

EDITORIAL

Ruling extends, not ends debate on guns

Two hundred and thirty-two years ago, colonists took up arms against the British. 221 years ago, the right to bear arms was codified with the ratification of the United States Constitution. But remarkably, in all the time since, the Second Amendment has received relatively little of the kind of judicial scrutiny it deserved.

That changed last week when the United States Supreme Court definitively declared that an individual has a right to possess firearms, outside of the oft-mentioned "well-regulated militia."

The judgement declared that the District of Columbia's ban on handguns, even in the home, was unconstitutional.

While certainly a victory for gun-rights activists, the ruling was not a swift denunciation of hundreds of gun laws all over the country. Instead, the opinion noted that the right to bear arms is

not absolute and can be reasonably regulated by the government.

This kind of even-handedness is what this contentious issue needed, especially considering in the midst of an election cycle. For awhile at least, a substantive issue like gun control and appointments to the Supreme Court took precedent versus more trivial matters.

It is somewhat fitting that such a significant case was decided so close to the anniversary of when we declared our country's independence. Then, as now, the first step was always going to be the hardest part.

But what's most important is that *Heller v. District of Columbia* didn't proclaim the gun debate finished. What it did was ensure that courts are going to have to make up for those two centuries of lost time and really start to chisel out what the Second Amendment means for all of us.

Our Opinion

Editorials represent the majority opinion of The Daily Illini Editorial Board, whose members are Steve Contorno, editor in chief; Susan Kantor, managing editor; Kathleen Foody, assignment editor; Andrew Mason, opinions editor; Meghan Montemurro, assistant assignment editor; Wes Anderson, copy chief.

Support Illinois servicemembers

When we think of the many sacrifices our servicemembers and their families make for us, we sometimes forget about the financial pressure caused by a deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan. There is often a large disparity between the civilian salary and the military paycheck our citizen soliders draw, with more than half of married National Guard and Reserve servicemembers reporting a significant loss of income when they are called to active duty.

This Fourth of July weekend we have an opportunity to thank our men and women in uniform by donating to the Illinois Military Family Relief Fund.

The Illinois Military Family Relief Fund is set up to help ease some of the financial pressure for National Guard and Reserve servicemembers deployed in support of the Global War on Terror. Fueled by generous donations from Illinois citizens and corporations, the fund has already distrib-

uted \$6,309,000 to meet the needs of 11,392 filed applications from Illinois military families.

Today, the Illinois Military Relief Fund needs your help. With the Illinois National Guard facing its largest single-unit deployment since World War II, the fund is struggling to keep up with demand.

I encourage all Illinois citizens to take a moment this Independence Day to thank our men and women in uniform by donating to the Illinois Military Family Relief Fund. Even the smallest contribution will help the fund continue its mission.

To contribute, please visit Operation-HomeFront.org or mail a donation to: The Illinois Military Family Relief Fund at PO BOX 8889, Springfield, IL 62791.

Thank you for your support of Illinois servicemembers, and have a safe and happy Fourth of July.

PAT QUINN

Illinois Lieutenant Governor

EDITORIAL CARTOON

JOHN DARKOW, THE COLUMBIA DAILY-TRIBUNE



Bozos rain on gay parade

At Chicago's gay pride parade Sunday afternoon, I saw an outlandish collection of freaks and degenerates, out and proud for something inherently shameful. I'm talking about the protestors.

Near the end of the parade's route on the corner of Pine Grove and Diversey, wooden riot-control barricades and a few disinterested-looking cops surrounded about 20 or 30 fundamentalist Christians. They yelled at the parade's participants, often from a loudspeaker at the top of a rickety folding ladder. "You're not really happy," a frowning young man told a float of pink underwear-clad men who, from the passion of their dancing, were having a much better time than the demonstrators.

Cardboard signs proclaimed the evil of homosexuality, and left no uncertainty about what happens to those who choose to be gay: They have a really fun parade.

Actually the signs warned of eternal damnation, a topic that mattered a lot to the protesters. "Hell is real, people," one of them helpfully explained from the ladder.

"Burn in hell," shot back someone from a radio station's float. The two sides had begun a dialogue. This was good.

Most of the floats seemed innocuous and would have easily fit in any parade: Bands, local politicians, and businesses ranging from neighborhood shops to major banks. I asked one of the more docile-looking protesters if he did business with National City, which sent a kelly green car as part of the procession. "I cancelled my account with them," he said. Apparently his 2.00% interest rate was an abomination.

The rest of the floats were more pride-specific. There was approval of the California Supreme Court, who recently over-



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turned a ban on gay marriage, and the crowd seemed to universally support pending Illinois legislation to legalize gay civil unions. Some raised awareness of HIV or breast cancer. The WGN float even featured an appearance by Bozo the Clown, recently returned from a trip to Los Angeles to marry his long-time partner, Ronald McDonald.

The protestors taunted and jeered throughout the day, but their message fell on deaf ears. I don't know the actual numbers, but if I had a dollar for every gay person the protestors turned straight, I probably wouldn't have any money in my National City checking account.

After the floats reached the parade's endpoint, many participants walked back up Diversey. A mother from a float of supportive parents lingered in front of the protestors' zone, where they told her about how mad all this was making the Lord.

But she stood her ground, and held her homemade sign so they could read it. They saw her message in large, thick letters:

"God blessed me with a gay son."

Scott is a third-year law student. His sexual orientation is nobody's business but his and his girlfriend's.