



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on January 6, 2011

NH Rep. Holds Home Intruder at Gunpoint

A freshman legislator in New Hampshire made front-page news by holding an intruder at gunpoint Tuesday night until the police arrived at his Amherst home.

State Rep. Peter Hansen, 67, told police the intruder broke into his home late Tuesday night, claiming he had been shot. When the man walked through the kitchen and lay down in the coatroom, Hansen retrieved his pistol and called the police, who arrived “within three to five minutes, I’d say — probably closer to three,” he recalled.

The man, identified by police as Christopher Spikes, 20, was a state witness against Steven Spader, convicted of murder in a 2009 home invasion in Mont Vernon, New Hampshire, where a woman was hacked to death and her daughter maimed by machete-wielding assailants. Spader was sentenced to life in prison. His alleged accomplice, Christopher Gribble, is scheduled to go on trial next month.



Spikes testified in Spader’s trial that he was with Spader and Gribble when he heard them bragging about the killing. Hansen said the intruder mentioned being involved in the Mont Vernon invasion. Police charged Spikes with criminal mischief and trespassing after arresting him at Hansen’s home. The story, along with pictures of both Hansen and Spikes, ran on the front page of today’s [New Hampshire Union Leader](#).

The first-term legislator chuckled when asked by *The New American* about his sudden fame: “It’s a bit overwhelming. It was certainly not my intention to gain notoriety of any sort. But you have to do what you have to do.”

He and his wife were upstairs when the intruder entered the house through the cellar, Hansen related, adding:

He was not armed, but I did not know that. I felt I had to retrieve my personal protection device [a Kel-Tec .380 semi-automatic]. I regret not having it as close as I should have. I should have had it with me. You hate to leave an intruder on the floor while you go to retrieve your piece, especially when there are relatives in the house.

Hansen said he has always owned hunting rifles, but he bought the pistol five or six years ago. He said he worried that future gun-control legislation might limit access to handguns, and reports of crime in the area added to his concerns. “I wanted to be cautious and protective,” he added, explaining that he considers himself a “strong proponent” of the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guaranteeing



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“the right of the people to keep and bear arms.”

“I believe it needs to be where it is and it needs to be left alone,” he said of the amendment. As it happened, the incident at Hansen’s home came the night before his first day in the legislature, when he cast his vote on a measure to repeal a long-standing ban on guns in the House chamber.

“In case you’re wondering, I voted Yes,” in favor of the repeal, he said. The new Republican majority in the House voted Wednesday to revoke the ban in Representatives Hall and adjacent areas. The ban had been in effect since 1971, when it was adopted by a Republican legislature. On Tuesday, the Joint Legislative Facilities Committee voted to repeal a ban on guns in any part of the State House complex. That wider ban was enacted by the Democratic majority last year, inspired by a March, 2009 incident when armed citizens in the House gallery stood and shouted at legislators during a hearing and vote on a resolution asserting the state’s rights against freedom from federal interference, [WMUR-TV in Manchester reported](#). The resolution was defeated.

In Tuesday’s debate, lawmakers sparred over whether the ban had made the State House a safer or more dangerous place for law-abiding citizens and their elected Representatives. Sessions sometimes run into the night hours and some Representatives said they feel it is not safe to walk unarmed from the State House to the legislative parking lots. Rep. Jennifer Coffey (R-Andover) said she has received threats that have convinced her of the need for self-protection. “I have a right to live and I don’t believe I have to give that up to a criminal,” she said.

When former state Rep. Valerie Hardy, a Litchfield Democrat, read a list of incidents around the nation involving gun violence, House Republican Leader D. J. Bettencourt was quick to respond. “The vast majority of places where those took place were gun free zones, were they not?” he asked.

“Gun free zones, if we wake up and smell the coffee, are a killing zone,” replied Rep. Al Baldasaro, a Londonderry Republican.

Senate Democratic Leader Sylvia Larsen of Concord argued that the debate reflected a misplaced priority. “Our most important job this session is to address economic issues,” she stressed. “We’re spending our first day addressing an issue I fear will cause problems over time.”

But in his interview with *The New American*, Hansen observed that the repeal was a defense of a fundamental liberty. “The value is it adheres to the Constitution,” he declared.

Photos of civilians being trained in pistol use to fend off terrorists: AP Images



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