

**National Parks Conservation Association  
Association of National Park Rangers  
U.S. Park Rangers Lodge, Fraternal Order of Police  
Coalition of National Park Service Retirees  
The Humane Society of the United States  
Violence Policy Center  
Coalition to Stop Gun Violence  
Legal Community Against Violence  
Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence**

May 13, 2009

Dear President Obama:

We respectfully request your support for protecting the safety of National Park visitors, rangers, and wildlife from a dangerous and misguided amendment to the Credit Cardholders' Bill of Rights Act of 2009 (H.R.627). Under this amendment, the National Park Service would be forced to allow loaded guns in parks, battlefields, historic sites and monuments after decades of requiring guns to be unloaded and stored when traveling through these special, well-visited locations. We ask you to help stop this amendment by signaling your support for its removal before it reaches your desk.

The amendment sponsored by Senator Coburn would allow individuals to openly carry rifles, shotguns, and semi-automatic weapons in national parks if the firearm is in compliance with State law. As a result, individuals could attend ranger led hikes and campfire programs carrying rifles at Yellowstone National Park, Shenandoah National Park, Grand Canyon National Park, and many other national park units across the country.

Even after public comments resoundingly opposed efforts to change National Park Service regulations from safely storing guns to allowing concealed weapons, the Bush Administration finalized a regulation to allow concealed weapons. The regulatory process did not include a review of potential safety impacts to visitors to our national parks, nor to the protected resources. On March 19, a U.S. District Court ruled against the implementation of the regulation. The judge found that the Bush Administration's process was "astoundingly flawed" because the Department "abdicated their [National Environmental Policy Act] obligations" and "ignored substantial information in the administrative record concerning environmental impacts."

National park rangers overwhelmingly opposed the Bush regulation because it would increase the risk of opportunistic shooting of wildlife and vandalism of historic monuments, structures, and archaeological resources, as well as increase the risk of gun-related accidents. Additionally, in a letter sent to the Bush Administration last year, seven former Directors of the National Park Service opposed changing the longtime regulation on storing guns adopted by the Reagan Administration, stating, "There is no evidence that any potential problems that one can

imagine arising from the existing regulations might overwhelm the good they are known to do.” The American public also registered opposition to the Bush regulation: of the 140,000 people who voiced their positions on this issue during the comment period, 73 percent opposed the proposal.

We ask that you support safety in America’s national parks by requesting the removal of the Coburn amendment from the Credit Cardholders’ Bill of Rights Act of 2009 (H.R.627). Like the Bush regulation, Senator Coburn’s amendment would put national park resources and visitors at considerable risk. The Reagan administration’s long-standing National Park Service firearms regulations requiring weapons to be unloaded and stored is a reasonable and balanced restriction to help keep park visitors, wildlife and historic resources safe.

Sincerely,

Thomas C. Kiernan, President  
National Parks Conservation Association

Scot McElveen, President  
Association of National Park Rangers

John Waterman, President  
U.S. Park Rangers Lodge, Fraternal Order of Police

Bill Wade, Chair, Executive Council  
Coalition of National Park Service Retirees

Wayne Pacelle, President and CEO  
The Humane Society of the United States

Kristen Rand, Legislative Director  
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