

TV Officer and Crime-Legislation Architect Join Forces

February 17, 2011 By [AL BAKER](#)

It is near the end of a 45-second online advertisement that the head of the Citizens Crime Commission walks over to the actor who plays an officer on TV.

“Our police officers deserve better,” says Richard M. Aborn, standing before a wall of law books and the American flag. “Help us protect them and help make us all safer.”

The actor is Vincent D’Onofrio, who plays the earnest detective Robert Goren on television’s “Law & Order: Criminal Intent.” And with him, Mr. Aborn is lending law enforcement credibility to a proposed ban on large-capacity ammunition magazines that has gained attention in Congress since 6 people were killed and 13 injured, including Representative Gabrielle Giffords of Arizona, in the Tucson shootings last month.

To the uninitiated, the debate over guns and ammunition is sometimes dominated by those with entrenched views on either side, while the voice of law enforcement is sometimes drowned out. On the streets, however, it is police officers, federal agents and others who enforce the laws who, along with civilians, are often in the most danger when criminals’ firepower reaches high levels.

Indeed, Jared L. Loughner, the man accused of opening fire at the congresswoman’s public event, had an oversize magazine of bullets that allowed him to quickly fire his Glock 19 semiautomatic more than 30 times before being forced to reload.

There once was a law in place to ban such magazines. It is a law that Mr. Aborn, who served as president of the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence from 1993 to 1996, is credited with championing, along with the Brady Bill and other legislation. But the law had a sunset provision and, in 2004, it died on the legislative vine.

So far, Mr. Aborn’s jumping back into the national debate over gun control, with Mr. D’Onofrio at his side, is having an impact. The spot has been linked to on Twitter and Facebook by Russell Simmons, the mogul, rap impresario and political advocate; and it has been sent out by New Yorkers Against Gun Violence.

“The more attention we can get to this very important issue to pass this bill, the better,” said Colin C. Weaver, that group’s deputy director.

Mr. D’Onofrio says in the ad that while the guns on his show are fake, “Our police officers face real threats every day.” He adds: “Police officers shouldn’t have to confront that much firepower on the street; it’s not fair.”

Al Baker, police bureau chief for The New York Times — and the son of a police lieutenant — brings you inside the nation’s largest police force every Thursday. Our Manhattan state courts correspondent, John Eligon, contributed reporting this week. Mr. Baker can be reached at OnePolicePlaza@nytimes.com.

<http://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/02/17/tv-officer-and-crime-legislation-architect-join-forces/?scp=1&sq=Vincent%20D’Onofrio&st=cse>