



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**BI-PARTISAN COALITION OF MAYORS AGAINST ILLEGAL GUNS LAUNCHES
TARGETED TELEVISION ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN**

*Ads Will Air on Broadcast and Cable in Targeted Congressional Districts Across Country;
Urges Repeal of Tiahrt Amendment*

27 Mayors From New Jersey Join Coalition, Which Grows to 214 Mayors

The bi-partisan coalition of Mayors Against Illegal Guns today unveiled the newest part of the coalition's ProtectPolice.org media campaign, a television advertisement that seeks the repeal of the "Tiahrt Amendment." The advertisement will run on television in Washington, DC and in targeted congressional districts, including the district of Representative Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ). Representative Frelinghuysen is the ranking minority member on the House appropriations subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, which is currently considering the Tiahrt Amendment. The advertisement will also run in the district of Representative Alan Mollohan (D-WV), the subcommittee chairman, and the district of Representative Todd Tiahrt (R-KS), who first introduced the Amendment. The mayors oppose the Tiahrt Amendment because of how it restricts the access of cities and law enforcement to gun trace data, an essential crime fighting tool. At the announcement, held at City Hall in Jersey City, the coalition also announced that 27 new Mayors from New Jersey, led by founding member Mayor Jerramiah Healy of Jersey City, have joined the group, now 214 strong.

"Less than a year ago, Mayor Bloomberg and I started Mayors Against Illegal Guns with 15 mayors. Today, our coalition can count over 200 Mayors from across the country as members all with one goal – getting illegal guns off our streets," Mayor Thomas M. Menino said. "Our numbers are strong. But we can't do it alone. While this is a national issue, we as Mayors once again are leading the way for change to make our cities safer and we need the help of Congress to get illegal guns off the streets."

"Our efforts have nothing to do with the Second Amendment or the rights of lawful gun owners," Mayor Bloomberg said. "This is about enforcing the law and keeping guns out of the hands of criminals. We can only do that if we have the best tools to combat illegal gun trafficking, and the most important of those is the gun trace data that the Tiahrt Amendment restricts. I join with Mayors from across New Jersey in urging that Representative Frelinghuysen oppose this amendment."

“Denying police access to valuable firearm sources not only hinders the efforts of states with strong gun laws like New Jersey, but also puts the lives and safety of our communities at risk,” said Mayor Healy. “It’s time for congress to step up to the plate and combat this federal plague by repealing the Tiahrt Amendment.”

“We are facing a crisis of illegal guns in our communities where more than 30,000 Americans lose their lives to gun violence every year,” said Mayor Booker. “We have an obligation to stem the flow of illegal weapons to our cities, and that starts with the ability of law enforcement to trace these illegal weapons to their source. The Tiahrt Amendment betrays the gravity of the current situation by insulating illegal gun retailers. We must act now. Our cherished values, the security of our communities, and the safety of our police officers are on the line.”

The new members of the Mayors Against Illegal Guns Coalition from New Jersey are:

Berkeley Township	Mayor Jason J. Varano
Corbin City	Mayor Carol Foster
Borough of Closter	Mayor Sophie Heymann
Demarest	Mayor James Carroll
Downe Township	Mayor Chester Riland
East Newark	Mayor Joseph R. Smith
Guttenberg	Mayor David Delle Donna
Haddon Heights	Mayor Beth Ann Haven
Lacey Township	Mayor Brian A. Reid
Logan Township	Mayor Frank W. Minor
Lower Township	Mayor Walt Craig
Manchester Township	Mayor Michael Fressola
Borough of Milford	Mayor James A. Gallo
Morristown	Mayor Donald Cresitello
Mount Olive	Mayor David M. Scapicchio
Neptune Township	Mayor James W. Manning, Jr.
North Haledon	Mayor Randy George
Oldmans Township	Mayor Harry Moore
Parsippany-Troy Hills	Mayor Michael M. Luther
Passaic	Mayor Samuel Rivera
Phillipsburg	Mayor Harry L. Wyant
Borough of Red Bank	Mayor Pasquale Menna
Salem	Mayor Earl Gage
Borough of Shrewsbury	Mayor Emilia M. Siciliano
Borough of Spotswood	Mayor Barry H. Zagnit
West Windsor	Mayor Shing-Fu Hsueh
Woodbridge	Mayor John E. McCormac

Existing members of the coalition from New Jersey are:

Asbury Park	Mayor Kevin G. Sanders
Camden	Mayor Gwendolyn A. Faison
East Orange	Mayor Robert L. Bowser
Elizabeth	Mayor J. Christian Bollwage
Hamilton	Mayor Glen D. Gilmore
Highland Park	Mayor Meryl Frank
Irvington	Mayor Wayne Smith
Jersey City	Mayor Jerramiah Healy

Newark
Paterson
Prospect Park
Trenton

Mayor Cory Booker
Mayor Jose Torres
Mayor Mohamed Khairullah
Mayor Douglas Palmer

Coalition Launches Television Advertisements in Targeted Congressional Districts

The Mayors announced that a new television advertisement, part of the ProtectPolice.org media campaign, will run in Washington, DC and in targeted congressional districts. The advertisement will run on a mix of broadcast and cable outlets, including ABC, NBC, CBS, CNN, MSNBC, and the Fox News channel. It debuts this Sunday during the *Chris Matthews Show*, *This Week with George Stephanopoulos*, and *Face the Nation*. The advertisement complements other parts of the media campaign that are already in place, a two-minute web video hosted on the coalition website ProtectPolice.org, a banner advertisement for ProtectPolice.org, and a web advertisement that plays a shorter version of the video.

In the advertisement, the limits that the Tiahrt Amendment imposes on police are explained by Chaska, Minnesota Chief of Police Scott Knight. As narrator, Chief Knight describes how the Tiahrt Amendment prevents him from being able to effectively address gun crime. Both the new advertisement and the web video refer viewers to the ProtectPolice.org website for details on exactly how the Tiahrt Amendment prevents police officers from doing their jobs. The website lists the over 20 national and state police organizations that oppose the Tiahrt Amendment as well as the full text of the Tiahrt Amendment itself.

New Jersey Members of Congress Offer Support to Coalition

There is growing support in Congress for the key piece of the Mayors federal legislative agenda, the repeal of the Tiahrt Amendment. At the January summit meeting of the Mayor Against Illegal Guns, held in Washington, a bi-partisan Congressional Task Force on Illegal Guns was created. The four founding members are Congressmen Charles Rangel (D-NY), John Conyers, Jr. (D-MI), Peter King (R-NY) and Mark Kirk (R-IL). Since then, other members have signed onto the Congressional Task Force, including Representative Mike Ferguson (R-NJ). Also, Representative Steve Rothman (D-NJ) introduced his own legislation that calls for the repeal of the Tiahrt Amendment during the last Congress and will re-introduce the bill in the next week. Similarly, both of New Jersey's Senators, Frank Lautenberg and Robert Menendez have signed a letter opposing the Tiahrt Amendment. The letter, excerpted here, was signed by thirteen other senators last week:

“Asking law enforcement officers to combat gun crimes with these Amendments in place is like asking them to fight such crimes with one hand tied behind their backs.”

“There is absolutely no good reason to hide gun crime data from city police departments. Once passed, my legislation to make the ATF’s trace data public again will help local police and prosecutors enforce the laws on the books. It’s illegal to knowingly sell guns to criminals and with the right information cops can stop those dealers who are guilty of breaking the law,” Representative Rothman said. “As the Mayors Against Illegal Guns Coalition proves, we can put politics aside to save lives. I am glad that Mayor Healy and Newark Mayor Cory Booker have joined the effort and urge all members of New Jersey’s Congressional delegation – Republican and Democrat – to support repealing the Tiahrt amendment.”

“It’s critically important that law enforcement has the tools they need to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and kids,” Representative Ferguson said. “This coalition is growing because of the common-sense solution to crackdown on gun trafficking.”

New Jersey Prosecutors Oppose Tiahrt Amendment

In a letter to Representative Mollohan, the County Prosecutors Association of New Jersey has also expressed its frustration with the Tiahrt Amendment. Through Association President and Prosecutor of Union County Theodore J. Romankow, the group explains how vital gun trace data is for law enforcement, and explains that “without this critical information, it is difficult to see how effective crime gun interdiction and crime suppression programs can be maintained. It is important for Congress to encourage rather than hamper effective law enforcement.” In another part of the letter, excerpted below, the Prosecutors defeat an argument often used to defend the Tiahrt Amendment:

“It has been argued that the Tiahrt restrictions are needed to protect the integrity of ongoing investigations. However, in the past the ATF has disclosed gun trace data to the public and law enforcement while withholding any specific information that might compromise an ongoing investigation. The Tiahrt restrictions have a chilling effect on law enforcement rather than on criminals.”

American Hunters and Shooters Association Addresses New Coalition Members

The Mayors also heard remarks from American Hunters and Shooters Association President Ray Schoenke, who spoke about the compatibility of common sense in gun policy with protecting America’s hunting and sport shooting heritage.

“We want a seat at the table when it comes to discussing gun rights and the Mayors Coalition has welcomed us as a voice representing hunters and shooting sportsmen across America,” said Hunters and Shooters President Schoenke. “We staunchly support the Second

Amendment, but we also strongly support our police, who risk their lives every day to protect my family and yours. We've got a responsibility to ensure that guns don't fall into the hands of criminals and that we punish to the fullest extent of the law individuals who would misuse guns to terrorize our communities. We can do all of this while at the same time standing firm in defense of our Constitutional rights."

About the Mayors Against Illegal Guns Coalition

Last week in Cincinnati, Mayor Mark Mallory, along with 13 other Mayors from the Ohio and Kentucky region, signed the statement of principles making them members of the Mayors Against Illegal Guns. In the six days since that Ohio announcement 32 new mayors have joined the coalition. Other coalition members have recently hosted events in their own cities including Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett and Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak. The combined population of the cities represented by the 214 Mayors is over 50 million. For more information please visit www.mayorsagainstillegalsguns.org.

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