

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

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Robert E. Hearnes, Director

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The Honorable Claire McCaskill  
506 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator McCaskill,

Last week, President Obama held a press conference to discuss his ideas to reduce gun violence. The President expressed his desire to reinstate the assault weapons ban, along with the ban on high capacity magazines.

Besides the obvious questions of constitutionality, as a police officer, I have several problems with a reinstatement of the ban. I will address them below:

- Rifles account for a tiny percentage of the firearms used in crime. The prior ban had no effect on crime and I see no reason to think a new ban would be any different. Since the ban expired, crime rates have actually dropped while gun sales have soared.
- Functionally, there is no difference between an assault rifle and a semi-automatic rifle used for hunting or sport. To be effective, the ban would have to outlaw thousands of rifles used by hunters and sportsman.
- Almost every mid and full sized semi-automatic handgun sold in this country comes standard with a 15 round magazine. These magazines are not "high capacity" but are what is normally sold with the gun. Law abiding citizens should not be restricted in the number of bullets they have to protect their families.

On behalf of the Charleston Department of Public Safety, I urge you to vote against any legislation that attempts to reinstate the assault weapons ban, or the high capacity magazine ban.

Respectfully,

*Robert E Hearnes, Jr.*

Robert Hearnes, Director