

State Senator Robert Mayer The Mayer Memo

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A Victory for Americans' Gun Ownership Rights

JEFFERSON CITY — Last week, the U.S. Supreme Court made its first pronouncement on gun control in the nation's history that upholds law-abiding Americans' rights under the Second Amendment to the Constitution to own guns for self-defense and hunting.

This is a major victory for Missourians — and all Americans — and I commend the Supreme Court for its sound ruling on this very important legal issue. The right to bear arms is a right we fought to defend more than 200 years ago, and I'm very pleased to see this and other individual rights contained within our Bill of Rights hold up to threats and scrutiny.

In a 5-4 ruling, written by Justice Antonin Scalia, the court struck down a 32-year-old outright ban on handguns in Washington, D.C., as unconstitutional. The court's decision held that the "Second Amendment protects an individual's rights to possess a firearm unconnected with service in the militia, and to use that arm for traditionally lawful purposes, such as self-defense in the home."

As many of you will recall, the Second Amendment states, "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

The Court did explain the Second Amendment right to bear arms is not unlimited and acknowledged that because this is the first in-depth analysis of the Second Amendment, it has not answered all of the questions surrounding this issue. But, it concluded that D.C.'s ban on handgun possession in the home and the prohibition

against rendering a lawful firearm in the home operable for self-defense is unconstitutional. This is truly good news for law-abiding gun owners.

While I applaud the recent U.S. Supreme Court's ruling on gun ownership rights, I was disappointed with the ruling against a Louisiana law that would impose the death penalty for child rapists. Earlier this year, Missouri considered a similar law. Many lawmakers here and in other states believe the harm this causes victims and society warrants the death penalty. Meanwhile, comprehensive child-protection legislation recently passed by the General Assembly makes Missouri one of — if not the toughest — on sexual predators who seek to harm our children. Senate Bill 714 demonstrates Missouri is fully committed to protecting our children and will punish those who do to the fullest extent of the law.

As your state senator, I can assure you I will work to protect our Second Amendment rights and enforce Missouri laws that give our citizens the right to carry firearms and defend their homes from intruders. I will also continue to support laws that protect our children from sexual predators and child pornographers in the real and cyber worlds.

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