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FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION

*... a Quaker lobby in the public interest*

July 14, 2011

Dear Senator:

The Friends Committee on National Legislation supports S.32, the Large Capacity Ammunition Feeding Device Act introduced by Senator Lautenberg. We write to thank you for cosponsoring this legislation, and to review some of the important reasons for promoting its passage.

Large capacity ammunition clips are a military adaptation for assault rifles and semi-automatic handguns to enable the user to shoot mass numbers of people quickly without reloading. There is no place for such killing capacity in civil society.

While the Friends Committee on National Legislation supports broader controls, we acknowledge that the majority in Congress do not currently unite with that position. We believe, however, that the broadly shared understanding of an individual's right to bear arms does not extend to military weaponry.

Weapons that are capable of mass killings -- bombs, explosives, incendiary devices -- are closely regulated as to ownership and use. High-capacity ammunition magazines belong in that category. Surely the founders, in protecting individual rights, did not anticipate the evolution of technology that would put weapons such as these in the hands of individual users.

All of our criminal laws grow out of an understanding that there is a line between individual rights and public safety. Activities that endanger public safety are regulated or banned when they cross that line. High-capacity ammunition magazines have crossed that line for the victims at Columbine High School, at Fort Hood, at Virginia Tech, and in Tucson, among many other tragedies. According to the Brady Campaign, police chiefs across the country report increases in the use of weapons with large capacity ammunition magazines in crimes and against police officers and civilians since the federal ban expired in 2004.

It's time for Congress to step in and protect public safety from high capacity ammunition magazines. We appreciate your co-sponsorship of this important legislation, and ask you to do what you can to move the bill toward passage in the 112th Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ruth Flower".

Ruth Flower  
Legislative Director

[Similar letter sent to Senate non-co-sponsors and to House sponsors and non-co-sponsors of H.R. 308 by Rep. Carolyn McCarthy.]