



Attorney General candidate urges leaders to give towns, cities and villages the opportunity to ban assault weapons

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HIGH LAND PARK - In a letter addressed to every elected member of the IL General Assembly, Mayor Nancy Rotering urged action in passing legislation that would give Illinois municipalities the power to regulate the ownership or possession of assault weapons.

"As I have in the past, I am asking again for the help of every legislator in the State of Illinois to fix an arbitrary time constraint that was thrust upon municipalities in 2013.



As a Mayor, I led the charge to ban assault weapons and stood up to the NRA in an effort to reduce the risk of a mass shooting. By passing legislation, the members of the General Assembly can provide Illinois municipalities the opportunity to protect their communities," stated Nancy Rotering.

The highly controversial 2013 Illinois law that allowed Illinois residents to carry concealed weapons also prohibited local governments from banning assault weapons, aside from a 10-day window of opportunity for them to institute such a ban. Highland Park passed an assault weapons and high capacity magazine ban in 2013 and prevailed in a federal lawsuit that challenged the City's right to restrict such weapons. While the 7th Circuit ruling allows all Illinois municipalities the opportunity to safeguard their residents from these weapons, recognizing the constitutionality of the ordinance, current Illinois state law limits their ability to enact their own firearm restrictions as part of the concealed carry legislation passed during the 98th General Assembly.

Rotering continued, "Banning assault weapons is a common sense step to reducing gun violence and protecting our children, our law enforcement, and our communities from potential mass violence and grief. While the families in Newtown, Orlando, Las Vegas, and now Sutherland Springs, Texas didn't believe they had "assault weapon" problems, we should agree that every town, village, and city should have the power to decide whether or not to limit these weapons that enable mass murder."

On June 24, 2013, the City of Highland Park passed an ordinance prohibiting the possession, sale, or manufacture of certain military-style weapons and large capacity magazines. The City later amended the ordinance to create exceptions for qualified retired law enforcement officers and for owners of curios or relics that are safely stored. The City's ordinance was modeled after a federal statute that had been in effect for many years before its legislated expiration, and a Cook County ordinance that had been upheld by the Illinois Supreme Court.

Special interest groups challenged the decision. On Monday, December 7, 2015, the United States Supreme Court announced that it would not entertain a challenge to the City of Highland Park's ban on assault weapons and large-capacity magazines, thus allowing the 7th Circuit Court opinion supporting the ordinance to remain standing.

LETTER TO LEGISLATORS:

After every mass shooting, there is public demand for elected officials to pass better gun laws to prevent future tragedies. Four years ago, following the shooting at Sandy Hook where the shooter used an assault weapon and high capacity magazine, I lead the Highland Park City Council in passing an ordinance to ban assault weapons and large capacity magazines. We had to fight the NRA all the way to the US Supreme Court, but ultimately we were successful.

Due to language included in Illinois' Concealed Carry Act, we didn't have much time to pass our ordinance. Illinois municipalities were limited to just ten days to pass an assault weapons ban and then the opportunity was gone.

As I have in the past, I am asking again for the help of every legislator in the State of Illinois to fix an arbitrary time constraint that was thrust upon municipalities in 2013. As a Mayor, I led the charge to ban assault weapons and stood up to the NRA in an effort to reduce the risk of a mass shooting. By passing legislation, the members of the General Assembly can provide Illinois municipalities the opportunity to protect their communities.

I recognize that restricting access to assault weapons isn't going to stop all gun violence, but banning assault weapons and high capacity magazines is one common-sense action to reduce gun violence and protect our families and communities from potential mass violence and grief.

While the families in Newtown, Orlando, Las Vegas, and now Sutherland Springs, Texas didn't believe they had "assault weapon" problems, we should agree that every town, village, and city should have the power to decide whether or not to limit these weapons that enable mass murder.

I ask that you'll consider what we did in Highland Park as the model ordinance that it is, and give municipalities throughout Illinois the opportunity to replicate it. Banning assault weapons and high capacity magazines has been determined to be constitutional in Illinois. Now is the time to allow Illinois cities to choose how they wish to address this recurrent crisis in our nation.