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By Congressman Mike Quigley (IL-05)

As the City of Chicago digests the news of today's Olympics decision, we must not overlook the news that came out of Washington earlier this week that will directly impact our neighborhoods, with or without the Games.

The United States Supreme Court has agreed to review *McDonald vs. City of Chicago*, a case that challenges whether or not Chicago's local handgun ban is legal. It is a development that deeply concerns me.

Since 1983, it has been illegal to purchase or own a handgun within Chicago's city limits. Over the course of the 26 years since, Chicago has seen the [number of registered handguns](#) drop from more than 400,000 to fewer than 200,000. Guns have become scarcer, saving lives and creating safer neighborhoods in the process.

But the threat of gun violence has by no means dissipated. Chicago communities are still reeling from losses of neighbors, children and friends -- innocent bystanders caught by a stray bullet, someone in the wrong place at the wrong time. The last thing our city needs is more guns on the street and more children fearing for their safety.

In a [Chicago Sun-Times survey](#) from last year, Chicago elementary school students were asked their greatest fear.

The overwhelming answer: *getting shot*.

More than [500 students in Chicago](#) were involved in a gun-related incident over the last two years, and four-fifths of Chicago homicide victims [died from gunshot wounds](#)

It's not hard to understand why they're so scared.

According to the survey, half of fifth- through eighth-graders in Chicago know a friend or relative who has been shot at and more than a third know a friend or relative who has been shot to death.

A fourth-grader at Sexton Elementary School put into words what no statistics can:

"I would feel good if I lived in a different city," she said. "I would not have to be scared to go outside."

If the Supreme Court abides by its previous rulings on Second Amendment cases, it will honor the decision made in the *McDonald* case and allow the ruling to stand. There is a clear constitutional case to be made for upholding local and state laws on this matter.

In the 1939 case *United States vs. Miller*, the Supreme Court affirmed that the purpose of the Second Amendment was to ensure that states had a right to maintain militias free of interference from the Federal Government. While the Court's recent 5-4 decision in the Court of the District of *Columbia vs. Heller* was hailed by the gun lobby as proof that this view had changed, the ruling actually affirmed that legal restrictions could be placed on individual gun ownership.

Furthermore, the court's decision striking down the more restrictive portions of Washington, D.C.'s gun laws did not address the rights of states to place reasonable restrictions on gun ownership, as it only referred to acts of Congress. It would be tragically ironic if this amendment, enshrined in the Constitution in part to protect states from encroachment by the federal government, were used to take away the rights of Illinois citizens to decide whether guns belong in the hands of school children.

During my time in Washington, I have become increasingly frustrated by the power held by the gun lobby.

Legislation to finally give voting rights to the taxpaying citizens of the District of Columbia was derailed by an amendment that would have allowed unrestricted gun possession anywhere in the city, including elementary schools.

Critical reform on the credit card industry became law only with a compromise to allow concealed weapons in National Parks.

Congress refused to extend the [Assault Weapons Ban](#) , and when the ban expired in 2004, the number of deaths among children and teens from firearms increased for the first time since it was enacted in 1994. During a Judiciary Committee hearing I recently asked Attorney General Eric Holder if the Obama Administration would push for a renewal of this life-saving legislation. I stand ready to work with the administration to make this happen. But, in the absence of federal action, it is critical that we preserve the rights of the people of states and municipalities to protect their children at the local level.

How many more parents will lose a child, or children will lose a parent if we allow more weapons into our neighborhoods?

More than 500 students in Chicago were involved in a gun-related incident over the last two years. Will reversing this decision cause that number to reach 600? 700?

How much longer can we afford the estimated [\\$2.5 billion a year](#) we spend due to gun violence?

How many more families and dreams will be shattered at the barrel of a gun?

Can we continue to pay such hefty costs?

Our Founding Fathers drafted the Bill of Rights to ensure that We the People could determine how best to protect our communities. The people of Chicago have made it very clear that they favor sensible restrictions on gun ownership. It is up to the Supreme Court to abide by over 200 years of judicial precedent and allow the *McDonald* decision, and the laws of the City of Chicago, to stand.

Read more at: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mike-quigley/gunning-for-chicago_b_307672.html
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