



## Senator Feinstein, California Officials Call for Renewal of Federal Assault Weapons Ban

*-- 76 days remain until ban expires --*

June 29, 2004

*San Francisco, Calif.* – Two days before the 11 year anniversary of the shootings at 101 California in San Francisco, U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) urged her Senate colleagues to once again approve the reauthorization of the federal assault weapons ban, which could expire on September 13, 2004.

Senator Feinstein was joined at a news conference by U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom, San Francisco Police Department Chief Heather Fong and victims of the 101 California shooting.

*Following is the prepared text of Senator Feinstein's remarks:*

“Ladies and gentlemen, the clock is ticking. There are 76 days left until the Federal assault weapons ban expires.

Seventy-six days before AK-47s, street-sweepers, TEC-DC 9s and the other guns banned by the law once again will be manufactured and imported into this country.

Seventy-six days until we turn back the clock to 1994, when those seeking to kill the greatest number of people in the shortest amount of time, had easy access to military-style assault weapons.

We all know what this will mean: more Columbines and more 101 Californias.

How can any of us forget the July day almost 11 years ago, when Gian Luigi Ferri walked into 101 California Street in San Francisco carrying two high-capacity TEC-9 assault pistols?

Within minutes, Ferri had murdered eight people, and wounded six others. This tragedy shook San Francisco – and the entire nation. We saw with absolute clarity the destruction that could be inflicted with these military-style assault weapons.

Navegar's advertising for the TEC-9 touted the gun as being for 'paramilitary' use and 'resistant to fingerprints,' with a 'military non-glare finish,' a 'military blowback system,' and 'combat-type' sights.

Guns like these are dangerous – because they have light triggers, you can spray fire them, you can hold them with two hands, and you don't need to aim.

Already, the gun companies are preparing for the day when the ban is lifted.

In mid-April, Italian customs officials seized more than 8,000 AK-47 assault rifles on their way from the Romanian port of Constanta to New York, and then apparently bound to a gun store in Georgia.

According to press reports, the guns were being shipped to the United States in anticipation of the expiration of the assault weapons ban.

This is the kind of thing we can expect to happen with increasing frequency – companies gearing up to once again produce and import the deadly assault weapons we banned almost ten years ago.

Unless Congress and the President act, our streets will be flooded with assault weapons.

This should really be an easy issue. After all, this ban already passed the Senate once – by a vote of 52-47.

The President has said many times that he supports the current law, and supports renewing the current law.

Every major law enforcement organization in the country supports renewing the ban, as do countless civic organizations.

Almost three-fourths of the American people and two-thirds of gun owners support renewing the ban.

And the ban works – the rate of crimes committed with banned assault weapons has dropped by two-thirds since the ban took effect almost ten years ago.

So one might wonder: why doesn't the Senate just pass the ban quickly, get it through the House and have it signed into law before it expires?

One very powerful interest group is stopping us – the National Rifle Association.

The NRA has used threats, distortions and bullying tactics to fight against commonsense gun control at every level and at all costs.

In March, the NRA was successful in defeating its own highest priority, the gun immunity bill, simply because the assault weapons ban was added as an amendment to that legislation.

But we will continue to fight the fight and look to amend the ban to legislation that has to pass the Senate this year.

The bottom line is this: these guns – and everyone knows it – have but one purpose, and that purpose is to kill other human beings.

Why would we want to open the floodgates again and let them back on our streets? There is simply no good reason. The time has come to renew the assault weapons ban.”

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