

July 29, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
H-222 US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
H-204 US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy,

We are writing to you on behalf of the millions of hunter conservationists we represent to express our strong opposition to the *Assault Weapons Ban of 2022* (H.R. 1808). This legislation was recently reported out of the House Rules Committee. This legislation would arbitrarily ban a large number of modern sporting rifles and magazines. The legislation would also ban common shotguns used by waterfowl and upland bird hunters, trap, skeet and sporting clays shooters. Examples include the Benelli Super Black Eagle III, Browning A5, Beretta A300 Ultima, Franchi Affinity 3, and the Mossberg 940. Banning firearms used almost entirely for hunting and sporting purposes and magazines in a manner that would fail to reduce violent crime while having a devastating impact on hunting and wildlife conservation funding in the United States.

Like all Americans, we abhor the criminal misuse of firearms. However, recent tragedies that have shocked and saddened all of us were not caused by the characteristics of firearms, ammunition or magazines. Rather, they were caused by the horrific acts of mentally impaired perpetrators. We also understand that the recent tragedies have resulted in a national search for answers and outcomes to address violent crime. While we share this goal, it is vital that any policy measures pursued to achieve this end are actually effective and do not ignore the underlying causes of violent crime.

There is a tremendous amount of misinformation surrounding the issue of so-called “assault weapons.” For example, firearms frequently referred to as “assault weapons” are not automatic weapons. They are functionally no different than the firearms that would remain legal if H.R. 1808 were to become law. These guns fire one shot per trigger pull and the only differentiating factors between guns that would be banned under H.R. 1808 and those that wouldn’t are purely cosmetic. In addition, a comprehensive study by the Centers for Disease Control considered the effectiveness, or lack thereof, of a full panoply of gun control measures including the 1994 “assault weapons” ban. The study concluded that the use of so-called “assault weapons” in violent crime reduced measurably after the 1994 ban expired in 2004.

Arbitrary bans on “high capacity” magazines are similarly ineffective. For example, a study conducted for the National Institute of Justice found conclusive data that “relatively few attacks involve more than ten shots fired” and that studies on the number of shots fired “show that assailants fire less than four shots on average.” In short, any capacity-based ban on the manufacture and sale of magazines would be nothing more than arbitrary.

The 1937 Pittman-Robertson Act provides for a “user pays-public benefits” American System of Conservation Funding. The Act, which directs an excise tax on the sale of firearms, ammunition, and archery equipment, is a primary funding source for state fish and wildlife agencies who utilize the funds to undertake wildlife conservation, provide for hunter and recreational shooter recruitment, public shooting range construction and other activities. Recently, it was announced that the revenue generated and distributed by this excise tax eclipsed \$15 billion over the lifetime of the program. Just last year alone the firearm and ammunition industry contributed over \$1.1 billion toward conservation.

The lion’s share of funding for Pittman Robertson is generated by recreational shooters. Not only are modern sporting rifles the most popular firearm platforms for recreational shooting but they are also, increasingly, the firearm of choice for hunters and law-abiding gun owners who wish to exercise their right to defend themselves, their families and others. In fact, between 1990 and 2020 nearly 25 million of these rifles have been sold. To that end, arbitrary and ineffective bans on modern sporting rifles would be devastating to state wildlife agencies, America’s 55 million sportsmen and women, and our mission of conserving and managing wildlife and its habitat.

For these reasons, we are united in our shared opposition to the *Assault Weapons Ban of 2022* and respectfully urge that you take the necessary actions to avoid its enactment into law. We encourage Congress to work towards pragmatic bipartisan solutions in a manner that enhances wildlife conservation, benefits the economy, and protects America’s rich hunting and recreational shooting heritage. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Boone and Crockett Club
Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation
Conservation Force
Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports
Dallas Safari Club
Delta Waterfowl
Ducks Unlimited
Houston Safari Club
Izaak Walton League of America
Masters of Foxhounds Association
Mule Deer Foundation
National Deer Association
National Rifle Association
National Shooting Sports Foundation
Professional Outfitters and Guides of America
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Safari Club International
Sportsmen’s Alliance
Whitetails Unlimited
Wild Sheep Foundation
Wildlife Management Institute
Wildlife Mississippi