



April 14, 2020

The Honorable Congressman Henry C. Johnson, Jr.  
Georgia 4th Congressional District  
2240 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

**House Bill 5717 – Request for Withdrawal**

Dear Congressman Johnson,

I write you today on behalf of Firearms Policy Coalition, a fiercely non-partisan nonprofit organization that promotes individual liberty and sound public policy through litigation, research, education, grassroots outreach, and direct advocacy. House Bill 5717 would ban constitutionally protected firearms and their components, increase costs for small business owners, and would make firearms unaffordable for the working poor, both in your district, and in communities across the Nation.

The majority of H.R. 5717's features are facially unconstitutional. Semi-automatic firearms, nearly all of which would be banned under this bill, are firearms in "common use for lawful purposes like self-defense," and are thus protected under the Second Amendment. *District of Columbia v. Heller*, 554 U.S. 570, 624-25 (2008) (citing *United States v. Miller*, 307 U.S. 174, 179 (1939)). Firearms components listed in H.R. 5717, e.g. the magazines you wish to ban, are also protected as ordinary and necessary equipment. *Heller* at 624.

When the Founders drafted the Bill of Rights, they included the Second Amendment not only to ensure the ability of the fledgling states to protect themselves from foreign aggression, but also to enable them to oppose the tyrannical actions of the government. By compelling federal licensure, H.R. 5717 creates a de facto registry of firearms owners, essentially enabling any future, authoritarian administration to swiftly and accurately target gun owners for activity such as civil disobedience or expressing unpopular opinions. As a representative who voted in favor of impeachment, I must ask, would you want any president having such power?

Finally, as a matter of public policy and public safety, we absolutely oppose H.R. 5717 because it will disenfranchise nearly 40 million individuals from exercising their Second Amendment right to self-defense by taxing firearms at 30% and ammunition at 50%. Not only will this bill make it cost prohibitive for non-owners to purchase a firearm, but it will make unduly burdensome on current firearms owners to practice, which decreases public safety. Considering you represent a Congressional District which is majority-minority and which has a median income of less than \$50,000 per year, we find it unconscionable that you would support this bill. Disadvantaged Americans are the most likely to be violently victimized, and thus have the dearest need for an effective means of self-defense. This bill would deal them the greatest harm of all.

For all these reasons, we respectfully ask that you withdraw House Bill 5717.

Sincerely,

Matthew Larosiere  
Director of Legal Policy