

CHRISTINE O. GREGOIRE  
Governor



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JOHN R. BATISTE  
Chief

BY: .....

STATE OF WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON STATE PATROL

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March 28, 2011

The Honorable Matt Shea  
Washington State Representative  
PO Box 40600  
Olympia WA 98504-0600

Dear Representative Shea:

Thank you very much for your letter dated March 22, 2011. I appreciate the chance to respond to the very legitimate concerns that have been raised.

As has been well documented, the Washington State Patrol's Criminal Investigation Division is looking into the disappearance of an AR-15 rifle from our inventory. This is something we take very seriously, and we immediately launched both an internal search and a criminal investigation.

During the investigation, a number of techniques were used which did not result in resolution. In the interest of a thorough and complete investigation, our detective opted to make contact with licensed gun dealers and solicit their assistance. That is consistent with prior practice—it is routine to contact experts and others who might have knowledge about any specific type of case.

However, I fully acknowledge the letter used to initiate contact with gun dealers should have been more clearly worded. In particular, we should have been very explicit that any response was voluntary. I am also concerned that the questions were overly broad.

As a result, I have directed that a second letter be sent. This letter will make very clear that a response is voluntary, and we will narrow the scope of the request. We are still asking for assistance, but we want to make as little work as possible for gun dealers.

I very much regret the concern that was caused by this letter. I want to make it abundantly clear that we are not creating any sort of registry of AR-15 owners. We are merely trying to solve this specific case.

I'd also like you to know that immediately upon learning that we had caused such a reaction, efforts were made to contact legislators, the National Rifle Association (NRA), and the media with the intent of clarifying our original request and our intent.



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WSP detectives are now working with the NRA to provide clarification regarding the initial letter and the reasoning behind the request. We hope this resolves the concern from the NRA and puts their members at ease. We are also actively engaged with the media on this topic in an effort to provide complete transparency.

Thank you again for the opportunity to clarify both our actions and our intent. Please let me know if you have further questions.

Sincerely,



CHIEF JOHN R. BATISTE

JRB:kls

cc: Governor Christine Gregoire  
Lieutenant Governor Brad Owen  
Attorney General Rob McKenna  
Senator Michael Baumgartner  
Senator Jeff Baxter  
Senator Don Benton  
Senator Curtis King  
Senator Pam Roach  
Senator Val Stevens  
Representative John Ahern  
Representative Jan Angel  
Representative Mike Armstrong  
Representative Katrina Asay  
Representative Vincent Buys  
Representative Bruce Chandler  
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Representative Bruce Dammeier  
Representative Susan Fagan  
Representative Larry Haler  
Representative Mark Hargrove  
Representative Bill Hinkle  
Representative Norm Johnson  
Representative Joel Kretz  
Representative Dan Kristiansen

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Representative Jay Rodne  
Representative Charles Ross  
Representative Joe Schmick  
Representative Shelly Short  
Representative David Taylor  
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Representative Hans Zeiger