



## 'Assault' ban dies

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WASHINGTON — In a huge political victory for the NRA, an assault-weapons ban proposed in the wake of the Newtown massacre won't be part of a Senate gun-control bill, all but eliminating its chances of passage.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), author of the ban, said yesterday that Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) had decided to ditch the legislation because it lacked the votes to pass.

Feinstein, who successfully got a 10-year ban passed in 1994, accepted the fate of her proposal.

"I very much regret it," Feinstein said. "I tried my best, but my best, I guess, wasn't good enough."

The ban would have prohibited 157 weapons, including the Bushmaster that deranged killer Adam Lanza used at the Sandy Hook Elementary School to kill 20 children and six educators in December.

Reid told reporters he will allow Feinstein to offer the ban as a separate amendment. On its own, however, it is unlikely to pass.

The ban would have to almost certainly clear a 60-vote threshold in the 100-member Senate, due to a likely Republican filibuster.

"Right now, her amendment, using the most optimistic numbers, has less than 40 votes," Reid said. "That's not 60."

Because of such strong opposition, Reid feared that the ban would have jeopardized the chance of passing of any firearms legislation at all — including such measures such as expanded background checks — if it had stayed in the original bill.

"The worst of all worlds would be to bring something to the floor and it dies there," Reid said.

Yesterday, the NRA's chief lobbyist, Chris W. Cox, said in a written statement: "Congress should reject this so-called 'assault weapons ban,' whether it is offered as a stand-alone bill or as an amendment."

After the idea of a renewed assault-weapons ban arose in the days after the Newtown, Conn., attack, NRA boss Wayne La Pierre angrily blasted any attempt to limit such weapons.

"The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun," he said in defending broad gun rights.

Just last weekend, he told the CPAC meeting of conservative leaders: "They can call me crazy or anything else they want, but the NRA's nearly 5 million members, and America's 100 million gun owners will not back down."

Gun-control advocates expressed little surprise over yesterday's decision.

"If their view is that the assault- weapons ban is tougher sledding, we respect that," said Mark Glaze, director of Mayors Against Illegal Guns.

Mark Barden, whose 7-year-old son, Daniel, was killed at Sandy Hook, said he hoped a ban would pass eventually.

"We're still very happy with the progress that's been made," he said. "Hopefully, what is stripped away will return as an amendment." *With*

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