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908-753-3000 ext. 3515

Office of the Mayor of Plainfield

Mayor Sharon Robinson-Briggs

media@plainfieldnj.gov



★ MAYORS AGAINST ILLEGAL GUNS ★ www.mayorsagainstillegalsguns.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 18, 2011

NEW JERSEY MAYORS AND FATHER OF VIRGINIA TECH VICTIM EXPRESS DISAPPOINTMENT WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION WHO VOTED TO GUT NEW JERSEY GUN LAWS

Mayor Bernie Platt, Mayor Antonia Ricigliano, Mayor Sharon Robinson-Briggs and Mayor J. Christian Bollwage, members of the bipartisan Mayors Against Illegal Guns coalition, issued the following statements after House passage of H.R. 822, the National Right-to-Carry Reciprocity Act, on November 15. Rep. Frank LoBiondo (NJ-2), Rep. Jon Runyan (NJ-3), Rep. Chris Smith (NJ-4), Rep. Scott Garrett (NJ-5), Rep. Leonard Lance (NJ-7) and Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (NJ-11) voted for the bill. The Senate rejected a similar measure in 2009 and is expected to consider the issue again soon.

“This bill would force New Jersey to honor concealed carry gun permits issued by every other state, even those with far weaker standards. Our state has put in place common-sense regulations to keep guns out of dangerous hands,” said Cherry Hill Mayor Bernie Platt. “But H.R. 822 would gut these regulations and undermine the authority of our state to protect our communities. Major law enforcement organizations, more than 600 mayors, 56 anti-domestic violence organizations and 72 faith organizations oppose this bill. I cannot fathom why Rep. Runyan would vote for it.”

“Many states to the south and west, such as Tennessee, Utah and Texas, have their own regulations concerning gun possession, and I can respect that,” said Edison Mayor Antonia Ricigliano. “What I cannot respect is Congress imposing these outside laws on New Jersey. Some members of Congress speak of states’ rights – but they conveniently forget about states’ rights when it comes time to please the gun lobby. I am especially disappointed with those members of Congress from New Jersey who voted for H.R. 822. They have completely overlooked the fact that their role in government should be to protect the most vulnerable. New Jersey, the most densely populated state, must not be flooded with hidden and loaded guns carried in from across the country. It is a tragedy waiting to happen.”

“In support of the people who we serve, strong measures must be put in place to prevent illegal guns from coming across our borders,” said Plainfield Mayor Sharon Robinson-Briggs. “I want to thank Rep. Pallone for taking a stand and voting against this bill. We are also so fortunate to have Senator Lautenberg and Senator Menendez, who are leaders on this issue in the Senate, and have consistently opposed forced reciprocity. I also extend my thanks to Assemblyman Jerry Green, Theodore J. Romankow, the Union County Prosecutor, City Council Members Reid, Greaves and Rivers, the Plainfield Police Division and all City employees, the Plainfield Taking Back our Streets Task Force, the Housing

Authority, the Plainfield Fire Division, Rev. Tracey L. Brown, Rev. J. Bowden, Rev. G. Thomas, Rev. R. McClendon, Superintendent Anna Belin-Pyles and the Plainfield Public School System, Plainfield Area NAACP, Plainfield POP, United Youth Council, Nation of Islam and all of the many faith based representatives, stakeholders and partners for joining me regarding our positive stance on the need for gun control”.

“I am deeply concerned about the safety of police officers in our state,” said Elizabeth Mayor J. Christian Bollwage. “By putting nearly 50 different kinds of concealed carry permits in play, H.R. 822 would make it extremely difficult for these officers to distinguish between a legal and illegal gun. It’s an administrative mess that could lead to more lethal encounters. Rep. Payne and Rep. Sires deserve so much credit for opposing this bill and helping to protect the residents of Elizabeth from gun violence.”

“They sided with the gun lobby, plain and simple,” said Michael Pohle, a resident of Flemington whose son was among 32 victims of the 2007 gun massacre at Virginia Tech. “I spent Wednesday on Capitol Hill with more than 60 survivors and family members touched by gun violence. We urged Congress to strengthen the nation’s gun laws to prevent future tragedies,” said Pohle. “Instead, at the end of the day, some of our elected leaders in New Jersey voted to do exactly the opposite.”

About Mayors Against Illegal Guns

Since its inception in April 2006, Mayors Against Illegal Guns has grown from 15 mayors to more than 600 from across the country. The bipartisan coalition has united the nation’s mayors around these common goals: protecting their communities by holding gun offenders and irresponsible gun dealers accountable; demanding access to trace data that is critical to law enforcement efforts to combat illegal gun trafficking; and working with legislators to fix gaps, weaknesses and loopholes in the law that make it far too easy for criminals and other prohibited purchasers to get guns.

More information on the coalition’s efforts to fight national concealed carry reciprocity is available at www.OurLivesOurLaws.org

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Press Contact for Mayors Against Illegal Guns:

Mark Glaze | mark@mayorsagainstillegalsguns.org | (202) 271-0982