

PRESIDENT CALLS FOR REGISTERING OF ALL FIREARMS

PLEA TO CONGRESS

Bill, Due Today, Also to Require Licensing of Gun Owners

Text of President's message
is printed on Page 24.

By MAX FRANKEL
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 24— President Johnson asked Congress today to require the national registration of every firearm and a license for every gun owner whose state did not enforce Federal license standards.

Sensing an aroused public opinion and wishing to channel the pressures developing on Capitol Hill, Mr. Johnson accelerated for the second time in a week his efforts for more gun controls.

The Administration's new proposals were outlined in a message to Congress this afternoon and will be submitted as a bill tomorrow morning.

The President said that he did not want the new measure to delay a pending bill to limit the sales of rifles and shotguns. But exactly how Congress will proceed probably will not become clear until the Senate Judiciary Committee considers the whole subject on Wednesday.

Tydings Bill Cited

Proposals similar to those embraced by the Administration today have been introduced formally by Senator Joseph D. Tydings, Democrat of Maryland.

He welcomed the White House action as a "tremendous boost" and said the President's leadership and the "groundswell" of public and Congressional support "may at last break the gun-lobby stranglehold on effective gun legislation."

The Administration's measure goes beyond the Tydings bill in two respects.

It requires national registration, regardless of state registry, to permit the National Crime Information Center of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to compile a comprehensive computer file of every gun in the nation — between 50 and 100 million, according to current estimates.

Moreover, to punish states

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that do not establish effective license systems for gun owners, Mr. Johnson would deprive them of funds from the Wildlife and Conservation Trust Fund. Last year it redistributed \$23-million collected in excise taxes on gun and ammunition sales.

Glenn Leads Drive

Another strong source of support for registration and licensing developed here today with the announcement that Col. John H. Glenn Jr., the former astronaut and associate of Senator Robert F. Kennedy, was leading many prominent citizens in a nationwide write-in campaign organized by the Emergency Committee for Gun Control.

The committee disclosed that Vice President Humphrey and Governor Rockefeller had responded favorably to its request for support from all Presidential candidates.

The organization's executive committee will be composed of Thomas J. Watson Jr., chairman of the board of International Business Machines Corporation; Adlai Stevenson 3d,

Treasurer of Illinois; John W. Gardner, former Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare; Charles Ever, Mississippi field director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and John V. Bennett, president of the National Council for a Responsible Firearms Policy.

It was not clear whether the committee's nationwide effort, the maneuvering in Congress and the spontaneous efforts of students and housewives in many communities had any direct effect on the schedule of action in the White House.

But Mr. Johnson has been moving faster even than he thought he could when he revived his pressure for gun controls on June 6, the day Senator Kennedy died.

Congress completed action that day on an omnibus crime bill that included a limitation on the sales of handguns by mail and to minors and others deemed unfit to possess them. The President called this a half-way measure and demanded follow-up action for similar limitations on the sales of rifles and shotguns.

In signing the crime bill last Wednesday, he again urged quick action on the second step, and Congress appears to be heeding his and the public's advice. Once that bill was passed, the President said, he would come back with still other proposals.

Today, without waiting for Congress to catch up, he offered those proposals.

Mr. Johnson's message, an abbreviated version of which he read for movie and television cameras in the White House Fish Room, anticipated even greater resistance from hunters, gun clubs, some manufacturers and their representatives and lobbyists here.

He argued against their case, as follows:

"Registration and licensing have long been an accepted part of daily life in America. Automobiles, boats, even dogs and bicycles in many communities, are commonly registered. Our citizens must get licenses to fish, to hunt and to drive.

"Certainly no less should be required for the possession of lethal weapons that have caused so much horror and heartbreak in this country. Surely the slight inconvenience for the few is minimal, when measured against protection for all."

What Bill Provides

The Administration's bill would allow 180 days for the registration of every gun, perhaps at post offices or other Federal agencies in the community. Thereafter, failure to register a firearm would be punishable with two years in jail and fines up to \$2,000.

Mr. Johnson said that he would prefer the states to take the initiative in issuing licenses, preferably through a uniform law that at the minimum would deny guns to criminals, dope addicts, alcoholics, the mentally ill and others whose possession of guns would be deemed harmful to the public health or safety.

His bill would require a Federal license of all citizens whose state had not enacted these minimal Federal standards within two years.

A Federal license, as now envisioned, would cost \$1 and require the photographing and fingerprinting of the applicant. Rifle and shotgun licenses would be available to persons over 18; handgun licenses to persons over 21.

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