



CITIZENS CRIME COMMISSION
OF NEW YORK CITY

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In Aftermath of Arizona Shooting, Citizens Crime Commission Calls for Return of Ban on Large Capacity Ammunition Magazines

Gunman used a 31-round ammunition magazine; far more rounds than any civilian needs – was only stopped when he paused to reload

New York — Following this weekend's shooting rampage in Arizona, the Citizens Crime Commission called on Congress to help prevent such incidents by renewing the federal ban on large capacity ammunition magazines.

In an op-ed published today in the New York Daily News, Crime Commission President Richard Aborn noted that accused gunman Jared Loughner used a semi-automatic weapon with a 31-round ammunition magazine – which has been legal in the United States since 2004, when Congress allowed the ban on assault weapons and large capacity magazines to expire after ten years.

These large capacity magazines "carry far more bullets than any civilian could possibly ever use," Aborn writes in the op-ed. As a result they present a grave danger to public safety, as Saturday's shooting demonstrates.

The attack in Tucson was eerily similar to the December 1993 Long Island Railroad shooting spree that helped to inspire the assault weapon ban. In both incidents, individuals acquired a semiautomatic weapon along with large capacity ammunition magazines. "Shots ring out so fast that there is nowhere to hide," Aborn explained. "The shooting only stops when the gunman is tackled as he tries to reload."

In the aftermath of the LIRR shooting, President Clinton called for tighter gun controls, and in nine months, Congress imposed the ban on large capacity magazines, limiting civilian ownership to magazines with 10 rounds, along with restrictions on assault weapons.

Saturday's shooting has tragically once again demonstrated the need for Congressional action to protect the public from the threat of gun violence. And while much of the recent debate around gun control has focused on assault weapons, this has overshadowed the less controversial issue of limiting the amount of ammunition that civilians can carry.

"One is hard-pressed to find a reasonable argument justifying the need to carry 31 rounds of ammunition," Aborn writes. "There simply isn't one."

At the same time, there is no constitutional impediment to banning these large magazines. "Any reasonable reading of the recent Supreme Court cases involving the Second Amendment could not support the idea that Congress lacks the power to ban these large capacity magazines," Aborn explains.

In light of the ongoing serious risk to public safety posed by large capacity ammunition magazines, and the obvious need to restore the 10-round limit for civilian ownership, "What will it take to get Congress to act?" Aborn concluded.

The Citizens Crime Commission of New York City is an independent nonprofit organization working to make criminal justice and public safety policies and practices more effective through innovation, research, and education. In the last two decades, the Crime Commission has been a leader on key issues such as: expanding the use of DNA evidence in crime fighting, improving the juvenile justice system, creating alternatives to incarceration, developing interventions against gun violence, and highlighting the changing nature of the threat of terrorism.

For more information about the Citizens Crime Commission of New York City, please visit our website: www.nycrimecommission.org

The full text of the op-ed can be found on the Daily News website: http://www.nydailynews.com/opinions/2011/01/11/2011-01-11_in_wake_of_the_arizona_massacre_ban_highcapacity_magazines_this_one_should_be_si.html

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