

Curb Gun Sales - -LBJ

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Lyndon B. Johnson urged Congress today to speed up action on a firearms control bill "aimed solely at keeping deadly weapons out of the wrong hands."

In a letter to House Speaker John W. McCormack, D-Mass., the President said legislation he proposed last February would meet the challenge to "keep weapons from the hands of the dangerous

and still permit the law abiding citizens to acquire them." McCormack made the letter public and said he would make every effort to get House action this year on the President's proposal.

"Since August of last year when a hidden sniper in a university tower in Austin, shot 44 people," the President wrote McCormack, "guns have been involved in 6,500 murders, 10,000 suicides, 2,600 accidental deaths, 43,500 aggravated assaults and 50,000 robberies.

"A civilized nation cannot allow this armed terror to continue. The time has come for action."

Last year, the President said, two million guns were sold in this country, many of them to hardened criminals, snipers, mental defectives, rapists, habitual drunkards and juveniles.

"THERE IS no excuse for this," he added. "We are long past the point where we can allow lethal weapons to be hawked by the same mail order techniques used to market frozen steaks or baskets of fruit. We are long past the point where we can allow an enemy of society to buy and use a weapon of death and disorder . . . when existing state laws will not even allow the same person to drive a car, or to vote."

The President said the legislation he proposed would stop interstate mail order sales of firearms, stop over-the-counter sales of firearms other than rifles and shotguns to any person not residing within the state of purchase, and halt the sale of handguns to any person under 21, and sales of rifles and shotguns to those under 18.

It also would curb firearms imports.

The President said his proposal would not interfere with sportsmen or law-abiding citizens having a legitimate need and would "impose no real inconvenience on gun buyers."