

Oct 20 2005 - BLOCKED AGAIN!

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Rules Committee Republicans Reject Common Sense Amendments in Sell Out to Gun Manufacturing Industry

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY-28), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, made the following statement regarding the vote this evening by Rules Committee Republicans to reject common sense amendments to S. 397, the "Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act."

"It should come as no surprise that Republicans on the Rules Committee are again abusing their power in what the American people have come to see as the ever growing culture of corruption in Washington," said Rep. Slaughter. She continued, "Its time for the Republican Majority to reevaluate its priorities and begin defending Americans from gun violence rather than signing another blank check for the special interests who keep them in power."

BACKGROUND

Late Monday evening, the House Rules Committee reported a closed rule for the consideration of S. 397, the "Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act," which the Senate passed on July 29, 2005. This bill prohibits civil lawsuits against gun manufacturers and dealers for damages resulting from the criminal or unlawful use of their products. It is anticipated that this rule and S. 397 will be on the House floor Tuesday or Wednesday.

This closed rule allows for only one hour of debate, equally divided between the Chairman and the Ranking Member of the Judiciary Committee. The rule blocks all 8 of the thoughtful Democratic amendments that were submitted to the Rules Committee. In particular, Rules Committee Republicans opposed on straight party-line votes the following amendments:

- An amendment offered by Reps. Van Hollen and Waxman prohibiting suspected and known terrorists from purchasing firearms;
- An amendment offered by Reps. Lofgren and Jackson Lee allowing courts to hear lawsuits concerning gun injuries to law enforcement officers;
- An amendment offered by Rep. McCarthy permitting gun liability lawsuits to go forward until the US Attorney General has 90% of the records necessary to conduct criminal background checks for gun purchases;

- Another amendment offered by Rep. McCarthy expanding the bill's prohibition on armor-piercing bullets to include bullets capable of penetrating body armor; and
- An amendment offered by Rep. Linda Sanchez permitting courts to hear suits based on sales of weapons to persons with domestic violence convictions.