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Senate

PROTECTION OF LAWFUL COMMERCE IN ARMS ACT

Mr. Carper. Madam President, I rise in support of the Bingaman amendment. I would just note, if I could, my understanding is this amendment would clarify that the manufacturer or the seller of a firearm would still be liable for the foreseeable injuries to a consumer who purchases a firearm, just like the producer of a toaster or a lawnmower or car seats or any other product, for that matter.

I also want to take a moment to speak on behalf of an amendment that is going to be offered and probably voted on tomorrow; and that is, with respect to gun shows, an effort, on the part of Senators MCCAIN and REED to close what many of us believe is a loophole.

By way of full disclosure, this past weekend I have been working with my youngest son, who is an eighth grader in a school back in Delaware. In school, he has a genealogy project. He has to not only tell his life story, but he has to tell the story of both sides of his family—his parents' ancestors—all the way back to North Carolina and Germany, and places like that.

One of things we came across, in looking through the genealogy, is that about 150 years ago, one of the things that was going on in the Carper family, in West Virginia, was the development of something called the Carper rifle.

It turned out to be a firearm that bears my family's name and was thought to be a weapon people were anxious to have a long time ago. In fact, we still trade a few from time to time. My dad was a big hunter and fisherman. I also like to fish and take my boys. My sons are Boy Scouts and they are being introduced to weapons as they go through their training. Occasionally, we will do some trap shooting. I remember my dad being a gun collector, too. I remember visiting him and my mom in Florida where they had lived for some time. I remember looking at his gun collection. He had enough for a small army in their home in Seminole, FL. He had rifles, shotguns, and even a musket or two, and handguns as well. He used to say, with some humor, if anybody tried to break into this house, it would be the last time they tried to do it. All I know is nobody tried to break into their house.

My dad also liked people. He was a claims adjuster for Nationwide Insurance Company. In the course of his work, he worked with troopers, police, law enforcement officers. He had a great affection for them and the work they did. I am like my father in some ways and different in some ways. We share an affection for the outdoors and also for people. We have a strong respect for the second amendment of the Constitution, believing people ought to have a right to bear arms and own arms.

We have a situation in Delaware, as in about 30-some other States, where folks can go to a gun show—and people are not able to buy guns under Delaware law. But you can show up at a licensed dealer and they call in to the State Bureau of Investigation, and in a minute or two they will know whether you are eligible to buy a gun.

That same person can go to a gun show in my State and if they deal with a licensed dealer, within a couple of minutes, they know whether the person may or may not buy a weapon. If not, they are told you cannot buy a weapon. Yet somebody can go as far from me as to the reporter right here, who is not a licensed dealer, and that same person who cannot purchase a gun in my State will purchase a gun. It happens in my State and in dozens of other States around America.

My law enforcement officers want to see a change. They want to see it stopped. All of our major law enforcement agencies in Delaware, from Dover, to Wilmington, to Newcastle, would like to see that loophole closed. Tomorrow when we vote on the gun show loophole amendment from Senators MCCAIN and REED, I plan to vote for it. It is good, commonsense legislation. I hope it will carry the day tomorrow when we vote.

I thank the Senator from New Mexico for allowing me to have this time.