

# **Defendant's Exhibit F**

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## **ROMNEY SIGNS ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN EXTENSION, CHANGES IN GUN LICENSING (7-1-2004)**

By Amy Lambiaso

STATE HOUSE NEWS SERVICE

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, JULY 1, 2004.....Gov. Mitt Romney today hailed the Legislature's bipartisan work as he signed into law a permanent ban on deadly assault weapons, such as the AK-47 and Uzi, made or sold in Massachusetts.

The current state ban, passed in 1998, is tied to a federal law that is set to expire Sept. 13 unless Congress re-authorizes the ban. President Bush has signaled he would sign a bill extending the ban, but state officials here fear Congress may not approve a new bill before the current federal law expires.

"These guns are not made for recreation or self-defense," Romney said. "They are instruments of destruction with the sole purpose of hunting down and killing people."

Activists say Massachusetts is the first state to extend the ban on so-called assault weapons. During a bill-signing press conference, John Rosenthal, co-founder and chair of Stop Handgun Violence, joined Romney in praising the Legislature and administration for "de-polarizing and de-politicizing" the issue.

"We're not taking guns away from anyone except assault weapons and cheaply made Saturday night specials," Rosenthal said. "This is the model for the nation."

Rosenthal called on other states to pass similar permanent bans, especially New Hampshire and Maine - states that he said have weaker gun laws. If the federal ban expires, people will be able to purchase and sell assault weapons in other states and the weapons may end up in Massachusetts, he said.

In addition to making the state ban on assault weapons permanent, the new law instructs the state to issue firearms identification cards (FID) and license to carry a firearm (LTC) cards the size of a driver's license and extends the term to carry the license from four to six years. The law also creates a 90-day grace period for a gun license holder in the renewal process; waives the licensing fee for police officers applying for a LTC, and requires police officers to keep an inventory and receipt of all confiscated guns.

Romney also praised creation of a new Firearms Licensing Review Board to review all applicants for a FID or LTC that have been denied because of a prior misdemeanor conviction. The board has the discretion to award a license to the applicant if they are no longer deemed dangerous. Up to \$50,000 of licensing fees collected are to be directed from the General Fund and spent on the board's operations.

"I think it's terrific," Romney said, flanked by Sens. Stephen Brewer (D-Barre) and Joanne Sprague (R-Walpole), Reps. George Peterson (R-Grafton) and Michael Coppola (R-Foxborough). "A new law - we're safer and we also have some great sportsmen to enjoy it."

The law does not address what some lawmakers called a "loophole" that allows assault weapons made before 1994 - when the federal ban took effect - to be bought and sold. Sen. Jarrett Barrios (D-Cambridge) had pushed to close that loophole. "An AK-47 made in 1992 kills just as many people as those made in 1997," Barrios said. ^Z

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