



Legal Community Against Violence

expertise, information & advocacy to end gun violence

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For Immediate Release

City Council Stops the Assault on Columbus

Columbus, OH, July 11, 2005: With this week's city council vote, Columbus joins other Ohio communities in banning assault weapons. Following a series of public hearings, Council members determined the risks to Columbus families increased unacceptably when the U.S. Congress failed to renew the federal law which expired last September.

The Columbus ordinance bans the possession and transfer of assault weapons while continuing to allow the use of the weapons at licensed shooting ranges and in officially sanctioned competitive shooting events. Individuals who lawfully owned and possessed assault weapons before the ordinance's effective date may keep their weapons but have 90 days to register them with local authorities.

The Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence (OCAGV) provided support for the ordinance and testified in the public hearings. Toby Hoover, Executive Director of OCAGV, congratulated the City on its progressive action to make Columbus a safer place to live and raise families.

Said Hoover, "Assault weapons are semi-automatic guns that are made to spray fire a high volume of bullets. Assault weapons are not hunting guns. They are people killers and we should never forget that we are talking about people, both victims and survivors. These guns are an assault on us all and we congratulate Columbus for regulating them."

Sue Ann Schiff, Executive Director of Legal Community Against Violence (LCAV), agreed: "Assault weapons are designed to kill humans quickly and efficiently. The Columbus ordinance is directed to military-style weapons designed for rapid spray firing, not to standard sporting firearms."

At the request of the chair of the Columbus Public Safety Committee, Michael Mentel, LCAV testified about assault weapons, and provided the Committee with its comprehensive report, *Banning Assault Weapons – A Legal Primer for State and Local Action*, which includes a model law. The report provides a legal framework for state and local governments interested in banning assault weapons. LCAV has a special interest in assault weapons: it was founded in 1993 following an attack in San Francisco in which a gunman with two assault weapons shot 14 people, killing nine.

Despite overwhelming public support for its renewal, Congress and the President allowed the 10-year old law regulating assault weapons to expire on September 13th, 2004.

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