



STATE OF ARKANSAS
MIKE HUCKABEE
GOVERNOR

April 13, 2000

The Honorable Eliot Spitzer
Attorney General
Office of the Attorney General
The Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

Dear General Spitzer:

I have received your letter of March 16, 2000 inviting me to join in your effort to encourage various state and local governments to award law enforcement gun contracts only to gun manufacturers agreeing to a "Code of Conduct" which dictates various business practices, safety features, marketing strategies, etc., for both gun manufacturers and gun dealers at the wholesale and retail level. I must respectfully decline your invitation.

First let me say, if I believed the safety of my constituents were truly the issue, I would be much more considerate of your request. But we are not living in a country flooded with "unsafe" guns. It is their illegal use that endangers us - and that must be addressed through vigorous criminal prosecution.

Providing for gun safety locks is one thing and, in truth, only a small part of your "Code of Conduct." However, dictating how many guns a purchaser is allowed to take home on one day, banning sales at gun shows and prohibiting a minor from even entering a gun store without a parent or guardian are parts of a political agenda, not a push for "gun safety." Coupling the safety issue with a strict regulation of business practices is merely a maneuver to advance a decidedly political agenda under the guise of "public safety."

I am a strong proponent and defender of Americans' Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms. I also make every effort to be a responsible manager of my constituents' tax dollars. I ask the director of the Arkansas State Police to make purchasing and requisition decisions based on quality, service and price. I will not ask him to award a lucrative government contract in order to further a political agenda geared at controlling and ultimately destroying the firearms industry. I want Arkansas State Troopers to protect our citizens and themselves using the best guns available, not guns from the most "politically correct" manufacturer.

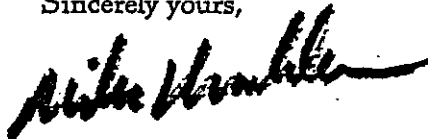
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In 1999, I signed into law an act prohibiting Arkansas' local governments from suing firearms manufacturers seeking compensation for injuries and deaths resulting from the illegal use of these companies' products. To hold the gun industry accountable for crime is like holding our nation's farmers liable for the healthcare costs associated with obesity. The desire of some to blame the gun manufacturers for crime rather than prosecute criminals seems to me a sadly misguided attempt at protecting our citizens. It is also a rather thinly veiled attempt to vilify and control those who engage in a business which is eminently legal and necessary, yet not particularly smiled upon by the current administration in Washington. I thank God previous administrations understood and appreciated not only the sanctity of the Second Amendment, but its necessity, as well.

Gun manufacturers make the Second Amendment a viable right rather than some theoretical proposition. I will not abuse my authority as Governor to pursue their demise or dictate their business practices through coercion.

So the answer is a definite "no," I will not seek the capitulation of firearm manufacturers through the use of asinine lawsuits or the doling out of taxpayer-funded government contracts. I regret that you feel either of these tactics to be worthwhile endeavors.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Huckabee", written in a cursive style.

Mike Huckabee

MDH/dh