

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1505

AGRICULTURE

JUDICIARY

POLICY

SMALL BUSINESS

May 8, 2008

I have introduced H.R. 4900 which rolls back unnecessary restrictions, corrects errors, and codifies longstanding congressional policies in federal firearms laws and regulations.

This bipartisan bill is a vital step to modernize and improve BATFE operations. Of highest importance, H.R. 4900 totally rewrites the system of administrative penalties for licensed dealers, manufacturers and importers of firearms.

Today, for most violations, BATFE can only give a federal firearms license (FFL) holder a warning, or totally revoke his license. H.R. 4900 would allow fines or license suspensions for less serious violations, while still allowing license revocation for the kind of serious violations that would block an investigation or put guns in the hands of criminals. This prevents the all-too-common situations where BATFE has punished licensees for insignificant technical violation—such as improper use of abbreviations, or filing records in the wrong order.

Among its other provisions, H.R. 4900:

- Clarifies the standard for “willful” violations—allowing penalties for intentional, purposeful violations of the law, but not for simple paperwork mistakes.
- Improves the process for imposing penalties
- Allows a grace period for people taking over an existing firearms business to correct problems in the business’s records
- Codifies limits on disclosure of firearms trace data—which Congress has already limited through a series of appropriations riders over the past three years, out of concern for gun owners’ privacy and the confidentiality of law enforcement records.
- Repeals the Brady Act’s “interim” waiting period provisions, which expired in 1998. This waiting period has now been made obsolete because in the instant check system

The BATFE plays a vital role in pursuing violent criminals and those who illegally arm them. To make this mission more effective, modest reforms are needed for the BATFE. These reforms will allow the BATFE to perform focused and reasonable approaches to many of the civil enforcement issues that it must deal with. For more information, please contact Brent Boydston, brent.boydston@mail.house.gov, in my office.

Sincerely,



Steve King
Member of Congress