

DRAFT LETTER TO EDITOR FROM CITIZEN

Dear Editor:

One of my major concerns is the safety of my family and my community. There is a disturbing trend of crimes involving use and possession of handguns and other firearms by criminals in our cities. Many times, these crimes are committed again and again by the same criminals in a pattern of violence that must be broken.

Current laws for the state of South Carolina sometimes tie the hands of local law enforcement as they work to protect us, and no local municipal ordinance can close the gaps in state law. As a resident of South Carolina, I am strongly urging our Legislature to support the following changes in state law to enable our local law enforcement to offer better protection to my family and all citizens:

1. Allow searches of persons on probation and parole which does not require a warrant. Speaking realistically, these people are given a privilege by being out on probation or parole instead of being incarcerated where they are subject to searches at any time.
2. Deny bail for repeat offenders. It is not logical that bail be given to someone who commits another crime while out on bail for an earlier arrest.
3. Convicted criminals should not be allowed to possess handguns and especially assault weapons. Although federal law prevents this, our state and local officials cannot enforce federal law.
4. Provide a separate charge for possession of a firearm when selling, manufacturing or possessing drugs.
5. Increase the minimum punishment for persons convicted of Assault and Battery with Intent to Kill. Just because the victim lived due to excellent medical attention does not mean the person did not intend to commit murder.
6. Increase penalties for unlawfully possessing a handgun or assault weapon.

Our state law needs to provide these common sense changes to support our local law enforcement. I support the South Carolina Criminal Justice Legislative Coalition comprised of state-wide law enforcement, solicitors and others who have a first hand view of the gaps in our state laws. I ask my state legislators to make a difference in my life by supporting all of these needed

changes.

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,