something good and solid and decent. AmeriCorps helps provide that opportunity and truly puts the states in the driver's seat, which translates into meaningful ownership, and impact, at the state and local level.●

ONE GUN A MONTH FORUM

● Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, on September 2, I convened a forum on gun trafficking. Across America, it is simply too easy for criminals, particularly gangs, to purchase and distribute large numbers of guns. And more guns in the wrong hands means more murder and mayhem on our streets.

Because we must move more aggressively to stop this deadly crime, I introduced S. 466, the Anti-Gun Trafficking Act. The testimony I heard at the forum has made me even more determined to pass this sensible legislation and help stop gun traffickers.

In order to share the insights of the witnesses at the forum with my colleagues and the public, I am submitting the testimony presented for inclusion in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. Previously, I submitted the testimony of Mayor Edward Rendell, James and Sarah Brady from the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence and Handgun Control, and John Schuler, Kenisha Green and Quanita Favorite, three young people from the D.C. area.

Today, I would like to submit a statement from Captain R. Lewis Vass, Commander of the Criminal Justice Information Services Division of the Virginia Department of State Police. His testimony bears witness to the success of Virginia's one-gun-in-thirty-day law which was enacted in 1993. Since 1993, the number of crime guns traced back to Virginia from the Northeast dropped by nearly 40 percent. Prior to one-gun-a-month, Virginia had been among the leading suppliers of weapons to the so-called ''Iron Pipeline'' that fed the arms race on the streets of Northeastern cities.

Mr. President, I ask that the testimony of Captain R. Lewis Vass be printed in the RECORD.

The testimony follows:

TESTIMONY OF CAPTAIN R. LEWIS VASS, SEPTEMBER 2, 1998

Senator Lautenberg, I am Captain Lewis Vass, Commander of the Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Division of the Virginia Department of State Police. I have been a sworn police officer with the Virginia State Police for the past 32 years. Since the enactment and implementation of Virginia's instant check firearms purchase approval program in 1989, I have been responsible for the administration and operation of the Firearms Transaction Center. One of the functions of the center is the tracking of multiple handgun sales and issuance of multiple handgun purchase certificates approving or denying the application to purchase more than one handgun within a thirty-day period.

I appear here today to speak with regard to Virginia's one-gun-in thirty-day law and the impact the law has had on gun trafficking in Virginia.

Prior to the enactment of Virginia's one handgun in thirty day law, Virginia was described as one of the major source states for illegal handguns being seized on the east coast. Information provided by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms regarding firearms seized from March to August of 1991 ranked Virginia as follows: New York Project Lead—(108 Firearms), Ranked Number One; District of Columbia Project Lead)—(244 Firearms), Ranked Number One; Boston Project Lead)—(14 Firearms) Ranked Number Three; Total Firearms—366 Firearms.

In 1989, the Virginia General Assembly enacted legislation which created Virginia's instant background system to address the flow of firearms going to prohibited persons. This system, even though it prevents prohibited persons from purchasing firearms from federally licensed firearms dealers, does not eliminate the flow of Virginia handguns being seized in other states. The Virginia General Assembly studied this issue and amended the law to reduce the flow of Virginia handguns to other states. The law was revised in 1993, to limit the number of handguns to one that a person could purchased during any thirty day period. The law went into effect on July 1, 1993, to address the growing problem of handguns being purchased from Virginia's firearms dealers and being seized by law enforcement authorities in other states namely New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts and the District of Columbia. Another issue that was addressed by enactment of this legislation was the influx of narcotics into Virginia as payment for the firearms being sold in other states. Even when cash was used to purchase the firearms from the trafficker, the trafficker in turn purchased narcotics for sale on Virginia's streets.

An example of illegal gun trafficking from Virginia to states in the north eastern corridor involved a gun shop located directly across the street from the Virginia State Police headquarters. This was a mom-and-pop gun shop favored by gun runners because of the ease in which firearms could be obtained. During an investigation into illegal gun trafficking, it was found that gun purchasers from New York would come to Virginia and solicit the help of either street people or college students possessing a valid Virginia drivers license to purchase firearms for them for a small fee. These ''straw purchasers'' would go into the gun shop and purchase a box of guns, a box contains ten handguns. The firearms would be turned over to the gun trafficker in the parking lot of the store. Videos captured by ATF agents during the investigation revealed that these types of illegal transactions were conducted numerous times a day almost every day of the week that the store was open.

During February 1992, the owner of the gunshop cut to five the maximum number of firearms transferred per purchase to five at the conclusion of a case in which a trafficking group moved 240 firearms from Virginia to New York, 85 percent or approximately 204 of them from this gun shop.

The investigation concluded with the arrest of the store owners and closing of the firearms outlet.

A Project Lead report released by ATF in 1992 reporting the results of firearms traced to New York from January 1, 1992 through June 16, 1992 revealed that for 501 of 805 firearms traces received the leading source states were as follows: 1. Virginia—108 firearms, 20%; 2. Florida—92 firearms, 18%; 3. Texas—39 firearms, 8%; 4. Connecticut—37 firearms, 7%; 5. Ohio—34 firearms, 7%.

A 1997 trace report released by ATF shows that the percentage of firearms from Virginia seized in New York has dropped to 12.5 percent as compared to 20 percent in 1992. While Virginia remains the leading source state for firearms seized in Washington, D.C., the percentage of firearms recovered in D.C. has dropped from 35.1 percent in 1991 to 26.8 percent in 1997. Additionally, Virginia has dropped from the number two source state in 1990 to number eight in 1997 for guns seized in Boston.

The law was designed to stop the flow of handguns being purchased for illegal purposes and transported out of state, but not to impede the law-abiding citizens from purchasing more than one handgun in thirty days. The statute was designed with provisions for the purchase of multiple handguns for collections by collectors, business use, personal use and estate sales. An individual desiring to purchase more than one handgun in thirty days is required to complete a multiple handgun purchase application. The application is submitted to the State Police and processed by the Firearms Transaction Center (FTC). The FTC conducts an enhanced background check on the applicant. If the applicant is approved, he/she is issued a multiple handgun purchase certificate which permits him to purchase the number and type of handguns requested in the application. The FTC has issued 2,245 multiple handgun purchase certificates from July 1, 1993 to July 30, 1998 while denying 164 applications because the applicant did not meet the multiple purchase requirements or had already exceeded the limit for the thirty-day period.

The one handgun in thirty days was studied by the Virginia Crime Commission in 1995; copy attached. The results of that study concluded that most gun control policies currently being advocated in the United States (e.g., licensing, registration, and one-gun-a-month) could, most fairly, be described as efforts to limit the supply of guns available in the illegal market. In other words, these are policies crafted to keep guns from prescribed individuals. Once enacted; however, it is important to demonstrate that they are effective. This study, which is attached, looks at the impact of Virginia's one-gun-a-month law, provides persuasive evidence that a prohibition on the acquisition of more than one handgun per month by an individual is an effective means of disrupting the illegal interstate transfer of firearms.

As a follow-up to this previous study, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms provided this Department with information on firearms seized on the east coast regarding Virginia firearms. The information revealed that of the firearms seized in 1997, 184 originated from Virginia. Of that number, 87 of these firearms were obtained after the law was enacted in July 1993. This demonstrates a significant reduction from 366 firearms for six months in 1991 to 87 firearms in 12 months of 1997.

We believe that Virginia's one handgun in thirty day law has had its intended effect of reducing Virginia's status as a source state for gun trafficking. At the same time, the law does not appear to create an onerous burden for the law-abiding gun purchaser who apply for and are granted multiple handgun purchase certificates. Even though there is not conclusive evidence that the one-gun-in-thirty-days reduced the number of violent criminal offenses occurring with firearms, the number of Murders, Robberies and Aggravated Assaults occurring with the use of a firearm has significantly dropped since 1993 the year the one-gun-in-thirty-days was enacted.●

DOUGLAS FONTAINE

● Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I am very pleased to learn that the Mississippi Hotel and Motel Association