



Public Relations

This Press Release is brought to you on behalf of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence

WASHINGTON, DC (February 5, 2010) - - BRADY CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE

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BRADY CAMPAIGN URGES STARBUCKS TO PROHIBIT GUNS IN ITS RETAIL OUTLETS

Washington, D.C. - Radical gun enthusiasts have begun parading into California restaurants and coffeehouses in recent weeks brazenly displaying handguns. The gun activists have frightened customers, alarmed police and caused at least two restaurant chains to establish firm policies prohibiting firearms in their retail locations.

Ten days ago, gun violence opponents in California started urging a third chain, Starbucks, to similarly prohibit the “open carry” of firearms in its retail establishments, but Starbucks has rebuffed their requests. Today, the national Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence joins with its chapter leaders in California and across the nation in urging the Starbucks Coffee Company to bar the carrying of firearms in its shops.

Paul Helmke, President of the Brady Campaign, today sent a letter to Howard Schultz, the Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Starbucks Coffee Company, asking him to change their policy. “I am writing to urge you to reverse Starbucks’ current policy allowing persons to carry guns, both openly and concealed, into your stores,” Helmke wrote. “On behalf of the Brady Campaign and its chapters across the country, I ask you to consider the rights of the vast majority of your customers to bring their families, including their children, into your stores without being confronted with the threatening presence of open-displayed guns.”

Just after New Years Day, gun enthusiasts began targeting restaurants for meetings, carrying their handguns out in the open, strapped to their hips. These gatherings follow last year’s activities by radical gun-toters who targeted Presidential appearances while openly carrying firearms.

After the California gatherings began, executives with Peet’s Coffee and Tea and California Pizza Kitchen announced they would exercise their private property right to prohibit the “open carry” of guns in retail locations.

In response to inquiries about its policy, however, Starbucks’ Customer Relations Department stated that “Starbucks does not have a corporate policy regarding customers and weapons; we defer to federal, state and local laws and regulations regarding this issue.”

“This is an evasion, not a response,” Helmke wrote to the Starbucks CEO. “The law in California and other states gives businesses the right to bar guns on their premises. Just as your stores may prohibit entry by people

who are not wearing shoes, they may prohibit entry by people carrying guns.”

The open display of firearms in public places is inherently threatening and intimidating, and poses risks to those nearby, to law enforcement and to the community. When open carrying of guns has occurred in retail stores, other customers understandably become alarmed and the police often are called to the scene, creating a volatile and potentially dangerous situation. One Sheriff’s Lieutenant in California said when police respond to a “man with a gun” call, they have no idea what the intentions of the gun carrier may be and “the result could be deadly.”

As the nation's largest, non-partisan, grassroots organization leading the fight to prevent gun violence, the Brady Campaign, with its dedicated network of Million Mom March Chapters, works to enact and enforce sensible gun laws, regulations and public policies. The Brady Campaign is devoted to creating an America free from gun violence, where all Americans are safe at home, at school, at work, and in our communities.

Visit the Brady Campaign website at www.bradycampaign.org. For continuing insight and comment on the gun issue, read Paul Helmke's blog at www.bradycampaign.org/blog/.