

racial discrimination is widely reported and unemployment among Uighurs is high.

Since the early 1990s, the growing strength of the Islamic cultural and religious movement in Xinjiang, combined with the end of Soviet political domination in Central Asia, has led the central government once again to impose increasingly tight restrictions on religious worship and practice in the region. The number of schools and mosques forced to close is rapidly increasing, displaying the strong similarities between the PRC's treatment of this region and Tibet.

Amnesty International reports that torture of political prisoners in XUAR is systematic and that new and particularly cruel methods of torture are used that are not known to be used elsewhere in China. The XUAR is the only region in China where political prisoners are known to be executed. They have been executed for offenses related to opposition activities, street protests or clashes with security forces. As true in other parts of the PRC, the death penalty is also applicable for a wide range of offenses, including non violent ones such as economic and drug related crimes. There are two reasons why this abuse is so much worse than in other areas of China. First, its history of independence and proximity to free countries, and second is the fact that the rest of the world seems to have forgotten them.

Amnesty International is calling on the Chinese government to establish a special commission to investigate human rights violations and economic, social, and cultural needs of the region. I want to join in this call, and demand that the Chinese government stop treating its citizens this way. The international community must be made aware of these atrocities and it is time for us to stand up and let the Uighurs know that the world has not forgotten them, and the Chinese government can not continue with this type of behavior.

THE SECOND AMENDMENT AND GUN CONTROL LEGISLATION

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 16, 1999

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to offer for the record a memorandum on the Second Amendment and Gun Control Legislation that was written by Professor Robert A. Sedler, an outstanding constitutional law professor who has taught at the University of Kentucky Law School and now teaches at Wayne State University School of Law. Professor Sedler previously worked with my Judicial Committee staff on constitutional matters during the recent impeachment proceedings. Given the current national debate on gun control and gun control legislation, his memorandum is particularly enlightening.

THE SECOND AMENDMENT AND GUN CONTROL LEGISLATION

(By Robert A. Sedler, Professor of Constitutional Law, Wayne State University School of Law)

Opponents of gun control legislation, such as the NRA, frequently invoke the Second Amendment to argue that gun control legislation is unconstitutional. Such an argument is completely misplaced for two rea-

sons. First, under current constitutional doctrine, as propounded by the United States Supreme Court, the Second Amendment does not establish an individual right to bear arms. The Second Amendment is a state's rights provision, guaranteeing a collective rather than an individual right. Second, even if the Supreme Court were to hold in the future that the Second Amendment does create an individual right to bear arms, that right, like other constitutional rights, would not be absolute, and would be subject to reasonable regulation that did not impose an "undue burden" on that right.

The Second Amendment starts out by referring to state militias, which were the forerunner of the present National Guard: "A well-regulated Militia being necessary to the security of a free State," and goes on with the more familiar: "The right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed." At the time of the Constitution every state had a militia, consisting of all able-bodied men. When there was a call to arms to defend the state, each able-bodied man was supposed to show up with his own rifle. Every man had a rifle, which he used for hunting and for the legitimate self-defense of his family and his home. The Constitution gave the federal government a lot of power over the state militias. Congress could call them into federal service (Art. I, sec. 8, cl. 15), as units of the Michigan National Guard have been called up for service in Bosnia and Kosovo. When the militias were called into federal service, they were subject to the control of the President as Commander-in-Chief (Art. II, sec. 2, cl. 1). Congress was also given the power to govern the organization and training of the state militias (Art. I, sec. 8, cl. 16), just as today Congress regulates the state National Guard.

After the Constitution was ratified, there was concern in the states that Congress would use its power over the state militias simply to abolish them. This concern was addressed by the Second Amendment. The language and historical context of the Second Amendment indicates that it was to be a states rights provision, it was intended to prevent Congress from abolishing the state militias. Under this view of the Second Amendment, it would not be the source of an individual right to bear arms, and federal gun control laws could not be challenged as violative of the Second Amendment.¹

The contrary view focuses on the fact that the time of the Second Amendment, all the able-bodied men that made up the state militia were expected to have their own rifles to bring with them whenever there was a call to arms. Under this view, the Second Amendment would be the source of an individual right to bear arms, just as the First Amendment is the source of an individual right to free speech, and federal gun control laws could be challenged as violative of the Second Amendment. Many state constitutions do expressly establish an individual right to bear arms. The Michigan Constitution, Art. I, sec 6, for example, provides that: "Every person has a right to bear arms for the defense of himself and the state." There is much debate today among law professors and others over whether or not the Second Amendment should be seen as establishing an individual right to bear arms.

Of course, only the United States Supreme Court can say authoritatively what the Second Amendment means. The only Supreme Court case to expressly deal with that subject is the older case of *United States v. Miller*, 307 U.S. 174 (1939). In that case, the Court rejected a Second Amendment challenge to a

federal law banning a number of weapons such as sawed-off shotguns and machine guns. The Court seemed to say that the Second Amendment was a state's rights provision intended to prevent Congress from abolishing the state militias, and was not intended to establish an individual right to bear arms. The Court stated: "With obvious purpose to assure the continuation and render possible the effectiveness of such forces, the declaration and guarantee of the Second Amendment were made. It must be interpreted and applied with that end in view," and concluded that, "[i]n the absence of any evidence tending to show that the possession or use of a 'shotgun having a barrel of less than eighteen inches in length' at this time has some reasonable relationship to the preservation or efficiency of a well-regulated militia, we cannot say that the Second Amendment guarantees the right to keep and bear such an instrument." 307 U.S. at 178. The Supreme Court has not had a case dealing with the meaning of the Second Amendment since *Miller*, except to cite *Miller* for the proposition that federal restrictions on the use of firearms by individuals do not "trench upon any constitutionally protected liberties." *Lewis v. United States*, 445 U.S. 55, 65, n.8 (1980).

Because lower federal courts are bound by United States Supreme Court decisions unless and until they are overruled by the Supreme Court itself, the federal courts of appeal have unanimously held, as the Sixth Circuit has put it, that, "[i]t is clear that the Second Amendment guarantees a collective rather than an individual right." *United States v. Warin*, 530 F.2d 103, 1106 (6th Cir. 1976) (upholding ban on possession of sub-machine guns). Recent cases holding that the Second Amendment does not establish an individual right to bear arms include *Hickman v. Block*, 81 F.3d 98 (9th Cir. 1996) (person denied a concealed weapon permit has no standing to claim that denial violates his Second Amendment rights); *Love v. Peppersack*, 47 F. 3d 120 (4th Cir. 1995) (denial of application to purchase handgun cannot be challenged as violative of Second Amendment).²

The Supreme Court's decision in *Miller* sets forth the current state of the law, which is why the lower federal courts must reject any claim that the Second Amendment establishes a constitutionally-protected individual right to bear arms. The Supreme Court may change its mind, but unless and until it does, the federal courts cannot properly use the Second Amendment to declare any gun control law unconstitutional.

Let us assume, however, that the Supreme Court does change its mind and holds that the Second Amendment does protect the individual right to bear arms. This would not have any effect at all on existing and proposed federal gun control laws, such as the ban on assault weapons, the ban on possession of a gun by a convicted felon, a requirement that guns contain safety locks and be kept out of the reach of children, or a background check waiting period. Constitutional rights are not absolute, and are subject to reasonable regulation in the public interest. Guidance on this point can be obtained from the decisions of state courts upholding gun control laws as a reasonable regulation of the right to bear arms. In upholding a ban on

¹ The Supreme Court long ago held that the Second Amendment does not apply to the states. *Presser v. Illinois*, 116 U.S. 252 (1886).

² In view of this unbroken line of federal appellate decisions, the very recent decision of a federal judge in Texas holding that the Second Amendment establishes an individual right to bear arms and renders unconstitutional a federal law prohibiting possession of a firearm while under a court restraining order, *United States v. Emerson*, 1999 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 4700, U.S. Dist. Ct. N.D. Tex., 4/7/99, is puzzling and is likely to be reversed on appeal.

dangerous weapons over 60 years ago, for example, the Michigan Supreme Court stated as follows: "Some weapons are adapted and recognized by the common opinion of good citizens as proper for the private defense of person and property. Other are the peculiar tools of the criminal. The police power of the state to preserve public safety and peace and to regulate the bearing of arms may take account of the character and ordinary use of weapons and interdict those whose customary employment of individuals is to violate the law." *People v. Brown*, 253 Mich. 537, 539, 235 N.W. 245, 246 (1931).

Moreover, since constitutional rights are not absolute, any regulation of a right—even a fundamental one, such as a woman's right to abortion—is not subject to constitutional challenge unless it imposes an undue burden on the exercise of that right. *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey*, 505 U.S. 833 (1992). Thus, a 24 hour waiting period before a woman can have an abortion was held in *Casey* to be constitutional because it does not prevent the women from having an abortion. By the same token, a three day waiting period for the sale of a gun at a gun show so that a background check can be run on the purchaser does not impose an undue burden on the right to bear arms, since it does not prevent a qualified purchaser from obtaining the gun. Nor does a requirement that guns be equipped with safety locks impose any burden at all on a person's ability to obtain and use guns. Nor could it possibly be suggested that the Constitution stands as an obstacle to denying a gun to a convicted felon or a mentally unstable person. Likewise, a ban on carrying a concealed weapon would be constitutionally permissible because of the clear danger to public safety that can result from people pulling out guns and engaging in a shootout in the public streets.

A constitutionally protected right to bear arms would include the right to have a rifle for hunting and for defense of the home. It might also include the right to have a handgun for defense of the home, although this is debatable. A ban on private ownership of handguns would serve the public interest in crime prevention, since so many crimes are committed by the use of handguns. This aside, most assuredly, the right to bear arms would not include the right to have a sub-machine gun or a sawed-off shotgun or an assault weapon, or to carry concealed weapons, or to brandish a gun in the public streets. And again, any right to gun ownership would be subject to reasonable regulation in the public interest.

In summary, under the current state of the law, the Second Amendment does not establish an individual right to bear arms. But even if the Supreme Court were to subsequently hold that it did, all the present and proposed federal gun control laws would be upheld as constitutional, because they are reasonable and do not impose an undue burden on the right to bear arms.

TRIBUTE TO LINNEAUS C.
DORMAN

HON. DAVE CAMP

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 16, 1999

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Dr. Linneaus C. Dorman of Midland, Michigan, who recently received the 1999 Percy L. Julian Award, the highest award presented by the National Organization for the Professional

Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers. Dr. Dorman earned this award for his pure and applied research in engineering and science.

I would like to congratulate Dr. Dorman and draw attention of my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives and my constituents in the 4th Congressional District to Dr. Dorman's distinguished career.

Dr. Dorman's fascination with science began in his childhood, with a friend and a chemistry set. Since then he has made remarkable contributions to his field. He earned his bachelor of science in chemistry from Bradley University and a Ph.D. in organic chemistry from Indiana University in 1961.

After receiving his Ph.D., Dr. Dorman went to Midland to work for The Dow Chemical Company, where he worked in research and development with a primary focus on the chemistry of carbon compounds, found in living things. His work in agricultural chemical synthesis, automated protein synthesis, ceramics, and polymers have earned him high praise from his peers.

Today he continues to be involved with science and shares his love of it with young people in the community, while remaining a member of the National Organization for the Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers.

Dr. Dorman's contribution to science and the community make him an outstanding role model and a respected professional in his field. I am honored today to recognize Dr. Dorman, his professional accomplishments, and his willingness to share his knowledge.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT AND ECONOMIC CONVERSION ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 16, 1999

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, long after the end of the Cold War and the breakup of the Soviet Union, the threat of nuclear weapons remains. Today, the United States continues to possess around 7,300 operational nuclear warheads, and the other declared nuclear powers—Russia, Great Britain, France, and China—are estimated to possess over 10,000 operational warheads. Furthermore, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, especially in countries in unstable regions, is now one of the leading military threats to the national security of the United States and its allies.

The United States, as the sole remaining superpower and the leading power in the world, has an obligation to take bold steps toward encouraging other nuclear powers to eliminate their arsenals and to prevent the proliferation of these weapons. That is why I have chosen today, on the 54th anniversary of the first test of a nuclear explosive in Alamogordo, New Mexico, to introduce the Nuclear Disarmament and Economic Conversion Act of 1999. The bill would require the United States to disable and dismantle its nuclear weapons and to refrain from replacing them with weapons of mass destruction once foreign countries possessing nuclear weapons enact and execute similar requirements.

My bill also provides that the resources used to sustain our nuclear weapons program

be used to address human and infrastructure needs such as housing, health care, education, agriculture, and the environment. By eliminating our nuclear weapons arsenal, the United States can realize an additional, "peace dividend" from which to fund critical domestic initiatives, including new programs proposed in the Administration's FY 2000 budget.

Many courageous leaders from the United States and from around the world have spoken out on the obsolescence of nuclear weapons and the need for their elimination. Those leaders include retired Air Force General Lee Butler and more than 60 other retired generals and admirals from 17 nations, who, on December 5, 1996, issued a statement that "the continuing existence of nuclear weapons in the armories of nuclear powers, and the ever-present threat of acquisition of these weapons by others, constitute a peril to global peace and security and to the safety and survival of the people we are dedicated to protect" and that the "creation of a nuclear-weapons-free world [is] necessary [and] possible."

Recent events on the Indian subcontinent demonstrate the urgent need for passage of my bill. Last year, in defiance of the non-proliferation efforts of the United States and the world community, India detonated several underground nuclear test devices, after it had refrained from doing so since its first nuclear test in 1973. Pakistan, a neighboring country with which India has fought three wars since the British colonial period ended in 1947, soon followed suit with its own nuclear tests. The trading of nuclear tests last year between India and Pakistan were a source of heightened concern as armed skirmishes persisted last month in the disputed Kashmir region adjoining those two nations.

The United States and the world community clearly must redouble their efforts to obtain commitments from India and Pakistan to refrain from actual deployment of nuclear weapons, as well as to contain other countries that aspire to become nuclear powers, such as Iran, Iraq, and North Korea, from moving forward with their programs. However, the United States will be far more credible and persuasive in these efforts if we are willing to take the initiative in dismantling our own nuclear weapons program and helping arms industries to convert plants and employees to providing products and services that enhance the wealth and quality of life of ordinary citizens. I ask my colleagues to cosponsor the Nuclear Disarmament and Economic Conversion Act of 1999 and for the committees with jurisdiction over the bill to mark it up quickly so that it can be considered and passed by the full House.

TRIBUTE TO LAVONNE LITTLE
BISHOP

HON. CHARLES W. "CHIP" PICKERING

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, July 16, 1999

Mr. PICKERING. Mr. Speaker, I rise in respect and remembrance of a gracious and remarkable lady in my district, Mrs. LaVonne Bishop, affectionately known as "Miss LaVonne" who passed away on July 10, 1999, at her home in St. Catherine's Village in Madison, MS. She was 95 years of age, and the