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GUNS AND GUN LAWS

Mayor Daley - Quick on the draw

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Fully expecting to lose the Supreme Court battle over its decades-old handgun ban, Mayor Richard Daley of Chicago was locked and loaded with Plan B. Today, less than a week after the high court announced its 5-4 decision enforcing Second Amendment gun rights over state and local governments, Chicagos city aldermen pulled the trigger and approved the mayors alternative plan by a unanimous vote of 45-0.

Unable to deny law abiding citizens the ability to own guns for protecting their homes and families, the citys new strategy is to restrict, regulate, and perhaps even inconvenience those wishing to purchase and own handguns legally. The new ordinance includes a one-gun-per-month cap, bans retail gun shops inside city limits, and prohibits Chicagoans from venturing outside their homes while in possession of a handgun. In addition, gun purchasers must satisfy certain requirements with regard to handgun licensing, registration and training.

Whether or not you agree with Chicagos new ordinance or even with its right to impose such rules, you have to be somewhat impressed by the speed with which the city leaders responded. Meanwhile, Governor Patricks gun bill has been bouncing around the Massachusetts state legislature for a year. Hopefully soon, H4102 will receive a fair and full debate on its merits, and the matter will be resolved one way or the other.

I fear, however, that at least some of our state lawmakers may be reluctant to take a stand on this controversial political issue. For them, it may be just too hot this close to Novembers election. Notwithstanding the political heat, it is too important an issue to ignore.

The sad truth about the gun debate is that many advocates on both sides are quick to denigrate and dismiss the opposition as gun nuts or moonbats, as the case may be. However, there are countless Americans who, like me, are respectful of Second Amendment rights for law abiding citizens to arm themselves, yet also believe that these rights are are from unlimited. We must continue to explore and pursue reasonable strategies for tracking and curtailing the flow on guns into the hands of illegal traffickers without getting sidetracked by ugly politics.