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THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER




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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

August 20, 2007

Colonel Jeffrey Miller  
Commissioner  
Pennsylvania State Police  
1800 Elmerton Avenue  
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Dear Colonel Miller:

  
Throughout last week, many members of the Democratic Caucus of the House of Representatives received calls, letters, and emails from a wide array of hunters, participants of shooting sports, and firearm retailers. These citizens, along with representatives from sportsmen organizations, outdoor columnists, and gun enthusiasts from across the state joined together to protest the shutdown of the Pennsylvania Instant Check System (PICS) scheduled for the first week of September.

With this letter, the unanimous voice of so many like-minded members of the outdoor community is brought to your personal attention in the hope that a new schedule for the necessary improvements to PICS can be adopted.

The beginning of September is a bad time to shut down PICS. For hunters, dove season begins at the start of September. Each year, dove season serves as an introduction to the hunting experience for countless new license buyers. Shotgun purchases during this time of year reflect the eagerness that these new hunters enter into their sport. Also, the more experienced hunters seeking to upgrade equipment at the outset of the year's firearm season will be turned away. Whether for dove, or the other seasons that closely follow, the beginning of September is an established commencement to the state's hunting year. \*

Because of the importance of the first week in September, including the Labor Day weekend, gun retailers historically rely on this period to run promotions to encourage buyers. One large retailer, Bass Pro Shops, uses this time to hold their Fall Hunting Classic. The impact of the unavailability of PICS to Bass Pro Shop, and to the other establishments with whom they compete, is obvious.

\* This is a lot of reasons!

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Given the fact that the technological requirements of the planned upgrade will require that PICS be offline for several days, some might argue that there is no ideal time for such a procedure, but they would be wrong. A better span of days can be found by utilizing the extensive records of gun sales during previous years along with a general recognition of the scheduled state firearm hunting seasons. Several suggestions for a better time period for a shutdown have been made in recent days. By working with input from affected interested parties, the plans for PICS can be fulfilled with much less inconvenience to gun buyers and to retailers.

With that in mind, we stand ready to help in that effort, willing to organize representatives for those concerned groups to meet with you to help set dates for enhancement of PICS. This partnership would accomplish your goals while protecting the serious commercial interests of gun retailers and the pursuits of our Commonwealth's sporting community.



Rep. Bill DeWeese  
50<sup>th</sup> Legislative District  
The Majority Leader

Sincerely,



Rep. Ed Staback  
115<sup>th</sup> Legislative District  
Chair (D), Games & Fisheries Committee