

RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS OPPOSE AMENDMENT TO UNDERMINE DC  
FIREARM REGULATIONS

March 19, 2009

US House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representative,

As groups inspired by religious values and ethical principles, we urge you in the strongest terms to oppose any amendment to H.R. 157, the District of Columbia House Voting Rights Act of 2009 that would undermine the District's ability to regulate firearms. Though proponents of such legislation claim it would restore Second Amendment rights in the District of Columbia, in actuality it prevents the 600,000 District of Columbia residents from enacting comprehensive, constitutional common-sense regulations to reduce gun violence and ensure their community's safety.

This legislation would go far beyond what is required of the District of Columbia to comply with the Supreme Court's recent decision in the case *DC v Heller*. The bill would drastically erode several regulations that were deemed both constitutional and reasonable by the *Heller* ruling. Previous incarnations of this legislation would have completely repealed the District's firearm registration requirements; allowed DC residents to travel to Maryland and Virginia to purchase handguns despite longstanding federal law that helps prevent gun trafficking; and legalized military-style assault weapons, whose destructive power goes far beyond what could possibly be necessary for self-defense or sport.

While we fully acknowledge that the DC law needs to comply with the Supreme Court's recent *Heller* decision, we believe duly-elected District officials should have a fair and reasonable opportunity to develop and implement new locally specific regulations. It would be unconscionable of the House of Representatives to approve such an amendment and impose its will on the residents of the District of Columbia. This is especially true in the context of H.R. 157, a bill which attempts to give the residents of the District of Columbia a voting member of Congress to register local concerns and defend their prerogatives. Rather than upholding Second Amendment liberties, such an amendment would restrict local governance, effectively limiting the freedoms of District residents. We find this violation of "home rule" to be deeply disturbing.

As faith inspired organizations, we must actively pursue a world free from bloodshed. No amendment that would prevent the District of Columbia from lawfully regulating dangerous weapons should be accepted to the H.R. 157. We urge you to help keep Washington, DC, residents safe, and to respect their right to self-government.

Sincerely,

American Jewish Committee  
Anti-Defamation League  
Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America  
B'nai B'rith International  
Church of the Brethren Witness/Washington Office

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FaithTrust Institute  
Fellowship of Reconciliation  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Hadassah the Women's Zionist Organization of America  
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington  
The Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
Jewish Women International  
Jews United for Justice  
Mennonite Central Committee Washington Office  
Methodist Federation for Social Action  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepard  
National Alliance of Faith and Justice  
National Council of Jewish Women  
NA'AMAT USA  
North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists  
Presbyterian Church (USA) Washington Office  
The Rabbinical Assembly  
Sisters of Mercy Institute Justice Team  
Sojourners  
Union for Reform Judaism  
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations  
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries  
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society  
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism  
Women of Reform Judaism  
Women's League of Conservative Judaism  
Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring