

April 13, 2010

Dear Editor,

A group of state lawmakers recently authored a letter supporting three Delaware public housing authorities in banning gun possession on their premises.

Regulations to prevent public housing residents from legally possessing firearms in their own homes have been struck down in federal courts elsewhere in the nation, largely on the grounds that law-abiding citizens should not be denied their Second Amendment rights based on their address or their socio-economic status.

In their letter, the legislators noted that public housing units often shelter seniors and those with disabilities. We agree and believe that these vulnerable citizens should not be deprived of a viable means of self-defense. In fact, the illicit “no guns” policy increases the chances such citizens will be victimized because it reduces the risk to criminals.

While apparently well-intentioned, supporters of the “no guns” rule are bartering away basic rights in exchange for a false perception that it will ultimately produce a societal benefit. Such thinking is not only misguided, it’s dangerous. It invites a path down a slippery slope where the freedoms of all Americans are continually eroded by the creeping authority of an overzealous government in the name of the public good.

The public housing authorities’ gun ban treats their residents like second-class citizens by illegally denying them their federal and state constitutional rights. On those grounds alone, these ill-advised regulations need to be abolished.

Sincerely

Rep. Ruth Briggs King, 37th District

Sen. Joe Booth, 19th District