this type of "condensation" of disturbing information unfavorable to government agencies.

The CDC, which has the rare distinction of being one government agency that so far has enjoyed public confidence, has far too important a job to do to indulge in such disingenuous, disappointing shenanigans.

The urgency inherent in the unusually high rate of AIDS in minority populations should compel the CDC to face its shortcomings in dealing with the cultural and fiscal accountability problems that may be involved, not hide them.

## FIRES

### Forest Services' 'let

I have a longstanding concern for the U.S. Forest Service's "let it burn" policy. This policy is ironically embraced by so-called environmentalists; its flaws are huge and becoming painfully clear.

Fires running wild are scorching and wasting beautiful countryside, burning homes and destroying habitat for wildlife. Politicians and politically appointed agency managers are mired in the stupidity of the "let it burn" policies.

I spent six summers fighting forest fires and preparing timber slash sites for controlled burns. I have fought fires from digging trenches on the ground, to fighting fire from the air and from the supply and fiscal cost end. I also spent a summer as liaison to the news media for the Department of Natural Resources.

A fire is much easier and cheaper to control or extinguish when it is small. That means don't let it burn — those are valuable natural resources and the danger of burning up someone's home or timberland cannot be easily reversed once the fire grows.

Major portions of America's most noteworthy national park, Yellowstone, have charred. This month near Wenatchee, 30,000 acres of timber and grassland went up in smoke overnight, claiming several homes; the fire then doubled in size before firefighters could get it controlled. With dry weather conditions we have recently seen, "let it burn" policies are absolutely insane. We have outdoor burning bans in the cities and we let the forests burn. How much sense does that make?

*Conversely, controlled burns should*