



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on March 27, 2015

Rubio Introduces Bill to Gut D.C.'s Anti-gun Laws

Senator Marco Rubio (shown, R-Fla.) [introduced a bill](#) on Thursday that would end the Washington, D.C., council's ongoing war against guns by removing their authority to make and enforce anti-gun laws altogether. Because it is a federal district, Washington, D.C., falls under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Congress and, consequently, the D.C. council operates at the discretion of Congress.



It was clear from his announcement that Rubio was fed up with the council's resistance to make laws that conformed with national policy: "For years, the District of Columbia has infringed on its residents' Second Amendment rights and ... rendered them vulnerable to criminals.... This legislation will finally allow D.C.'s law-abiding residents and visitors access to firearms for sporting or lawful defense of themselves and their homes, businesses and families."

The council has been dragging its feet ever since the 2008 *Heller* case (*District of Columbia v. Heller*) ruled that the Second Amendment guarantees an individual's right to keep and bear arms, even in the District. The council drafted new rules that were so draconian and restrictive in their nature that a federal judge ruled last year that they also were unconstitutional. Today an applicant for a concealed handgun permit faces an intimidating and expensive process including his need to show a "good reason" why he wants one at all. Even after all that, the council "may" issue the permit, but more likely it will not.

Rubio's legislation — a similar bill was introduced in the House on Thursday by Representative Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) — would accomplish the following:

- Remove entirely the authority of the D.C. council to enact gun control laws;
- Conform D.C. law with federal laws governing firearm ownership;
- Allow D.C. residents to purchase firearms from FFL dealers in nearby Maryland and Virginia;
- Repeal the council's current onerous gun registration system that is part of the concealed carry application process;
- Create a "shall issue" system for those seeking a concealed carry permit; and
- Allow private owners of public buildings the freedom to decide for themselves whether residents with CCPs will be allowed on their properties.

As expected, D.C.'s non-voting but vehemently anti-gun delegate to the House, Eleanor Holmes Norton, pushed back against Rubio and his bill in a masterful misinterpretation: "It should shock no one that Sen. Rubio, who is widely expected soon to announce a run for president, would try to raise his national profile and conservative bona fides, but they should be shocked to hear that he would try to use our local jurisdiction and laws to violate his own support for the principle of local control."

According to Norton, it's all about politics and profiles and climbing into the arms of the NRA and its five million members recently galvanized into action against the ATF. She said nothing about crime in



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her district or the council's extreme reluctance to follow the rulings in *Heller* and by the federal judge last fall.

Crime in Washington, D.C., rates the district the 96th safest (or, conversely, fourth most dangerous) in NeighborhoodScout's Crime Index. The latest numbers are positively frightening: Residents in D.C. are two times more likely to be raped, two-and-a-half times more likely to be assaulted, four times more likely to be murdered, and six times more likely to be robbed than in the country as a whole. And yet all Norton can talk about is the council's "local jurisdiction" without acknowledging that the council serves at Congress' discretion.

There is a political angle to the offering of this legislation at this particular time. It will engage Congress in a much-needed intelligent conversation about the Second Amendment and force invisible anti-gunners from both parties out of the shadows and into the bright light of that conversation. If the legislation passes both houses, it will surely light a confrontation with the White House which has moved heaven and earth (unsuccessfully, so far) in its efforts to neutralize the Second Amendment.

Photo of Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.): AP Images

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