



NRA-ILA

· 11250 Waples Mill Road · Fairfax, Virginia 22030 · 800-392-8683

Bi-Partisan Congressional Majority Moves to Restore Second Amendment in National Parks

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On Wednesday, NRA-backed legislation to restore the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding citizens in national parks and wildlife refuges passed in the U.S. House of Representatives by an overwhelming bipartisan majority of 279-147. Today, the measure was signed into law and, as specified in the legislation, will take effect in nine months, on February 22, 2010. This was a major repudiation of the gun control community's anti self-defense agenda.

The current Department of Interior (DOI) regulations were amended by the Bush Administration in 2008, allowing law-abiding citizens to defend themselves by carrying a concealed firearm in national parks and wildlife refuges. However, early this year, a federal district court in Washington, D.C. granted anti-gun plaintiffs a preliminary injunction against implementation of the new rule. NRA has been working for the past several years in the regulatory, legal, and legislative arenas to achieve this policy change.

"It has been an NRA priority to change the old, outdated rule, and we are pleased that Congress passed this critical legislation," said NRA-ILA Executive Director Chris W. Cox. "This step brings clarity and uniformity for law-abiding gun owners visiting our national parks and wildlife refuges. NRA will continue to pursue every avenue to defend the American people's right of self-defense."

The National Park Service's recent report revealed that 11 murders, 35 rapes, 61 robberies and 261 aggravated assaults occurred on parklands in 2006. Our parks also contain hidden methamphetamine labs, marijuana fields and illegal drug and illegal alien smuggling routes. In addition to these dangers and potential attacks from human predators, park visitors have to consider attacks from animal predators. Between April and December 2007 there were at least a dozen grizzly bear attacks reported by park visitors. Today, 31 states allow the carrying of firearms in state parks--all with safe and satisfactory results.

This bill provides consistency across our nation's federal lands and puts an end to the patchwork of regulations that govern different lands managed by different federal agencies. In the past, only Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service lands allowed the carrying of firearms, while National Parks and Wildlife Refuges did not.

In 1982, only six states allowed citizens to carry handguns for self-defense. Currently, 48 states have some process in place for issuing licenses or permits to allow law-abiding citizens to carry firearms for self-defense. The NRA has long held that the regulations needed to be updated to reflect this change.

This move restores the rights of law-abiding gun owners who wish to transport and carry firearms for lawful purposes on most DOI lands and makes federal law *consistent with the state law in which these lands are located*.

"This common-sense measure, offered by Senator Tom Coburn (R-Okla.), gives law-abiding gun owners the option of protecting themselves in our federal parks and refuges. We appreciate the efforts and leadership of Senators Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) and Max Baucus (D-Mont.), and Representatives Doc Hastings (R-Wash.) and Rob Bishop (R-Utah), in ensuring a legislative remedy to amend out-of-date regulations and restore the Second Amendment rights of American gun owners," concluded Cox.

Find this item at: <http://www.nraila.org/Legislation/Federal/Read.aspx?id=4901>