

RIFLE SALE CURB PASSED BY HOUSE; VOTE IS 304 TO 118

Bill Would Limit Interstate
Mail Order Transactions
Involving Long Guns

MEASURE CALLED WEAK

A Senate Panel Also Acts,
Backing Proposal 9 to 3—
Floor Debate Delayed

By MARJORIE HUNTER
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 24—A bill to curb interstate mail order sales of long guns and some ammunition cleared the House today after four days of bitter debate.

The vote was 304 to 118. Voting for passage were 158 Democrats and 146 Republicans. Voting against were 79 Democrats and 39 Republicans.

Meanwhile, breaking a long deadlock, the Senate Judiciary Committee approved a similar bill, 9 to 3.

Senate action on the long-stalled measure, now stripped of stiffer controls, will be delayed until after Labor Day. Congress will recess next week for the national political conventions.

In Cincinnati, the National Governors Conference rejected any coordinated national approach to the problem of gun control and agreed only on a resolution expressing the Governors' "individual concern" over the issue.

Both the House and the Senate committee rejected Administration demands for Federal registration of all guns and state licensing of gun owners.

A Million Letters

Even the more modest mail order ban had been stymied in Congress until the greatest outpouring of Congressional mail in many years flowed into Capitol Hill offices. The mail was prompted by the assassination of Senator Robert F. Kennedy on June 5.

Congressional sources reported that more than a million letters were received in recent weeks. Senator Clifford P. Case, Republican of New Jersey, says that he alone has received 80,000 communications, most of them demanding stiffer gun controls.

As passed by the House, the bill would ban interstate mail order sales of rifles and shotguns and of handgun ammunition.

It also would ban over-the-counter sales of rifles, shotguns and bigger weapons to most nonresidents of a state, except those from an adjoining state, and would bar store sales of persons under 18 years old.

Pro-gun forces, largely

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Rifle Sale Curb Is Passed by the House

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sportsmen and members of the National Rifle Association, succeeded in exempting mail order sales of long-gun ammunition. They also pushed through other amendments viewed by the floor managers as "quite crippling."

Noting that pro-gun forces had said they could "live with" the slimmed down bill, Representative Charles S. Joelson, Democrat of New Jersey, told the House acidly:

"I suggest that tens of thousands of Americans can die with it. This bill is far too weak."

The House also was chided by Representative Charles A. Vanik, Democrat of Ohio, for refusing to approve gun registration and licensing of gun owners.

Citing the sniper deaths last night in Cleveland as proof that strict gun controls are needed, Mr. Vanik said:

"Like everyone else, I call for law and order. But I am just

sick and tired of hearing some of my colleagues deplore violence and call for law and order when I have seen them go through teller [nonrecord] votes time and again and vote for amendments which would strike down adequate gun control laws."

Advocates of stiffer gun controls were hampered by major defections within liberal Democratic ranks. Chief among these was the Democratic leader, Carl Albert of Oklahoma, a firm opponent of gun controls, who was the only leader from either party to vote against the bill.

Furthermore, Representative Emanuel Celler, Democrat of Brooklyn, floor leader for the bill, had pledged to oppose registration and licensing in order to win speedy approval of the more modest mail order ban.

Not satisfied with defeat of registration and licensing, pro-gun forces peppered the bill with nearly 100 proposed amendments.

Approved Changes

In addition to exempting long gun ammunition, the House approved amendments that would do the following:

Require mandatory prison

terms for those convicted of committing Federal felonies—but not state felonies—while using a gun.

Permit a sportsman, away from his home state on a hunting trip, to purchase a gun to replace a lost, stolen or broken firearm by filing a sworn affidavit.

Allow gun collectors to sell and trade guns across state lines. They would have to obtain a \$10 license.

Reduce the proposed annual license fees for manufacturers and importers from \$500 to \$50.

The House also approved an amendment that Mr. Celler contended would exempt from the mail order ban the million members of the National Rifle Association.

Representative Robert L. F. Sikes, Democrat of Florida, author of the amendment, disputed Mr. Celler's assertion.

His amendment, Mr. Sikes insisted, would simply assure the right of the Army's National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice to continue supplying ammunition to junior rifle clubs affiliated with the National Rifle Association.