



February 18, 2005

Honorable Don Sherwood
1131 Longworth Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Sherwood,

Currently, Pennsylvania Code allows lawful carry of concealed firearms with a valid permit. The only places specifically prohibited under state Code are courtrooms and schools. A Pennsylvania citizen should be able to assume that unless otherwise specifically prohibited by state Code they can exercise their Second Amendment rights within the Commonwealth.

The National Park Service currently prohibits citizens of the United States from possessing a firearm in any property they administer under regulation 36CFR2.4. This prohibition, in our view, is immoral as it results in the assaults, rapes and deaths of citizens who visit National Parks. We also feel the prohibition is illegal, as it violates the letter and intent of the Bill of Rights.

The NPS regulation forces concealed carry permit holders to disassemble their firearms, render them inaccessible prior to entering these sites and to leave them in their vehicle risking possible theft. The gun owner, alternatively, is forced to leave the firearm at home if they choose to visit these sites. These are unacceptable alternatives. Artificial geographic boundaries do not prevent criminals from perpetrating crimes. Basically, 36CFR2.4 creates gun-free victim zones literally just feet away from areas not regulated by this code

National Parks are the sites of over 4,400 serious crimes each year, including 10 murders, 132 rapes, 70 robberies, 3 kidnappings, 212 aggravated assaults, 488 burglaries, 3,277 larcenies and thefts, 130 motor vehicle thefts, and 104 arsons. My wife and I happened to be staying at Skyland on Skyline Drive in Virginia several years ago just days after two hikers were raped and murdered on the same trail we hike. I am personally offended that I may be literally risking my and my wife's life when I go to these parks. It is simply unrealistic of the National Park Service to claim they can protect citizens within the vast wilderness or urban settings of many Parks.

The Johnstown Rifle and Pistol Club has contacted Congressman Jack Murtha on this issue. He's enthusiastically committed to help and has already contacted the Park Service and asked them to review the regulation. He wholeheartedly agrees this rule must be amended.

Our club has joined the Virginia Citizen's Defense League and submitted a formal Petition for Rule Making (<http://www.vcdl.org>) to the Interior Department. We, and representatives from the NRA-ILA, have subsequently met with officials there in our effort to have the regulation reviewed by the Department and amended to simply assimilate state laws regarding lawful concealed carry. The Johnstown Rifle and Pistol Club will also be submitting a petition to the Pennsylvania Federation Of Sportsmen's Clubs requesting statewide support for our proposal.

We now have strong support from Reps. Jack Murtha (PA), Virgil Goode (VA), Senator George Allen (VA) and Marilyn Musgrave (CO). I have also contacted Rep. John Peterson's office and have spoken with Jeffrey Vorberger. He, too, is very interested in our petition and has asked me to continue to update him. We hope you will see the merit of our request and give us your support on this fundamental matter.

To summarize, we essentially are asking that the National Park Service regulations simply comply with state codes regulating firearm possession since the parks reside within state boundaries. Citizens with concealed carry permits should be able to cross the street into National Park sites without forfeiting their Second Amendment right to self-protection

Thank you for your in interest and help with this important issue. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Rick *****
Johnstown Rifle and Pistol Club