



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on December 1, 2015

NFL Nixes Police Union Request to Lift Gun Ban at Games

The National Fraternal Order of Police asked the NFL to lift its ban on fans carrying guns to games, asserting that the ban “weakens safety and security.” The NFL, however, intends to maintain its policy.



Until last year, NFL teams or venues were able to decide for themselves whether legally owned guns were allowed into games. Just before the start of the 2014 season, however, NFL officials issued a no-gun policy following “an extensive process that included consultation with a multitude of law enforcement agencies and security experts,” Fox News writes.

NFL spokesman Brian McCarthy told Fox News that the NFL had determined that fans could be best protected by only permitting on-duty officers “specifically assigned to work the game” to carry firearms. But in light of the recent terror attacks in Paris, the National Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) asked the NFL to reverse its decision.

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In a November 20 letter to NFL commissioner Roger Goodell, FOP President Chuck Canterbury asked the NFL to reconsider its ban on concealed weapons, at least for retired and off-duty law enforcement officers:

Today, I am writing on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to urge you to rescind this policy, which weakens the safety and security of NFL players, personnel and fans. The terrorist attacks and threats of attacks from organizations like the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) are selecting targets based on the amount of death and injury they can inflict — mass murder and casualty events.

Well-attended venues and areas are being deliberately targeted by the radical killers who do not intend or expect to survive the assault. Law enforcement, even when working actively with highly trained and skilled security professionals, cannot be certain that all threats will be detected and neutralized.

Unsurprisingly, gun control advocates have criticized Canterbury’s letter, accusing him of acting “to protect the interests of the gun industry.”

But Canterbury’s letter recognizes the limitations of law enforcement in that it cannot guarantee with certainty whether a threat exists or not, nor can police officers be everywhere. Allowing legal gun owners to bring concealed weapons to packed football stadiums enables spectators to protect themselves in the event that the police can not.

Canterbury’s letter precedes a rare worldwide travel alert issued by the U.S. State Department on November 23 that cautions American travelers about threats posed by the Islamic State or copycats.



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“U.S. citizens should exercise vigilance when in public places or using transportation,” the State Department’s alert said. “Be aware of immediate surroundings and avoid large crowds or crowded places. Exercise particular caution during the holiday season and at holiday festivals or events.”

Canterbury’s request, in contrast to the State Department’s advice, would enable citizens to live freely without fear so they do not have to “avoid large crowds.”

GOP presidential hopeful Donald Trump made waves following the November terror attacks in Paris by daring to insinuate that Parisians may have been particularly targeted because of France’s tough gun control laws.

“Isn’t it interesting that the tragedy in Paris took place in one of the toughest gun control countries in the world?” Trump tweeted on November 13, prompting a swift rebuke from the French ambassador to the United States.

Perhaps the timing of Trump’s tweet was unfortunate, but his conclusion was not inaccurate. John Lott, president of the Crime Prevention Research Center and author of *More Guns, Less Crime*, has observed that mass public shootings almost exclusively occur in gun-free zones:

Since at least 1950, all but two public mass shootings in America have taken place where general citizens are banned from carrying guns. In Europe, there have been no exceptions. Every mass public shooting has occurred in a gun-free zone. And Europe is no stranger to mass shootings. It has been host to three of the six worst K-12 school shootings and by far the worst mass public shooting perpetrated by a single individual.

Lott also cites several shooters, including the Aurora movie theater gunman and the Charleston, South Carolina, shooter, who admitted to targeting certain areas because they were gun-free zones.

Elliot Rodger, who fatally shot three people in Santa Barbara, California, last year, explained in his 141-page “manifesto” that he ruled out a number of targets because he feared that a person with a gun would end his killing spree early.

And though rarely reported in the mainstream media, there are numerous stories of civilians who were able to stop mass shootings with their legally-owned guns.

In May 2012, off-duty Bexar County Sergeant Lisa Castellano stopped a gunman who opened fire in a crowded movie theater in San Francisco. The gunman had managed to injure only one person before Castellano wounded him and likely prevented what could have been significant loss of life.

In March of this year, when 17-year-old Jaquise Lewis and several of his friends began shooting at people in Los Altos Skate Park in Albuquerque, a witness who had a concealed carry permit shot Lewis, effectively ending the rampage.

An Uber driver with a concealed-carry permit ended a shooting spree this past April after a gunman opened fire on a crowd in Logan Square in Chicago.

Still, the NFL has elected to maintain its policy, refusing to make exceptions even for off-duty officers.

“Off-duty officers attend games as spectators and are unknown to working law enforcement officers and security personnel,” McCarthy said. “They may not have the same training and do not participate in the weekly preparation meetings. They are not included in the on-site chain of command. The well-intentioned display or use of a gun could have serious unintended and potentially tragic consequences.”

Meanwhile, an October Gallup poll found that the majority of Americans believe that if more citizens



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carried concealed weapons, the country would be safer. Unfortunately, the NFL is ensuring that its spectators will be “fair game.”



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