

Editorial...

"If one person dies in the next 20 years because of this vote, you should be accountable because you killed him. You're going to put somebody's little baby in a coffin."

Pennsylvania Rep. Joseph Preston Jr., a Pittsburgh Democrat said this to his colleagues prior to Tuesday's historic vote that reversed a compromise that was approved in December. The December compromise banned 15 assault weapons and required a five-day waiting period for all gun purchases. The House also passed legislation that prohibits municipalities from regulating firearms. Philadelphia and Pittsburgh have laws that prohibit assault weapons. These laws soon will be stricken.

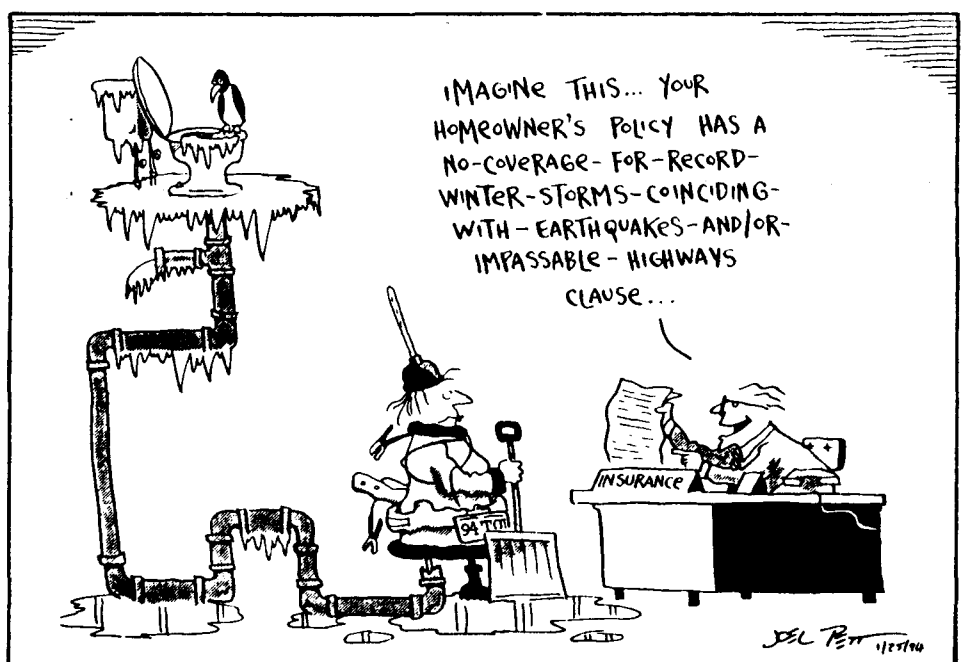
What does this mean? It means that Pennsylvania gun buyers now only have to wait 48 hours to buy a handgun, and there is no waiting period for rifles or long guns. Worse yet, there is no state law requiring background checks.

With violent crime on the rise (recent reports say that violent deaths will soon be the leading killer of young adults) how could this happen? Some representatives are pointing at special interest groups like the NRA. Rep. David K. Levandesky (D. Allegheny) said that the votes were a sellout to these groups in return for their support in upcoming elections. He said, "It is a triumph of private interest over the public interest. I'm ashamed to be a member of this chamber." He damn well should be. We should be ashamed that these people are representing us. One representative, Robert E. Belfanti Jr.(D. Northumberland), tried to justify his vote by saying this action will not raise the current levels of violent crime. He added, "More murders are committed in this state with butcher knives and scissors." What? Scissors? I have never heard of anyone being scissored to death! What can we do? We need to make our voices known. Locally three representatives voted against gun bans and controls. These representatives are Karl Boyes, R-3rd District, Tom Scrimenti, D-4th District and Jim Merry, R-5th District. They need to hear how outrageous their actions were. Let them know. Write them a letter, create petitions, peacefully protest. If we don't, then Rep. Vincent Hughes' (D. Philadelphia) words may ring true for you, "It is only a matter of time before a group of individuals, family members, folks you may know, will be gunned down by one of the weapons."

Think about it!



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