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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

19 April 1982

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This will respond to your request for the Administration's position on the Federal Firearms Owners Protection Act, which is now awaiting mark-up in your Committee.

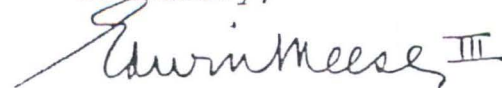
The President's position on firearms regulation is, I think, well known. He strongly rejects the notion that registration of weapons is either necessary or desirable and believes that mandatory sentences for those who use firearms in the commission of a crime is a preferable way to approach the problem of firearms abuse.

As with other areas of federal regulation, he believes that in the past firearms regulators have too often lost sight of their ultimate objective and have misused their authority to search for minor technical infractions by otherwise law-abiding sportsmen, collectors, and dealers instead of concentrating on firearm violations by criminals. The administration's policy, therefore, is to redirect its enforcement focus away from the former toward the latter.

Toward that end, the President remains committed to the de-regulation of law-abiding gun owners, such as that called for by the proposed Federal Firearms Owners Protection Act. At the same time, the Administration has proposed a reorganization of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms that would, among other things, prevent the possible misuse of authority and enhance the ability of the Treasury Department to refocus its enforcement efforts against criminals.

We would like to see both elements of this policy move along together and as in the past will continue to work with the Congress and interested outside parties to accomplish our common goals.

Sincerely,



EDWIN MEESE III
Counsellor to the President

The Honorable Strom Thurmond
U. S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

EM:SC;bp

cc: Ed Meese Chron

DRAFT

April 19, 1982

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This will respond to your request for the Administration's position on the Federal Firearms Owners Protection Act, which is now awaiting mark-up in your Committee.

The President's position on firearms Regulation is, I think, well known. He strongly rejects the notion that registration of weapons is either necessary or desirable and believes that mandatory sentences for those who use firearms in the commission of a crime is a preferable way to approach the problem of firearms abuse.

As with other areas of federal regulation, he believes that firearms regulators have too often lost sight of their ultimate objective and behaved as if the enhancement of their authority were an end in itself. Too much emphasis has been placed on a search for minor technical infractions by other wise law-abiding sportsmen, collectors, and dealers -- and not enough on the behavior of the criminal element. The administrations's policy, therefore, is to redirect its enforcement focus away from the former toward the latter.

Toward that end, the President remains committed to the de-regulation of law-abiding gun owners, such as that called for by the proposed Federal Firearms Owners Protection Act. At the same time, the Administration has proposed a reorganization of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms that would, among

other things, enhance the ability of the Treasury Department to refocus its enforcement efforts against the criminal element.

We would like to see both elements of this policy move along together and as in the past will continue work with Congress and interested outside parties to accomplish our common goals.

Sincerely,

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 17, 1982

TO: Ken Duberstein
THRU: Pam Turner *pt*
FROM: Sherrie Cooksey *SMC*
SUBJECT: McClure/Volkmer and BATF Reorganization

I. Present Situation

The Senate Judiciary Committee is unable to report the McClure/Volkmer legislation because even those Democrats who support the bill are joining Senators Kennedy and Metzenbaum (who oppose the legislation) in refusing to vote out the legislation until the Committee receives an Administration position on the bill.

Senator McClure will offer the McClure/Volkmer bill as an amendment to the Criminal Code next week unless the Judiciary Committee has reported his legislation. McClure informed me of this on Friday. He understands that we are linking BATF reorganization to our support of McClure/Volkmer but he is unwilling to wait for the Administration to resolve its difficulties over the BATF before proceeding with his bill. McClure considers the Criminal Code an opportunity he cannot afford to pass up in seeking passage of his bill in this Congress.

Negotiations with the NRA on the BATF reorganization are not likely to be completed before Tuesday or Wednesday of this week, which is when McClure is likely to offer his amendment.

II. Options

A. Oppose the attachment of McClure/Volkmer to the Criminal Code.

Cons: The Administration is on record in support of the basic principles of the McClure/Volkmer bill and would obviously argue our conservative supporters. This would put us in a direct confrontation procedurally on an issue which we substantively support (in general terms).

B. Send a position letter to Senator Thurmond on the McClure/Volkmer bill which links our support to the reorganization of the BATF, and urge the Judiciary Committee to report the bill early this week. Continue to discuss the BATF reorganization with the NRA.

Pros: This would satisfy McClure's immediate concerns about his bill and preclude him from offering it as an amendment to the Criminal Code. We would be reaffirming our support of McClure/Volkmer but, because the bill could not be considered in the Senate for at least a few weeks', we would still have time to work on the BATF reorganization with NRA.

Cons: This would result in the loss of some leverage over the NRA in the BATF reorganization. However, new leverage could be found in their desire to obtain Administration support in seeking passage of this bill by the House in this Congress. Additionally, the concerns of both the Justice and Treasury Departments over the interstate gun sales language in McClure/Volkmer may be sticking points in sending up even a general letter of support for the McClure/Volkmer legislation. Such a letter will be met with skepticism by Kennedy and Metzenbaum since they have a memo detailing DOJ's objections to the legislation.

RECOMMENDATION:

Go with a letter to the Judiciary Committee and ask Thurmond to report out McClure/Volkmer while the Criminal Code debate is ongoing. However, the position letter should link BATF reorganization to our support and should be so generally worded as to leave open the raising of the DOJ and Treasury concerns on interstate sale provisions by the Departments when the bill is considered on the Senate floor.

OFFICE OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT STAFFING MEMORANDUM

DATE: 4/19/82 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: ~~4/23/82~~ 4/23/82

SUBJECT: 8:00 am Meetings

	ACTION	FYI		ACTION	FYI
HARPER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SMITH	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PORTER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	UHLMANN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BANDOW	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ADMINISTRATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BAUER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	DRUG POLICY		
BOGGS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	TURNER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BRADLEY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	D. LEONARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CARLESON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	OFFICE OF POLICY INFORMATION		
FAIRBANKS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	GRAY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FRANKUM	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	HOPKINS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HEMEL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	OTHER		
KASS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. LEONARD	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MALOLEY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

REMARKS:

- (UHLMANN) McClure-Volkmer
ACTION
 (Coordinate with Sherie Cooksey)
- McClure wants to push this as an add-on to the Criminal Code.
 - We should send a letter to the Judiciary Committee asking them to report out McClure-Volkmer and that we are trying to solve overly zealous questions re; law enforcement on two tracks: 1) McClure-Volkmer 2) BATF.
 - Mike Uhlmann should draft for Meese's signature.

EDWIN L. HARPER
 ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT
 FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT
 (X6515)