

# JFK Death And Our Gun Laws

## No Action All Year

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WASHINGTON — Almost a year after President Kennedy was killed with a mail order rifle, not a single law has been enacted by federal, state, or major city governments to register or strictly control sale of firearms.

The anti-gun furor after the Nov. 22 assassination brought a flood of bills and proposals throughout the country. There were 18 in one month in the U. S. Congress, 35 in Massachusetts, others in Maryland, Virginia, Rhode Island, California and New York.

The only measure even approaching importance was an ordinance by New York City's council barring transportation of rifles inside the city limits unless they are unloaded and cased. And a handful of other communities required "waiting periods" to check records of gun buyers.

Hunters, collectors and other firearms fans consolidated into the powerful 650,000-member National Rifle Association have balked most of the proposals, and there is no doubt about the association's claim that some of the anti-gun plans are "fantastic . . . out of this world." But even the association's own proposals have been ignored by the nation — severer penalties for crimes by armed men; firearm theft a felony in all cases, mandatory penalties for gun related crimes.

Mail-order gun ads such as the one that brought Lee Harvey Oswald and the fatal Mannlicher-Carcano 6.5 mm. rifle together still crowd the pages of gun magazines.

### ALL AVAILABLE

"The National Rifleman" for November, ironically, has three advertisements for Mannlicher-Carcanos like the one used to kill the president — all available by mail order.

The same highly-regarded magazine carries a full page advertisement for mail order guns by the firm from which Oswald bought his gun using an assumed name.

The major bill considered in Congress since the President's assassination is one by Sen. Thomas J. Dodd (Democrat of Connecticut). It would require a mail-order house to notify local police when a person buys a gun.

The bill—a watered down version of a previous Dodd proposal—died in the Senate Commerce Committee. Dodd will reintroduce it in the new session of Congress this January.

The bill, while short of the registration and permit requirements that some police seek, would at least let law enforcement men know who in the community is getting a gun by mail order.

At present, an estimated 30,000,000 people in the U.S. own guns.

California's legislature took a different tack, one that appears reasonable if slow. The Assembly Interim Committee on criminal procedure was told to study the whole problem and report back to the 1965 session.

Full hearings are being held to give both sides a chance to be heard (the Rifle Association has circularized its members and clubs saying "this hearing could be of vital importance to you and to your right to keep guns!

. . . dealers, distributors, manufacturers and factory representatives of shooting equipment and accessories could be greatly affected. . . the association urges a letter writing, wiring and personal visit campaign to all members of the committee.)

Stricter gun proposals have been beaten down or postponed in Philadelphia, Cleveland, Baltimore County, Newport News, Washington, D.C. —and many more. In scattered areas—Falls Church, Va., is one—rules have been enacted to require a short waiting period before guns are delivered so police can check criminal records.