



Allegheny County Sportsmen's League Inc.

Organized in 1921 Incorporated in 1933

www.acslpa.org

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Executive Director Bryan Burhans
Commissioners
Pennsylvania Game Commission
2001 Elmerton Ave
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Gentlemen,

I am writing you in regards to the Commissions recent action of shutting down the comment period for using center fire semi-automatic rifles for big game hunting in the Commonwealth.

In 2016, Allegheny County Sportsmen's League supported HB263 because we felt that the Game Commission was the best entity to determine if the use of semi-auto rifles would be appropriate for hunting in Pennsylvania, not the Legislature. PAGC promptly allowed for semi-auto rim fire to be used for small game. This has been the case since and there have been no negative changes in small game harvesting and there has not been any additional safety issues due to use of semi-autos during small game season.

On 1/29/19, PAGC issued a press release about potentially allowing center fire semi-auto rifles for big game hunting and welcomed comments from ALL hunters and citizens. "Written comments can be submitted by email to pgccomments@pa.gov **up until the April meeting.**"

On 2/1/19, PAGC released this: "After receiving input from the public and key members of the General Assembly, and noting the board already is considering several significant proposed changes, Pennsylvania Game Commissioner Brian Hoover today rescinded his direction to staff to develop language through which semiautomatic center fire rifles could be included as lawful sporting arms in big-game seasons. No proposal will be drawn up, and no vote will be taken."

Who are the "Key Members of the General Assembly" that have so much influence over the Commission that PAGC would submit their authority and take away the opportunity for PA Hunters to voice their opinions on this matter? Why does it appear that some with in the PAGC are playing anti-gun/liberty politics? That is the only way to interpret this kind of shift.

Allegheny County Sportsmen's League has done extensive research in the past, research that we have shared with PAGC, and semi-auto rifles are indeed safer than other action types. Commissioner Hoover's statement in the 2/1/19 press release echoes this sentiment, "While many states allow the use of semiautomatic rifles for hunting big game, and evidence suggests these firearms actually can be safer than their manually operated counterparts..."

The PAGC HAS the authority to pass this regulation and allow the use of semi-auto center fire rifles for big game hunting. Why is PAGC not letting the process run its course? Why is the PAGC stifling the Rights of PA hunters to voice their opinion?

Each time I speak to a WCO, I ask, "Since the introduction of semi-auto rim fire rifles for use of small game hunting, has there been over harvesting or "blood baths" with in the squirrel population?" The answer I receive is always a resounding "No". I think it is fair to compare safety and harvest information in neighboring states, and we all quickly recognize that the "semi-autos lead to over harvesting myth" is simply that..... a myth. If PAGC wants to sell more licenses, and bring new Sportsmen and women into the woods of Pennsylvania, why would you exclude the countries #1 selling firearm, the modern sporting rifle, or AR Platform? This type of rifle by far out sells all others across the country and PAGC would welcome a whole new generation of Law Abiding gun owners into the woods of Pennsylvania.

PAGC is always very keen to welcome women and youth to join in on our proud Pennsylvania hunting tradition. The AR platform, comes in a variety of calibers, recoil is much more manageable than any manually operated action type, and with collapsible stock options, rifle fit makes it much easier for smaller framed individuals to shoulder and deliver more precise rounds on target, ultimately resulting in a more humane harvest.

With all of these benefits; safer, more potential for license sales, more youth and more women hunters, more humane harvests, I cannot understand why the Commissioners stopped the comment process only after 3 days instead of the promised time period of "up until the April meeting"? I can only conclude that PAGC is playing anti-gun/liberty politics. After all, it would be much harder for a Legislator to try and ban a particular type of firearm if that type of firearm can be legally used for hunting in Pennsylvania.

Allegheny County Sportsmen's League strongly recommends that the Commissioners reconsider this course of action and re-open the comment process and grant the use of semi-auto center fire rifles for big game hunting. We also recommend, during the comment process, you require that each person state whether they have a valid hunting license or not, and if so to supply their license number. I have confirmed that this information is not gathered when people call in or write to offer opinion. It is known that during these comment periods, folks who support an "anti-liberty" agenda, who do not speak for PA Hunters load the system with negative comments.

Throughout our history, The ACSL has been critical of the Game Commission at times but we also work closely with and support the WCOs and the safety and education programs. I would love to help the Pennsylvania Game Commission educate the Citizens of PA of the benefits of using of center fire semi-auto rifles for big game hunting. If you would like to have a discussion about this issue, or if you would like ACSL to host a "town hall" discussion, I would be more than eager to make that a reality.

Yours Most Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Klint Macro", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Klint Macro
President of Allegheny County Sportsmen's League