



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on November 27, 2024

Suppressor Bill Boosted by Ear Doctors

Texas GOP Congressman August Pfluger [introduced a bill](#) in the lame-duck House of Representatives last Friday, hoping that the House Judiciary Committee will consider it before the 118th Congress ends (target date December 20). Called “Protecting Americans’ Right to Silence” (PARTS), [H.R. 10145](#) would trim the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives’ (ATF) claim that parts making up a silencer (or suppressor) for a firearm are themselves silencers and thus are all included in the “machine gun” category of the National Firearms Act of 1934.



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ATF’s Overreach

Presently, the ATF’s rules require purchasers of such suppressors and their parts to register them with the ATF and pay a \$200 tax. The ATF has been taking up to 90 days to process the paperwork so the owner can take possession of the suppressor.

Said Pfluger:

Suppressors make hunting and all shooting sports safer. They help our military personnel, law enforcement, and recreational shooters alike.

Unfortunately, we’ve seen the Biden-Harris Administration’s ATF try to criminalize the tools and accessories that actually make using firearms *safer*.

Criminalizing suppressors would only make their manufacturing and use nearly impossible....

We do not want to see suppressors weaponized like [pistol braces](#) have been. We do not want to criminalize law-abiding gun owners....

My bill would prevent that blatant overreach and protect the Second Amendment Rights of Americans.

It’s just nibbling around the edges of what really needs to happen to “protect the Second Amendment rights of Americans,” of course.

Ear Doctors Support Suppressors

However, Pfluger’s bill got an [unexpected and welcome boost](#) just days earlier from the 13,000-member American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery (AAO-HNS), aka ear doctors. The group concluded, after reviewing three separate studies, that the use of suppressors is “an effective method of reducing the risk of hearing loss, especially when used in conjunction with conventional hearing protective measures [i.e., ear plugs or earmuffs].”

There is a political motive behind the study, and perhaps the timing. One of the physicians behind the



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announcement, Dr. Timothy Wheeler, also happens to be the founder of Doctors for Responsible Gun Ownership. The group disclaims any political motive in its conclusion or its timing — “position statements are not intended to and should not be treated as legal, medical, or business advice.” However, Wheeler was much more forthright:

That’s always been a big thing for ear doctors because there are many kinds of hearing loss and some of them we can fix with surgery or treat with medication.

However, noise-induced hearing loss is permanent and untreatable. That’s the kind of inner ear hearing loss you see with gunshot noise....

Suppressors dependably reduce the impact or impulse noise exposure of a gunshot by about 30 decibels....

If you oppose making this useful firearm accessory available to people who can benefit from it, then you are opposing protecting them from hearing loss.

Time may be running out for Pfluger’s bill to be heard before the end of the 118th Congress, but he has promised, if necessary, to present it again once the 119th Congress is seated in January. It is hoped that a more Second Amendment-friendly House and Senate will be seated and take action on this, the first of many bills that will be needed fully to protect the Second Amendment rights of American gun owners from the anti-gun agenda of the ATF.



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