

Hawaii Reporter

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Banning the .50 Caliber Rifle in Hawaii Sets a Bad Precedent

The Act of a Governmental Entity Banning Commercial Sales of Legal Firearms, Such as My .50 Caliber Rifle, Not Only Violates the Basic Principles of the United States Constitution, But Also Puts National Security at Risk by Ending the Delicate Balance Between the Government and the Private Sector

By Ronnie Barrett, 3/25/2008 8:48:01 AM

EDITOR'S NOTE: This letter was sent to Chief Boisse Correa of the Honolulu Police Department on 801 South Beretania Street, Honolulu, Hawaii, regarding the .50 caliber rifle ban that his department is aggressively seeking this legislative session. While the legislation died this session because of a lack of support from lawmakers and the public, his department administrators continue to push their agenda in the media, with presentations at neighborhood boards and behind the scenes at the Legislature -- and promise to be back next year. Those familiar with the .50 caliber rifle who have seen the HPD presentation say there is a great deal of misinformation coming from HPD. No crime has ever been committed with the rifle in Hawaii. There are just 125 of them registered in Hawaii, and they are used on military and private shooting ranges and on private property for hunting.

Dear Chief Correa:

I am Ronnie Barrett, president of Barrett Firearms Manufacturing, Inc. In 1982, I invented a rifle and started producing it in my gravel-floor garage. Through hard work and financial risk, my company has grown into a brand that is known around the world for its products and services.

What began for me as a personal sport shooting rifle has evolved into one that is used by many sportsmen throughout the country, the United States military, law enforcement agencies and by nearly 50 American allied countries around the world.

Barrett Firearms Manufacturing, like all U.S. small arms defense contractors, has a combination of civilian, police and government defense sales in order to sustain its business life. This is the only way we can stand ready when products are needed in both peacetime and during war.

Simply put, the small arms defense industry in America would not survive if not for commercial sales, which are a significant part of our business. Unless the government is ready to bring back its manufacturing arsenals that were finally closed in 1968, it needs to guard and protect the privately-owned businesses that provide these essential products.

The act of a governmental entity banning commercial sales of legal firearms, such as my .50 caliber rifle, not only violates the basic principles of the United States Constitution, but also puts national security at risk by ending the delicate balance between the government and the private sector. Furthermore, it sets a precedent that endangers the future of other vital defense contractors.

How important is this particular rifle? In 2004, the United States Army named the Barrett M107 Rifle as one of the Top 10 Greatest Inventions for helping our brave service men and women do their jobs. The free enterprise system allowed me, a civilian sportsman and manufacturer, to perfect that rifle and get it into the hands of those who use it to defend freedom.

I am, of course, aware that you are receiving exaggerated and untrue information that is originating from the Violence Policy Center. For many years The VPC has claimed an urgent need to ban powerful rifles by predicting some attack will soon happen that would result in preposterous destruction. Well, as much as they promote the attack idea, they don't happen, as this is not the type of weapon our enemies are using against us.

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VPC's call for urgent action is in hopes that no time will be spent in factual research that easily reveals the irrationality of these exaggerated claims. All of these tactics have failed to work in Washington, D.C. Now, the VPC's plan is to continue this deception at the state level.

I was in law enforcement myself for several years. There is something that bothers me, and I believe it should bother you as a police official. Sir, your general testimony and statements must be based on factual evidence. All police work in this great nation must be firmly grounded in facts, collected evidence, and the solid truth.

Throughout history, when police work was contaminated with innuendos, fabrications and fear tactics, the society was doomed. Now, I must ask you how many murders can you report that were committed in your jurisdiction with a .50-caliber rifle? How many robberies? How many .50-caliber rifles have you found at crime scenes? The answers should be the true facts; anything else is the destroyer of our society, our great republic.

It is the law. Barrett Firearms Manufacturing cannot sell our products to those who break the law even though the officials responsible may not yet be indicted. Barrett will not support a state or local government that is obviously in violation of the United States Constitution thereby jeopardizing the safety and security of its citizens.

Be aware there are more companies that will respect this position. If Hawaii or any state bans the sale of the .50-caliber rifle, we will immediately stop the sale and service of all Barrett products to that state's government agencies. We will also welcome all small arms manufacturers to take the same action.

Ronnie G. Barrett is the president of Barrett Firearms Manufacturing, Inc.

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