

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA,
Washington, D.C., September 20, 1963.

HON. ALAN BIBLE,
Chairman, Committee on the District of Columbia,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR SENATOR BIBLE: I note with interest the reports that the Senate District Committee will begin hearings in the very near future on H.R. 7525, relating to crime and criminal procedures in the District of Columbia, and which was recently passed by the House of Representatives.

Because of the nature of this bill and the number of legislative measures contained therein, I understand that there is a distinct possibility that your committee will wish to study in toto each bill originally introduced in the House on the subject of crime and crime prevention in the District of Columbia and subsequently incorporated in whole or in part in H.R. 7525.

In recent days, the Department of Justice has urged the enactment of legislation requiring the registration of handguns. On May 1, 1963, I appeared before Subcommittee No. 6 of the House Committee on the District of Columbia in opposition to such a measure, which appears in the guise of a requirement that a person have a license merely to possess a pistol or revolver even in his home or place of business. As you know, the House committee rejected this approach to the District of Columbia law enforcement problem.

The National Rifle Association of America is unalterably opposed to this method of firearms regulation. The practical result of such legislation, as has been proven many times in those jurisdictions having such provisions, will be that the criminal will generally violate the act and take his chances of discovery and punishment while the law-abiding citizen will find it increasingly difficult to possess firearms for defense of home or property. Experience has shown that such legislation only aids the criminal by ultimately disarming the citizen of good repute and depriving him of any means of self or property protection.

The National Rifle Association of America, a nonprofit organization of more than 600,000 shooter-sportsmen and 11,000 affiliated shooting clubs, requests the opportunity to appear before your committee at any hearing that may be scheduled on this proposal by the Department of Justice, or any proposal which would restrict the rights of law-abiding citizens to possess arms.

Sincerely,

FRANKLIN L. ORTH,
Executive Vice President.

The CHAIRMAN. Before calling the first witness this morning, I believe it might prove helpful to outline what this committee proposes to do over the next 3 weeks. There will be an in-depth examination of the need for strengthening the District of Columbia criminal justice code.

H.R. 7525, the House-passed omnibus crime bill to which I have just referred and made a part of this record, covers a broad field of 14 proposed amendments in 5 separate titles. We will propose to cover each of these subjects separately.

For the benefit of our witnesses and the general public, our ground rules of procedure will call for testimony today on title IV, pertaining to establishing robbery as a crime of violence, and 7 sections in title V dealing with minimum sentences for various crimes; defining burglary in two degrees; corrupt influence in connection with athletic contests; making mandatory the punishment of crimes of violence; and fictitious reports to the Metropolitan Police Department. In addition to the aforementioned we shall also receive testimony on S. 486, which I hereby make a part of the record at this point.