May 1, 1968

Dear:

The Senate Judiciary Committee has reported legislation dealing with regulations of the interstate traffic in firearms. As ranking minority member of this Committee, I gave careful study and attention to the various proposals which were before the Committee.

Be assured I appreciate your comments.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen
July 18, 1968

Dear Friend:

This will acknowledge your communication with respect to your views on pending gun legislation. I expect that Congress will act on this in the near future. The stickler seems to be the registration and licensing provisions and on that point the two Houses are at variance.

I submitted an amendment to the Tydings' bill, which in turn is an amendment to the administration's bill, to the effect that the registration and licensing provisions would not apply to any person in possession of a valid license or permit issued pursuant to state law if that law was adequate to protect the public against the issuance or transfer of a license or permit to narcotic addicts, felons, mental incompetents, and so forth. The whole concept of the Tydings' bill is to put all this in the hands of the state if they will take the necessary action. It further provides that the states would have two years in which to accomplish this purpose. This is in essence the substance of the Illinois law which is presently in effect.

Between the ordinances adopted by a good many cities, the state law and the proposed federal law, one finds himself in a rather awkward position and we have merely endeavored to reconcile these. I am sure we shall begin to get this job done in a proper way. I thoroughly appreciate your views.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen
August 19, 1968

Dear Friend:

The House of Representatives has passed a firearms control bill which would forbid the interstate mail order sale of rifles and shotguns. The Senate Judiciary Committee has ordered reported S. 3633 and then it will be referred to the Senate Commerce Committee for further consideration.

Let me emphasize that neither measure prohibits a citizen from purchasing or possessing a gun for any legitimate reason. The main thrust of these measures is to restrict mail order sales of both long guns and hand guns to make certain that weapons will not be available to convicted felons, narcotic addicts, mental incompetents, persons who have foresworn their citizenship and one or two other classes. I believe it will be possible to work out a measure that will not restrict the liberties of the citizen and at the same time make dangerous weapons harder to get by those who could not be trusted with the use of a weapon in the interest of society. I believe this is the whole story. I do appreciate your interest.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen
Dear Friend:

This will acknowledge your communication you signed with regard to gun control legislation.

I thought when the House and Senate acted on the gun control title which was included in the Safe Streets and Anti-crime measure, which was signed by the President, that we had done a reasonably good job. However, a great clamor developed throughout the country and the House of Representatives has passed a firearms control bill which would forbid the interstate mail order sale of rifles and shotguns. The Senate Judiciary Committee has reported S. 3633 dealing with the interstate traffic in firearms.

In the Senate Judiciary Committee, I submitted an amendment to the Tydings bill which in turn is an amendment to the Dodd (the Presidential bill) bill to the effect that the registration and licensing provisions would not apply to any person in possession of a valid license or permit issued pursuant to state law if that law was adequate to protect the public against the issuance or transfer of a license or permit to narcotic addicts, felons, mental incompetents, and so forth. The whole concept of the Tydings' bill is to put all this in the hands of the states if they will take the necessary action. It further provides that the states would have two years to accomplish this purpose. This is in essence the substance of the Illinois law which is presently in effect.

Because of the State law and the various gun control ordinances in various cities, failure to work out some agreeable solution might be regarded as sheer neglect or indifference on my part and hence I have been giving it double attention and particularly to one measure which would give the various states two years to enact legislation which would deal with this problem in a satisfactory manner.

I am sure we shall begin to get this job done in a proper way. I do appreciate your interest.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen
United States Senate

Guns-ROBO

October 2, 1968

Dear :

The House of Representatives completed action on their version of the gun control bill some time ago. The Senate completed action on a different version about ten days ago. The two bills are now before a committee on conference to adjust the differences and to come up with an agreed version in the form of a conference report.

Under our conference rules, the conferees cannot go beyond the provisions included in one or both of the two bills. They can delete or they can agree to certain things with other amendatory language, but this is about the limit of their authority.

When the gun bill was before the Senate, we were certainly mindful of the fact that the House set itself resolutely against any licensing or registration provision and that had a real influence on the votes on Senate amendments.

There should be a gun control bill because we included a provision to that effect in our national platform, I trust that the ultimate measure on which the conferees can and will agree will be at once effective, moderate, and with proper regard for the rights of honorable, law-abiding citizens.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen