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Agnew Gets Handgun Permit Under Waiver of Federal Law

By Richard M. Cohen
Washington Post Staff Writer

Former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew, stating he needs a gun for personal protection, received permission yesterday from the federal government to own handgun.

It was also learned yesterday that the state of Maryland granted Agnew similar per-

mission last April despite a provision of state law banning persons sentenced to more than a year from carrying handguns.

In a routine announcement published in the Federal Register, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms of the Treasury Department announced it had granted Agnew

and 15 other persons relief from a provision of the federal Gun Control Act of 1968 that forbids persons under a sentence of more than one year from possessing firearms.

Agnew pleaded nolo contendere last Oct. 10 to a tax evasion charge and resigned as Vice President. He was fined \$10,000 and sentenced to three years of unsupervised probation. He was allowed to remain under the protection of the Secret Service until last February when his Secret Service detail was withdrawn by Treasury Secretary George P. Shultz.

A spokesman for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms said he could not divulge the reason Agnew gave in asking that the provision of the gun act be waived. However, it was learned that the former Vice President said he needed a gun for personal protection and Rex D. Davis, director of the bureau, told the Associated Press that Agnew reported seeing trespassers on his property and had received threats.

The spokesman said such waivers are common and are published from time to time in the Federal Register, the official government publication that carries government regulations and announcements.

He said the only persons convicted of felonies involving the use of guns are barred under the law from regaining their right to carry or possess a handgun. He said the waiv-

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ers are granted after a review in which the applicants record and his position in the community is reviewed.

Although Agnew had to request a waiver from the federal government, his application for a gun permit from the state of Maryland was approved last April 10, a spokesman said, because he had pleaded nolo contendere (no contest) to the tax charge, and never admitted guilt.

"You have to realize that nolo and a plea of guilty are not the same," said Sgt. Norman Peppersack of the Maryland State Police's handgun permits section. For that reason, he said, Agnew's application was approved.

Maryland law forbids the possession or carrying of handguns to persons convicted of a felony or misdemeanor for which a sentence or imprisonment had been imposed for more than one year. Peppersack said that despite Agnew's sentence to three years of unsupervised probation, the state police did not consider him convicted of any crime and therefore issued the handgun permit.

At the time he pleaded to the tax charge, Agnew was informed by Federal District Court Judge Walter E. Hoffman that a nolo contendere plea was "the full equivalent of a plea of guilty" and a common plea in tax cases. Hoffman said that he was sentencing Agnew for "willful" failure to pay income taxes, "which charge is a felony in the eyes of the law."

Agnew could not be reached for comment and it could not be determined if he intends to keep a handgun on his person, or retain it in his home. The Maryland State Police refused to divulge the reasons Agnew gave them for applying for a gun permit.

The federal gun application did not say what type of weapon Agnew was intending to buy. He would be permitted any kind of gun that the government considers legal.

Since his resignation, Agnew has reportedly been writing a novel and attempting to develop a business as middleman between American firms and foreign governments. He has moved from Chevy Chase, the address listed in the Federal Register, to Indian Hills, just north of Annapolis. He has opened an office in Crofton, Md., a nearby town.

Agnew was disbarred by the Maryland Court of Appeals and can no longer practice law.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
FIREARMS; GRANTING OF RELIEF

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to 18 U.S.C., section 925(c), the following named persons have been granted relief from disabilities imposed by Federal laws with respect to the acquisition, transfer, receipt, shipment, or possession of firearms incurred by reason of their convictions of crimes punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year.

It has been established to my satisfaction that the circumstances regarding the convictions and each applicant's record and reputation are such that the applicants will not be likely to act in a manner dangerous to public safety, and that the granting of the relief will not be contrary to the public interest.

Agnew, Spiro T., 6415 Shadow Road, Chevy Chase, Maryland, convicted on October 10, 1973, in the United States District Court, District of Maryland.

Amos, Jr., Walter Gordon, Route 5, Rocky Mount, Virginia, convicted on September 9, 1968, in the United States District Court, Western District of Virginia, Danville Division.

Blondheim, Richard M., 3210 5th Avenue, South, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, convicted on September 9, 1940, in the District Court, Minn.

ginia. Savulcha Pittsbu April 4, 1961, and on Quarter County Still, Jam lando, 1961, County Yawn, Ja ville, I 1969, in val Cou Signed day of J [SEAL] [FR Doc Excess Notice to § 24. CFR 24.1 ble exce installati

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Agnew exemption is listed in the Federal Register.

See AGNEW, C2, Col. 5