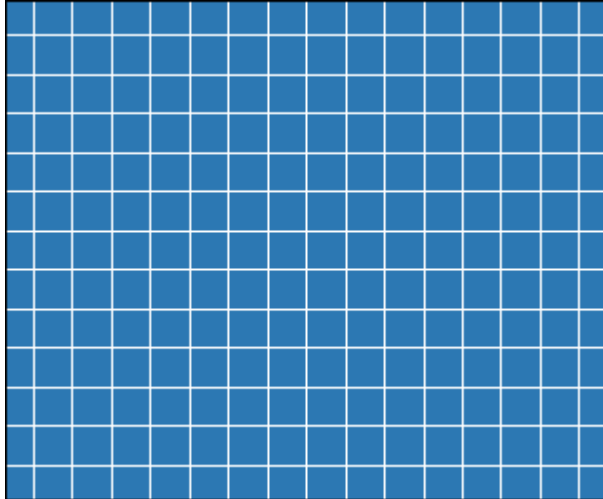


EXHIBIT A

The Washington Post

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District may provide handgun transfers

By [Mike DeBonis](#), Published: July 7

The District could assume a direct role in helping its residents purchase handguns under a proposal to be considered next week by the D.C. Council.

Since May, city residents have been unable to purchase handguns and take them home. There are no gun sellers in the District, and the only person properly licensed to transfer firearms purchased in another state has been out of commission. [Charles W. Sykes Jr.](#) lost his lease and is still searching for a new place of business in the city.

While Sykes's business is on hiatus, D.C. residents have, in essence, been unable to acquire handguns, which has opened the city to lawsuits. In late May, Alan Gura, a Virginia lawyer, sued the city, the state of Virginia and the federal government in Alexandria's federal court on behalf of three District residents who have purchased guns legally but are unable to transfer them into the District.

Council member [Phil Mendelson](#) (D-At Large) is offering a fix. He informed his colleagues Thursday that he intends to offer an emergency bill that would allow the District to serve as a firearms dealer for the purpose of transferring guns to residents.

"The opponents of gun regulations are looking for any opportunity to pounce on the District," Mendelson said Thursday, noting that the Supreme Court clearly ruled in 2008 that residents have the constitutional right to own handguns. "Right now it's impossible for an individual to acquire a handgun. . . . It's a situation we need to solve."

Mendelson announced his plan on the same day that Police Chief Cathy L. Lanier said on WTOP (103.5 FM) that the gun-transfer issue “is becoming an issue that has to be addressed.”

Gura said Mendelson’s effort, successful or not, would have no bearing on his litigation. “There are still serious problems” with District law, he said. “It’s a step in the right direction, but it doesn’t end the lawsuit.”

If the city were to treat handguns in the same manner as rifles and shotguns, which aren’t subject to rigorous transfer restrictions, Gura said the District might not be subject to the lawsuit.

Under Mendelson’s proposal, which he will introduce in the council Tuesday, the District would facilitate gun transfers only if no other licensed dealer was available. “I do not want to displace the private market,” the council member said.

But the private market is encountering some serious barriers to entry. Sykes said Thursday that city regulations have made it very difficult for him to find a new place of business. Zoning rules demand that all gun-related businesses be at least 300 feet away from schools, libraries or certain other landmarks.

“I wish the District would assist me more with trying to find an office,” he said. “I’m just a little disappointed that I’m not getting any encouragement or support.”

Sykes said he has proposed several addresses to the city, but they have been rejected. He said he doesn’t know when he might return to business. “I thought [finding a location] was going to be the easy part,” he said. “This has been a stumbling block.”

Gura, who brought the case that led to a landmark 2008 Supreme Court decision that ended D.C.’s long-standing handgun ban, said the city should move to ease the zoning restrictions. “They need to knock it off and understand that gun stores are a normal part of the American landscape,” he said.

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