

From: Mr John Rabb [johnrabb2000@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, June 21, 2005 3:14 PM
To: *****
Subject: Guns cont'd

Rick:

I'm happy to provide advice on this topic.

By the way, if NRA/ILA and/or Phil Van Cleave are making recommendations, you should heed them, as those guys know a lot more than I do about this business.

I just finished an article on local hunting regulations, and I got help from the Pa. Game Commission staff. How does PGC relate to DCNR? The PGC press secretary, Jerry Feaser, gave the impression that PGC is very pro-gun, but I don't know if that knowledge is helpful.

Just as a "Congress 101" item, I want to tell you about the Senate/House Conference Committee (you may already know this). The Senate and House often pass their own versions of the same bill (Interior Appropriations, for example). The differences between the two versions must be worked out, and that is done in a joint Senate/House Conference Committee. The work of the Conference is very important for a variety of reasons, including the fact that a Conference Agreement cannot be amended on the Senate or House floor. It's a straight up or down vote.

Obviously, being a Member of the Conference Committee (Conferee) is very important. Because Appropriations Subcommittees are so small, I'm guessing that all of the Members of the Senate and House Interior Subcommittees will be Conferees. That means you would have Burns, Craig, Sherwood and Peterson as Conferees. Conferees are not supposed to raise issues that do not appear in either the Senate or House bill, but that ruled often gets stretched. If Burns or Craig want to talk about guns in National Parks, I'm virtually certain the issue would be discussed in the Conference. It sounds like you have Burns staffer on the line, and if he can hook you up with a Craig staffer, that would be helpful.

Typically, after you get the attention of a staffer, they will ask in some fashion, "Was is it you guys want exactly?" You must be ready to answer that question properly. In the guns/NPS case, you might want an amendment that basically says that none of the funds in this bill may be used to enforce the NPS gun ban. There may also be some legislative way to change the offending regulation, but I don't know, so you will have to ask one of the staffers.

Because Interior watches this bill very closely, they will pick up very quickly on the fact that the NPS/guns issue is being discussed. It is at that point when you will know what you are up against. If Interior/NPS wants to go to war over the guns issue, that could make things tough, because Burns, for example, may want something from Interior, so there might be some horsetrading (Senator, if you back off on the guns matter, then we will support (program X) that you want). The staffers should already know the lay of the land, so they will tell you if this is a tough sell, or if you might be able to get what you want. Stay close to them, as they are the best source of information and advice.

I hope this is helpful. Feel free to contact me again.

John