

HRC vs. NRA
(Missouri
Gun Legislation)

Clips

101ST STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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The Hotline

April 6, 1999

SECTION: IN THE STATES

LENGTH: 486 words

HEADLINE: MISSOURI: FIRST LADY AND HESTON BATTLE IT OUT

BODY:

In a last minute effort, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton and NRA Pres. Charlton Heston are trying to sway voters "in a vigorous (GOTV) effort" for today's Prop. B vote, MO's concealed-carry proposal. HRC sent recorded telephone messages statewide saying, "It's just too dangerous for Missouri families." The first lady's plea to vote down the Prop came from a machine automatically calling 75K MOans this past weekend, and "was aimed at women voters." The NRA "pulled out its own big gun" in NRA President, Charlton Heston, to tout Prop. B. Heston urged voters to "get to the polls and accuses anti-gun groups of using 'scare' tactics in their campaign against the measure"; Targeting 700K MOan phone numbers. Heston at a rally in Springfield told AP reporters that "he wasn't aware of Mrs. Clinton's efforts against the measure but that they didn't concern him." Heston: "They must really be terrified if they've got Hillary against it. ... I'm delighted." Adding: "I don't know if a great majority of the American public really looks to Mrs. Clinton for information on firearms." Gwen Fitzgerald, anti-Prop B spokesperson for Safe Schools and Workplaces Cmte, said: "We know that Mrs. Clinton is probably more liked on public policy issues than Charlton Heston, especially on issues of protecting our children" (Sloca, AP, 4/6).

Also for today's vote, the NRA has kicked in another \$650K in "last-minute contributions and loans" to help push the Prop. On 4/5, the state Ethics Commission said that Missourians Against Crime, a pro-Prop. B group, "received a (\$450K) contribution and a (\$200K) loan from the NRA late last week." The NRA's latest contribution and loan bring the pro-Prop B sides total to \$3.7M, attributing 97% of "what the committee has collected for the campaign. The NRA has spent another (\$38.5K) for mailing lists and telephone banks in direct support of" the Prop. The Safe Schools Cmte "reported last-minute receipts" of \$29K on 4/5, bringing their total to \$800K. Fitzgerald "said that after today's vote, the NRA lobbyists pushing Prop B will leave Missouri." More Fitzgerald: "Their children and families won't have to deal with the potentially deadly consequences of this dangerous measure." Amy Pennington, a spokesperson for Missourians Against Crime, said: "I'm just sure Missourians are going to come out and pass this. ... They want the same right of self-protection that 43 other states enjoy." Opponents "held a

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news conference with Mayor Clarence Harmon. Police chiefs from the St. Louis area, an emergency room physician and religious and community leaders joined Harmon in urging voters to go to the polls to vote 'no.'" Harmon: "This thing will pass if good citizens stay home" (Ganey and Bell, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 4/5).

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 6, 1999

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THE KANSAS CITY STAR

April 6, 1999 Tuesday METROPOLITAN EDITION

SECTION: NATIONAL/WORLD; Pg. A6

LENGTH: 816 words

HEADLINE: Money and messages flow as gun campaigns near end

BYLINE: KIT WAGAR, The Kansas City Star

BODY:

The Missouri battle over concealed firearms winds up today when voters decide whether the state is better off with residents packing hidden weapons.

Both sides in the campaign made last-minute preparations Monday for a vote that is expected to be close.

Gun advocates were boosted by a \$ 650,000 infusion from the National Rifle Association and a third appearance by NRA President Charlton Heston.

Opponents countered with a taped appeal from first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton. In an automated phone message, Clinton urged voters to reject Proposition B, which would make concealed handguns legal for the first time in 124 years.

"It's just too dangerous for Missouri families," the message says.

The latest NRA money, a \$ 450,000 contribution and a \$ 200,000 loan, brought total NRA spending on the campaign to \$ 3.75 million.

Most of that was contributed to Missourians Against Crime, which is leading the fight for Proposition B.

Missourians Against Crime also reported \$ 12,273 in contributions from 195 individuals. That brought total contributions in favor of Proposition B to \$ 3.89 million, nearly five times that raised by opponents.

Safe Schools and Workplaces, the leading concealed-gun opponents, reported raising \$ 29,385 in the last five days. The largest donation was \$ 10,000 from Robert Brooks of Brooks Investments in St. Louis.

That brought the total raised by Proposition B opponents to \$ 828,359.

Opponents assailed the NRA as an out-of-state organization trying

to buy the election. The NRA contributions represent 96 percent of Proposition B supporters' financing. But supporters argued that the money represented a return on the investment of the NRA's 103,000 Missouri members, who pay \$ 35 a year for membership.

The biggest campaign event of the day was Heston's appearance in Springfield, which followed appearances last month in St. Louis and Kansas City. Heston also taped an automated phone message that warned of a close election.

"Please call friends, family, fellow hunters and gun owners to go to the polls on Tuesday and vote yes on Proposition B," Heston says.

Local officials in St. Louis, Columbia, St. Joseph and Kansas City gathered to denounce concealed weapons.

In Kansas City, political and law enforcement officials and community leaders gathered at the headquarters of the Ad Hoc Group Against Crime.

State Sen. Mary Groves Bland, a Kansas City Democrat, urged voters not to "regress to Wyatt Earp days."

Jackson County Prosecutor Bob Beaird likened TV ads for Proposition B to "someone trying to sell snake oil out of a Chautauqua tent." Raytown Police Chief Larry Overfield warned that police officers would have to be more aggressive in approaching residents if the concealed-gun law passes.

Kansas City Mayor-elect Kay Barnes said the gun issue was the most important one facing voters, adding: "This could be one where even a few votes could make the difference."

At City Hall about two dozen demonstrators held up signs opposing Proposition B. The Rev. John Birmingham of the Victory in Praise church called the demonstration an effort to fight vigilantism and reduce gun violence.

"There is a better way than carrying guns," Birmingham said.

"Guns just make everyone more cocky and suspicious."

A few hecklers in cars yelled that they had the right to defend themselves with guns. One bystander angrily told demonstrators that he needed a gun because the legal system was a mess.

Supporters also were heckling Kansas City branches of NationsBank, which the Second Amendment Coalition of Missouri has focused on as an opponent of concealed weapons.

NationsBank actually is neutral on Proposition B. Bill Nelson, president of the Kansas City division, signed a fund-raising letter in support of Safe Schools and Workplaces. He said he was acting as

THE KANSAS CITY STAR, April 6, 1999, Tuesday

an individual, not as bank president, and had not contributed money to Safe Schools and Workplaces.

NationsBank spokeswoman Shirley Nova said several branch managers on Monday reported complaints from concealed-carry supporters. Many of them mistakenly thought Proposition B was opposed by Hugh McColl Jr., chairman of NationsBank's parent company, BankAmerica Corp. of Charlotte, N.C.

To reach Kit Wagar, Jefferson City correspondent for The Star, call (816) 234-4440 or send e-mail to kwagar@kcstar.com

The Star's Matt Campbell and The Associated Press contributed to this report

LOAD-DATE: April 06, 1999

103RD STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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St. Louis Post-Dispatch

April 6, 1999, Tuesday, FIVE STAR LIFT EDITION

SECTION: NEWS, Pg. A6

LENGTH: 783 words

HEADLINE: NRA BOOSTS WEAPONS MEASURE EFFORT BY \$ 650,000

BYLINE: Terry Ganey; By Kim Bell

BODY:

The National Rifle Association has poured another \$ 650,000 in last-minute contributions and loans into the campaign to pass the concealed weapons proposal that Missouri voters will decide today.

The state Ethics Commission said Monday that Missourians Against Crime, the group pushing passage of Proposition B on today's ballot, received a \$ 450,000 contribution and a \$ 200,000 loan from the NRA late last week. The latest NRA contribution and loan bring to \$ 3.7 million what the gun organization has contributed to pass Proposition B in Missouri.

If approved by a majority vote, people could get permits to carry concealed weapons. The NRA contributions account for 97 percent of what the committee has collected for the campaign. The NRA has spent another \$ 38,500 for mailing lists and telephone banks in direct support of Proposition B.

The Safe Schools and Workplaces Committee, the group opposed to Proposition B, reported last-minute receipts of \$ 29,000 on Monday. That brings to \$ 800,000 what the opponents have to spend in the campaign to defeat the concealed weapons proposal.

Opponents used a tape-recorded message from Hillary Rodham Clinton in a last-minute attempt to boost the "no" vote in today's election. In the message, played by telephone for 75,000 households throughout the state, Mrs. Clinton said Prop B was poorly written and riddled with loopholes.

Prop B proponents have encouraged economic sanctions against businesses that have contributed to the opponents' campaign. One of the proponents' committee's Web sites listed businesses that had contributed more than \$ 5,000 to the opponents. The site said, "Criminals get aid and comfort from Missouri businesses."

Proponents have encouraged their people to pull their accounts out of banks that have contributed to the opposition campaign. Grocery chains that do not allow concealed weapons are being sent letters by proponents who say they will no longer shop in those stores.

Gwen Fitzgerald, a spokeswoman for the opponents' organization, said that after today's vote, the NRA lobbyists pushing Prop B will leave Missouri.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, April 6, 1999

"Their children and families won't have to deal with the potentially deadly consequences of this dangerous measure," Fitzgerald said. "The gun lobby is not spending millions of dollars because Missourians want concealed weapons. The gun lobby is spending millions of dollars because they are afraid Missourians do not want concealed weapons."

A public opinion poll released last week showed that today's election is too close to call, and that the undecided vote and turnout at the polls will make the difference in the outcome. Under Proposition B, people 21 years of age and older who pass a background check and a gun safety course would be able to get a permit to carry guns anywhere but a church, school or government building.

Amy Pennington, a spokeswoman for Missourians Against Crime, said she believed Prop B will pass.

"I'm just sure Missourians are going to come out and pass this," Pennington said. "They want the same right of self-protection that 43 other states enjoy."

Thirty-one states have concealed carry laws similar to what Missouri voters are considering today. Nineteen others either sharply restrict or prohibit carrying concealed weapons.

Secretary of State Bekki Cook has predicted one in four Missouri voters will go to the polls today - a turnout of about 900,000 voters. Polls are open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The campaign over Proposition B ended Monday in much the same way as it had been conducted over the past 10 weeks. The well-financed proponents' campaign brought in Charlton Heston, NRA president, to rally support in Springfield, in southwest Missouri. The actor had conducted similar rallies in St. Louis and Kansas City.

Meanwhile, opponents held a news conference with Mayor Clarence Harmon. Police chiefs from the St. Louis area, an emergency room physician and religious and community leaders joined Harmon in urging voters to go to the polls to vote "no."

"This thing will pass if good citizens stay home," Harmon said.

St. Louis Police Chief Ron Henderson said: "It's scary, down to the wire. Some are predicting this might pass, which would be a nightmare for us certainly and our citizens."

Marlene Davis, president of the St. Louis School Board, said the referendum would invite parents to "come settle your argument" with a principal or teacher on a school playground with a gun.

Dr. Anthony Scalzo of Cardinal Glennon Children's Hospital said, "I find it quite ironic that we're voting on this measure, which is bad for children, during public health week," which runs April 5-9.

LANGUAGE: English

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, April 6, 1999

LOAD-DATE: April 9, 1999

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The Associated Press State & Local Wire

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April 5, 1999, Monday, AM cycle

SECTION: State and Regional

LENGTH: 775 words

HEADLINE: Missouri voters to have their say on legalizing concealed guns

BYLINE: By SCOTT CHARTON, Associated Press Writer

DATELINE: ST. LOUIS

BODY:

As Missouri's bitter campaign about legalizing concealed guns drew to a finish, both sides solicited support outside ballparks and introduced their own MVPs: Hillary Rodham Clinton for the foes, Charlton Heston for proponents, each voicing thousands of taped telephone appeals.

The nation's gun rights debate was focused on Tuesday's Proposition B election, the first time a state's voters have been asked to decide whether hidden handguns should be permissible.

Proponents said Missourians wanted and deserved the legal right to keep criminals guessing by carrying concealed guns, a practice that has been illegal under state law since 1875, an era when outlaw Jesse James was at large.

Critics of Proposition B said its training requirements (12 hours minimum), its wording (sheriffs "shall" issue permits to qualified applicants) and its backers (including more than \$ 3 million from the National Rifle Association) were adequate reasons to reject it.

In her taped telemarketing appeal underwritten by the opponents, Mrs. Clinton declared: "It's just too dangerous for Missouri families."

Mrs. Clinton's message was targeted to 75,000 female voters. Heston's taped message was also sent statewide, and the actor, who was a memorable Moses in "The Ten Commandments," was also appearing in person in Springfield to exhort supporters to vote.

Other closing campaign events included an evening radio debate in St. Louis and handouts of literature outside polling precincts on Tuesday.

Both sides were distributing fistfuls of materials outside Busch Stadium, where fans were streaming for opening day and a glimpse of St. Louis Cardinals home-run king Mark McGwire.

The Cardinals are on record against Proposition B, as are the Kansas City Royals, Kansas City Chiefs and St. Louis Rams. Literature also was being handed out to Royals fans outside Kauffman Stadium in Kansas City.

"Today, we are seeing Cardinal red everywhere, including on our children," said the Rev. B.T. Rice, president of the St. Louis Clergy Coalition. "But if this passes, we won't see Cardinal red, we will see blood red ... the blood of our children."

Supporters say sports arenas, amusement parks and other public venues are free to bar concealed weapons from their premises.

Opponents say many won't heed the signs, and might pull triggers in response to a fumbled football or an umpire's bad call or after too many beers.

Turnout will be the key for both sides. In April, when the ballot usually features elections for city posts or school boards, light turnout is the norm.

But both sides on Proposition B were offering rides to the polls, a burst of advertising and media events they hoped would lead newscasts and front pages on Election Day.

The National Weather Service predicts a mostly sunny and warm day in Missouri. Fair weather could boost turnout in an election that Secretary of State Bekki Cook predicts will be decided by perhaps one voter in four. She projected that 900,000 Missourians would cast ballots on Proposition B, which was sent to voters by the Legislature last year.

Opponents of Proposition B rallied in the state's largest cities. Mayors Clarence Harmon of St. Louis and Emanuel Cleaver of Kansas City were among them, joined by law enforcement leaders.

Harmon, a former St. Louis police chief, told reporters at City Hall that his city's violent crime rate has been dropping. That will change if Missourians are allowed to carry concealed guns, he said.

"This is not about having a gun in your home. It's about carrying a gun in the street," Harmon said. "It would make Missouri law one of the most lax in the United States."

But Greg Jeffrey, a volunteer for Missourians Against Crime, the main proponents' group, said his research of states' concealed weapons laws showed Proposition B would put in place some of the tightest restrictions. For example, he said the 12 hours of minimum training would place Missouri at No. 3 among the 31 states he surveyed.

"The honest people of this state need to be able to defend themselves while going from their homes to their businesses," Jeffrey said.

NRA donations accounted for well over 90 percent of the funding for Missourians Against Crime. NRA spokesman Bill Powers said the organization was simply pumping its resources back into a state where it counts some 103,000 members, all of whom pay at least \$ 35 in annual dues.

The Associated Press State & Local Wire

The lead opposition group, the Committee for Safe Schools and Workplaces, countered that the NRA was trying to buy the election.

"We need to have Missourians control what Missouri law is," said St. Louis County Prosecutor Robert McCulloch.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 5, 1999

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The Associated Press State & Local Wire

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April 5, 1999, Monday, BC cycle

SECTION: State and Regional

LENGTH: 254 words

HEADLINE: Telephone messages on gun measure by Heston, first lady

BYLINE: By The Associated Press

BODY:

Text of automated messages from Hillary Rodham Clinton and Charlton Heston on Proposition B:

HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON:

"Hello. This is Hillary Clinton. I apologize for using this recording to contact you, but I'm trying to reach as many Missouri families as I can with an urgent message. I'm calling to urge you to vote "No" on Proposition B on April 6.

"Proposition B is so poorly written, with so many loopholes, it would allow people convicted of assault, stalking - even child molesting - to carry hidden guns in places like malls, stadiums, restaurants and even school yards.

"On Tuesday, April 6, please take the time to vote no on Proposition B. It's just too dangerous for Missouri families."

CHARLTON HESTON:

"Hello, this is Charlton Heston. I am calling to remind you that Tuesday is a very important day for Missourians. It is your chance to secure the very basic right to carry a concealed firearm for the protection of you and your loved ones. It is a right that 43 other states already have and a right Missourians deserve.

"The opponents of Proposition B are using their usual misleading ads to scare Missouri voters.

"Officials predict a close election, which means every vote will count. Please call friends, family, fellow hunters and gun owners to go to the polls on Tuesday and vote yes on proposition B.

"We will win this election, but only if you and every supporter you know turns out."

Sources: Safe Schools and Workplaces Committee; National Rifle Association.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 5, 1999

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The Associated Press State & Local Wire

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April 6, 1999, Tuesday, BC cycle

SECTION: State and Regional

LENGTH: 730 words

HEADLINE: Calls from first lady, Heston provide fodder for concealed guns campaign

BYLINE: By PAUL SLOCA, Associated Press Writer

DATELINE: JEFFERSON CITY, Mo.

BODY:

Last minute efforts to sway voters on a measure to allow concealed guns in Missouri had the first lady battling Moses in a vigorous get-out-the-vote campaign.

In a recorded telephone message sent to homes statewide, Hillary Rodham Clinton tells voters, "It's just too dangerous for Missouri families."

Her plea to vote down Proposition B in today's election, automatically dialed to 75,000 Missouri phones over the weekend, was aimed at women voters.

The National Rifle Association pulled out its own big gun to tout Proposition B: NRA President Charlton Heston, the actor best known for his portrayal of Moses in "The Ten Commandments."

Heston, in his automated message, urges voters to get to the polls and accuses anti-gun groups of using "scare" tactics in their campaign against the measure. The message targeted 700,000 Missouri phone numbers.

During a stop at a Proposition B rally in Springfield on Monday, Heston told The Associated Press he wasn't aware of Mrs. Clinton's efforts against the measure but that they didn't concern him.

"They must really be terrified if they've got Hillary against it," he said in a booming voice. "I'm delighted."

Then he added, "I don't know if a great majority of the American public really looks to Mrs. Clinton for information on firearms."

Gwen Fitzgerald, a spokeswoman for the anti-gun Safe Schools and Workplaces Committee, said, "We know that Mrs. Clinton is probably more liked on public policy issues than Charlton Heston, especially on issues of protecting our

children.

"We also know Mr. Heston is interested in selling more guns. He isn't interested in saving children."

The automated phone messages from Mrs. Clinton and Heston began over the weekend and ended before voters went to the polls today.

Heston says Proposition B provides Missouri residents with the "chance to secure the very basic right to carry a concealed firearm for the protection of you and your loved ones."

Mrs. Clinton says the ballot measure is so poorly written, it would let convicted criminals, "even child molesters," carry guns in public.

If Proposition B is approved, people 21 or older will be allowed to apply for permits to carry concealed handguns as long as they passed law enforcement background checks that include several disqualifiers and a handgun safety course.

The Missouri referendum is the first to put the concealed guns issue to a vote of the people, and state officials estimate that about 900,000 Missouri residents - about one in four - will vote.

Mrs. Clinton's calls were "designed to reach out to women voters because we feel they will be a key group going to the polls," Fitzgerald said.

She said her group's efforts didn't stop with the first lady. About 125,000 automated phone calls from Carl Wolfe, president-elect of the Missouri Police Chiefs Association, were made.

James Baker, the chief lobbyist for the NRA in Washington, D.C., said he had no doubt that the opposition was using Mrs. Clinton's celebrity to sway voters. His own organization, he said, was using an NRA official.

"I don't know what dog Hillary Clinton has in this fight," Baker said Monday.

When asked whether Heston's celebrity may mean more to some voters than his NRA position, Baker said: "I guess that might be the case. But he's speaking as the president of the NRA and not as Charlton Heston the actor."

St. Louis University political science professor Ken Warren wasn't sure it would matter what the actor/NRA president and the first lady had to say about Proposition B.

"I would say that a vast majority of people who know anything about this have already made up their mind, so these recorded messages don't work," said Warren, who has done extensive research on campaign strategy.

However, having a celebrity on the other end of the phone might be a little more persuasive for those who are undecided.

"That star quality is more effective than not having a star," Warren said.

Alice Dickens, 75, of Springfield, was impressed when she picked up the phone

The Associated Press State & Local Wire

Saturday and heard the first lady's voice on the other end, even if it was an automated message.

"It certainly can't hurt for those of us are opposed to know that the first lady is also opposed to it," Mrs. Dickens said. "But given the circumstances in the White House at the moment, I don't know that she carries that much weight, actually."

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 6, 1999

85TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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AP Online

April 06, 1999; Tuesday 05:17 Eastern Time

SECTION: Domestic, non-Washington, general news item

LENGTH: 317 words

HEADLINE: Weapons Question Put To Mo. Voters

BYLINE: SCOTT CHARTON

DATELINE: ST. LOUIS

BODY:

To conceal or not to conceal.

Although 31 states allow citizens to carry concealed weapons, Missouri today became the first state to put the question before voters. The practice has been banned here since 1875, when outlaw Jesse James was still at large.

Backers said Proposition B deserved support so law-abiding citizens could keep criminals guessing about whether attempted robberies, rapes, assaults or carjackings might be met with bullets.

"The honest people of this state need to be able to defend themselves while going from their homes to their businesses," Greg Jeffrey, spokesman for Missourians Against Crime, said Monday.

Critics said the plan's training requirements (12 hours minimum), its wording (sheriffs "shall" issue permits to qualified applicants) and its backers (including about \$3.8 million from the National Rifle Association) were adequate reasons to reject it.

Supportive campaign cash flowed so freely that "the NRA should change its initials to ATM," said Gwen Fitzgerald, spokeswoman for the principal opposition group, the Committee for Safe Schools and Workplaces.

The campaigns included NRA president Charlton Heston and Hillary Rodham Clinton, who urged voters to vote no because the proposal was "just too dangerous for Missouri families."

Missourians weren't expected to turn out in large numbers. Secretary of State Bekki Cook forecast that just one in four eligible Missourians would vote.

Destry Garibaldi, 31, said he was "a big-time 'Yes' vote," because "it's a constitutional right to have arms.

"So why shouldn't I be able to conceal it?" Garibaldi asked.

His fiancée, Lisa Pashia, 21, disagreed and was voting "No."

AP Online, April 06, 1999

'I understand the constitutional right,' she said. 'But it scares me to think I might accidentally cut someone off with my two girls in the car and they fire at me in road rage. It's scary.'

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 06, 1999

81ST STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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The Washington Post

April 07, 1999, Wednesday, Final Edition

SECTION: A SECTION; Pg. A03

LENGTH: 1113 words

HEADLINE: Missouri Voters Defeat Ballot Measure to Allow Concealed Handguns

BYLINE: Thomas B. Edsall, Washington Post Staff Writer

DATELINE: ST. LOUIS, April 6

BODY:

Pro-gun forces, on the ropes after a series of political defeats and court challenges, suffered a major setback today after pouring \$ 3.8 million into a bid to win the first state ballot measure on whether law-abiding citizens should have the right to carry concealed handguns.

With more than 98 percent of the vote counted, opponents held a solid 52 percent margin, 661,962 to 614,782, in a contest in which big bucks faced off against big names, including first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton.

The measure went down to defeat at the hands of suburban white voters and black city voters, whose solid opposition more than offset pro-gun forces in rural Missouri. Voters in St. Louis and surrounding counties voted no by 3 to 1 ratios, while the Kansas City area voted no by an 8 to 5 ratio. In addition, pre-election polling showed women far more opposed to the proposal than men.

The outcome today was a boost for the Senate bid of Gov. Mel Carnahan (D), who opposed the measure and whose daughter ran the opposition campaign. Carnahan is challenging Sen. John D. Ashcroft (R-Mo.), who supported the proposition and participated in radio commercials in its behalf.

The vote marked a crucial test of whether the National Rifle Association still has the political muscle to battle what has been growing momentum for gun control.

For years, proponents of gun control have been on the losing end of the debate. As recently as the 1994 elections, after Congress passed the assault weapons ban, votes for that measure were considered a factor in the defeat of a number of southern Democrats.

In 1996, however, the politics of gun control flipped. President Clinton used his support of the assault weapons ban and the Brady bill to advantage in the contest, while Republican nominee Robert J. Dole was forced by the weight of public opinion to play down his support of gun rights.

The Washington Post, April 07, 1999

In private, a number of gun rights supporters say that a major setback to their cause was the profound public concern over the misuse of weapons and explosives prompted first by Timothy J. McVeigh and the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, and then by the widespread disclosure of anti-government, private militias in states everywhere.

In their bid to regain leverage in the debate, gun rights activists here stole a page from the playbook of the abortion rights movement. They asserted in radio and television ads that bombarded this state that men and women should have the freedom of "choice" to exercise the right to carry a handgun for their own protection.

In one ad, a woman told viewers, "You probably heard of the southside rapist . . . I was one of his victims. So I am going to vote for Proposition B, the right to carry, absolutely. It may not be something you want to do, but I'm asking you to give me the right to protect myself."

In another, Charlton Heston, president of the NRA, declared: "America's greatness comes from our fight for individual rights. The Constitution, the Civil War, women's suffrage, the civil rights movement. These freedoms define America. . . . Don't cave in to the politically correct elite. It's your choice. It's your right," referring to the Second Amendment, "to bear arms."

The "choice and rights" strategy adopted by the NRA and its local ally, Missourians Against Crime, initially threw gun control advocates on the defensive. Unwilling to challenge the right to carry a weapon, opponents of the measure argued that the law would have too many loopholes.

"They sold choice and rights, and if you take rights as an absolute, then it makes sense to vote for Proposition B. We are arguing that it was written with loopholes big enough that the guy next to you in the ballpark can have [a concealed weapon]. The question is, how will voters juxtapose these two conflicting feelings?" said Saul Shorr, who produced the commercials for opponents of the measure.

While on the ropes nationally, the NRA -- until today -- had been successfully building a "right to carry" movement that has been gaining momentum at the state level. In the last decade, a majority of state legislatures have passed concealed weapons laws. But today's referendum is the first time the issue was put before voters and was viewed as a key barometer of the NRA's political strength.

"Our opponents are always contending we are strong-arming legislatures to do these things, with campaign contributions rather than representing the will of the people. Should we manage to win, it will put the lie to that. There are real people out there who believe these things," said James J. Baker, chief lobbyist for the NRA, which has put nearly \$ 3.8 million into this referendum.

"The NRA has been taking it on the chin left and right, gun sales are down, the gun lobby is backing up when it comes to lawsuits, and they have not won a major issue in the last three years. So they are really raising the stakes on this," said Brian Morton, associate director of Handgun Control.

The Washington Post, April 07, 1999

Today's vote was a victory for the Clinton administration, which has made gun control a centerpiece of its agenda, winning passage of the assault weapon ban and the Brady handgun law. The commitment was reflected by Hillary Clinton's involvement in the referendum here.

In a taped message that was used in at least 75,000 calls directed as much as possible to women, Hillary Clinton argued that the proposed law "is so poorly written with so many loopholes it would allow people convicted of assault, stalking -- even child molesting -- to carry hidden guns in places like malls, stadiums, restaurants and even schoolyards."

If Proposition B had passed, applicants in Missouri would have needed a second permit to carry a concealed weapon. They would have had to undergo criminal and mental health background checks, take at least 12 hours of state-approved training and have had no violent offenses on their records for at least five years.

Missouri banned the carrying of concealed weapons in 1875, when Jesse James was still at large. Citizens must obtain permits to own a gun.

Licensed to Carry

Carrying a concealed weapon is prohibited in seven states and the District of Columbia.

Concealed weapons prohibited

WIS.

ILL.

MO.

KAN.

NEB.

N.M.

D.C.

Restricted to those meeting "need" requirement

CALIF.

MINN.

IOWA

HAWAII

MICH.

The Washington Post, April 07, 1999

ALA.

N.Y.

R.I.

N.J.

DEL.

MD

Licenses issued without demonstrated "need"*

The other 31 states.

* No license required to carry a concealed weapon in VT

SOURCE: Handgun Control Inc.

NRA president Charlton Heston made advertisement in favor of Missouri measure on concealed weapons.

GRAPHIC: PH,,AP/BILL HABER; IG,,TWP

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 07, 1999

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USA TODAY

April 7, 1999, Wednesday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 1A

LENGTH: 381 words

HEADLINE: Missouri voters decide against lifting concealed weapons ban

BYLINE: Steve Marshall

BODY:

Missouri voters rejected a measure Tuesday to lift a century-old ban on concealed weapons in a referendum that left gun opponents gleeful.

With 96% of the votes counted early today, Proposition B, which would have lifted the ban, failed 52% to 48%.

The hotly contested measure, the first time a state let voters decide the question of legalizing concealed weapons, lured heavy hitters from both sides of the gun lobby and turned a state vote into a national battleground.

The measure would have let qualified residents carry concealed weapons, a practice banned since the days of Jesse James. Applicants would have had to undergo a criminal background check and at least 12 hours of firearms training.

The National Rifle Association provided more than \$ 3.7 million, about 95% of the money backing the measure. Leading the charge was the NRA's Charlton Heston.

"It's a stunning loss for the NRA," Handgun Control Inc.'s Joe Sudbay said early today. "The people of Missouri shut the door to them."

But NRA spokesman Bill Powers pointed to the closeness of the vote and said Gov. Mel Carnahan "did everything he could to defeat this measure."

Opponents of the measure had one-fourth of the NRA's bankroll, but had help from big names, including Hillary Rodham Clinton, who helped target women voters.

Clinton said the measure is "just too dangerous for Missouri families."

Other backers included Sen. John Ashcroft, R-Mo., who did broadcast ads in favor of Proposition B, Anheuser-Busch and some police

USA TODAY, April 7, 1999

groups.

Republican John Danforth, who Ashcroft succeeded in the Senate, co-chairs an opposition group, the Safe Schools and Workplaces Committee.

One officer in favor of the measure, Springfield police Cpl. John Marcum, said, "It boils down to a basic right of self-defense. Why should you lose the right to defend yourself when you leave your home?"

The referendum resulted from failed annual attempts by lawmakers to pass a concealed weapons law against Carnahan's threatened veto.

Thirty-one states allow concealed weapons to be carried, but state legislators passed those laws.

The state auditor estimated that 60,000 Missouri citizens would apply for the concealed carry permit if Prop B passed.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO, Color, AP; Heston: NRA backing of \$3.7M

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 07, 1999

79TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1999 Gannett Company, Inc.
USA TODAY

April 7, 1999, Wednesday, FIRST EDITION

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 1A

LENGTH: 373 words

HEADLINE: Close call in Missouri battle over right to conceal weapons

BYLINE: Steve Marshall

BODY:

A Missouri proposal that drew national partisans on both sides of the gun issue was fought down to the wire late Tuesday.

The referendum, the first time a state has allowed voters to decide the question of legalizing concealed weapons, brought out heavy sluggers on both sides, turning a state vote into a national battleground.

Proposition B would have allowed qualified residents to carry concealed weapons, a practice banned since the days of Jesse James.

With 44% of precincts reporting, the vote was a 50-50 split.

The National Rifle Association, which needed a victory to counteract recent adverse anti-gun publicity, provided more than \$ 3.7 million, about 95% of the money backing the measure. Leading the charge was the NRA's Charlton Heston.

The opponents of the measure had one-fourth of the NRA's bankroll, but had help from big names, including Hillary Rodham Clinton, whose recorded voice was fed telemarketing-style to women. Clinton said the measure is "just too dangerous for Missouri families."

Other backers included Sen. John Ashcroft, R-Mo., who did broadcast ads in favor of Proposition B, Anheuser-Busch and some police groups.

Republican John Danforth, who Ashcroft succeeded in the Senate, co-chairs an opposition group, the Safe Schools and Workplaces Committee. One officer in favor of the measure, Springfield police Cpl. John Marcum, said, "It boils down to a basic right of self-defense. Why should you lose the right to defend yourself when you leave your home?"

The concealed weapons ban dates to the days of gunslinger Jesse James, a native of Kearney killed by a member of his own gang. In a crackdown on desperados, Missouri banned concealed weapons in 1875, seven years before his death.

USA TODAY, April 7, 1999

The referendum resulted from failed annual attempts by lawmakers to pass a concealed-weapons law against Gov. Mel Carnahan's threatened veto.

Thirty-one states allow carrying concealed weapons, but legislators passed those laws.

The state auditor estimated that 60,000 Missouri citizens would apply for the concealed carry permit if Prop B passed.

The requirements for applicants included at least 12 hours of state-approved firearms training.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO, Color, AP; Heston: NRA backing of \$3.7M

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 07, 1999

73RD STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1999 The New York Times Company
The New York Times

April 7, 1999, Wednesday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Page 19; Column 4; National Desk

LENGTH: 434 words

HEADLINE: Missourians Keep Concealed Weapons Ban

BYLINE: AP

DATELINE: JEFFERSON CITY, Mo., April 6

BODY:

Missourians today voted down an attempt to lift a ban on concealed guns that dated to the era of Jesse James.

The vote marked the first time a state had put the question of concealed weapons to the voters. Thirty-one other states allow citizens to carry concealed guns, but those measures were enacted by legislators.

With 95 percent of the vote counted, lifting the ban was opposed by 52 percent of the voters, or 643,117, and supported by 48 percent, or 589,821.

Jubilant foes of the proposal said voters had not been snookered by the pro-gun lobby.

"Missourians have said they just do not want guns carried into football games and bars and schools," said State Senator Harry Wiggins, a Democrat.

Although the measure won in 91 mostly rural counties, it failed by wide margins in the city of St. Louis and Kansas City, according to unofficial returns.

The measure, Proposition B, resulted from failed yearly attempts by pro-gun lawmakers to pass a concealed-weapons law against a threatened veto by the Democratic Governor, Mel Carnahan.

The National Rifle Association almost singlehandedly bankrolled the campaign for Proposition B -- providing more than \$3.7 million, well over 95 percent of the money behind the measure -- in what was viewed as an important test of gun sentiment in the heartland.

"Since this is the first time it's ever been put to a vote, both sides on this issue are going to learn a tremendous amount," said Fred Myers, a leader of the Proposition B campaign. "This will be a race that political scientists and pundits will mull for years, because it's breaking such new ground."

The New York Times, April 7, 1999

Supporters said allowing law-abiding people to carry guns would keep the criminals guessing.

"The honest people of this state need to be able to defend themselves while going from their homes to their businesses," Greg Jeffrey, a spokesman for the Proposition B campaign.

The other side received just one-fourth the funding but had help from Hillary Rodham Clinton, who recorded a telemarketing message aimed at women. The First Lady said Proposition B was "just too dangerous for Missouri families."

The St. Louis County prosecutor, Robert McCulloch, was among the law enforcement officers who feared the measure would court trouble. "We don't want to be going back to the old Wild West days with everyone wearing a gun," he said.

James, the Wild West's most notorious outlaw, was a native of Kearney. Missouri banned concealed weapons in a crackdown on gunslinging in 1875, seven years before James was shot to death in St. Joseph, Mo., by a member of his gang.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 7, 1999

59TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

The Associated Press State & Local Wire

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April 7, 1999, Wednesday, AM cycle

SECTION: State and Regional

LENGTH: 886 words

HEADLINE: Concealed guns fails in Missouri

BYLINE: By SCOTT CHARTON, AP Political Writer

DATELINE: JEFFERSON CITY, Mo.

BODY:

With a strong urban vote that dealt a setback to pro-gun forces, Missourians on Tuesday rejected lifting a ban on concealed guns that dated to the era of Jesse James.

With 99 percent of votes counted, Proposition B failed 52 percent to 48 percent, with 674,378 voting "no" and 625,689 "yes" votes.

The vote marked the first time a state has put the question of concealed weapons on the ballot.

"I don't think in the near future it will be resubmitted to voters," said a somber Rep. Wayne Crump, D-Potosi and the key legislative sponsor of Proposition B.

The margin had been much closer all evening, with Proposition B slightly ahead, until populous St. Louis County punched through with tallies defeating it by a greater than 2-1 margin.

It also failed by 3-1 in the city of St. Louis and nearly 2-1 in Kansas City, while carrying nearly all rural counties, according to unofficial returns.

Backers of Proposition B - which was financed almost singlehandedly by the National Rifle Association's contributions and loans exceeding \$ 3.7 million - conceded the contest during a subdued gathering at a Jefferson City hotel four hours after the polls closed.

Jubilant foes of the concealed guns proposal said Missourians didn't let the NRA's massive spending sway them. The NRA money financed an advocacy campaign including 700,000 mailings, 60,000 yards signs and huge advertising buys on television and radio.

"It just shows that you can't buy an election in Missouri," declared Carl

Wolf of Hazelwood, president-elect of the Missouri Police Chiefs Association.

"Missourians have said they just do not want guns carried into football games and bars and schools," said state Sen. Harry Wiggins, D-Kansas City, whose hometown helped provide the margin of defeat.

Both sides spent the evening scanning the map of Missouri, watching rural counties report local approval of Proposition B by margins sometimes exceeding 3-1.

The favorable vote spread statewide - from Atchison and Holt counties in the far northwest corner, Marion, Ralls and Scotland counties in Mark Twain country, Cape Girardeau and Scott counties in southeast Missouri and Douglas, Laclede, Dade and Camden counties in the Ozarks.

Proposition B also won in Phelps County, home of Gov. Mel Carnahan, a leading opponent of concealed guns.

The two largest cities more than closed the gap, however, along with defeats for Proposition B in Buchanan (St. Joseph) and Boone (Columbia) counties.

Interest in Proposition B drove turnout to its highest level for an April election, with about 35 percent, or 1.25 million voters participating, said Secretary of State Bekki Cook. That was above her projection of 25 percent turnout.

Thirty-one other states allow citizens to carry concealed weapons, but those measures were enacted by legislators. Missouri's pro-gun lawmakers instead sent Proposition B straight to the ballot after Carnahan threatened a veto if it reached his desk.

The NRA donations accounted for well over 95 percent of the money behind the measure, in what was viewed as an important test of gun sentiment in the heartland.

Supportive campaign cash flowed so freely that "the NRA should change its initials to ATM," said Gwen Fitzgerald, spokeswoman for the principal opposition group, the Committee for Safe Schools and Workplaces.

Fred Myers, campaign manager of Missourians Against Crime, which received most of the NRA money, dismissed critics' claims that pro-gun forces were trying to buy the election.

"For an issue as highly charged and personal as this, there's not enough money in Missouri to make someone vote for or against this thing. You can only reinforce the beliefs of people. They are going to go out and vote their consciences," Myers said.

The proponents' campaign included TV ads featuring the victim of a serial rapist, plus Missouri appearances and automated phone calls to likely voters by the NRA's president, actor Charlton Heston.

Opponents raised just one-fourth as much money, but had help from Hillary Rodham Clinton, who recorded a telemarketing message telling women that

Proposition B is "just too dangerous for Missouri families."

The opposition also relied on community leaders, law enforcement officers and activists such as the Rev. B.T. Rice, president of the St. Louis Clergy Coalition.

After voting Tuesday in a north St. Louis neighborhood that has been rocked by gun violence, Rice boarded a 40-foot motor coach emblazoned with anti-Proposition B signs for a day of driving in black neighborhoods.

Rice said he has preached at more than two dozen funerals in recent years because of gun violence.

"I always tell my congregation that with these handguns, all you need is a spurt of anger and somebody's life is gone forever," Rice said. "The only purpose for handguns is to kill or wound another human being."

But pro-gun voters like Wayne Lindberg of St. Charles said there was another purpose for packing a hidden handgun: keeping criminals guessing.

"We just need that option," Lindberg said as he distributed campaign literature outside Busch Stadium.

Janet Reed, a voter from Ballwin, was unconvinced. "'No' is the easiest thing to say if you have too many questions - much simpler than saying 'yes.'"

Missouri banned the carrying of concealed weapons in 1875.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 7, 1999

55TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

The Associated Press

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April 7, 1999, Wednesday, AM cycle

SECTION: Domestic News

LENGTH: 579 words

HEADLINE: Missouri refuses to toss out ban on concealed guns

BYLINE: By SCOTT CHARTON, Associated Press Writer

DATELINE: JEFFERSON CITY, Mo.

BODY:

Missourians shot down an attempt Tuesday to lift a ban on concealed guns that dated to the era of Jesse James.

With 99 percent of votes counted, Proposition B, which would have lifted the ban, failed 52 percent to 48 percent, or 674,378 votes to 625,689 votes.

The vote marked the first time a state put the question of concealed weapons to the voters. Thirty-one other states allow citizens to carry concealed guns, but those measures were enacted by legislators.

Jubilant foes of the proposal said voters were not snookered by the pro-gun lobby.

"Missourians have said they just do not want guns carried into football games and bars and schools," said state Sen. Harry Wiggins, D-Kansas City.

The vote count had been very close throughout the night until populous St. Louis County reported the measure's rejection by a greater than 2-1 margin. The county does not include the city of St. Louis, but does include many of its suburbs.

Although the measure won out in 91 mostly rural counties, it failed by wide margins in the cities of St. Louis and Kansas City, according to unofficial returns.

About 35 percent of eligible voters turned out, the highest ever for an April election in which local offices are up for grabs, officials said.

Proposition B was an attempt by pro-gun lawmakers to pass a concealed-weapons law without having to contend with a threatened veto by Democratic Gov. Mel

The Associated Press, April 7, 1999

Carnahan.

The National Rifle Association almost singlehandedly bankrolled the campaign for Proposition B - providing more than \$ 3.7 million, well over 95 percent of the money behind the measure - in what was viewed as an important test of gun sentiment in the heartland.

The NRA paid for 700,000 mailings, 60,000 yards signs and huge advertising buys on television and radio.

"It just shows that you can't buy an election in Missouri," declared Carl Wolf, president-elect of the Missouri Police Chiefs Association, which opposed the measure.

Supporters had said allowing law-abiding people to pack guns would keep the criminals guessing.

Fred Myers, campaign manager of Missourians Against Crime, which received most of the NRA money, dismissed claims that pro-gun forces were trying to buy the election.

"For an issue as highly charged and personal as this, there's not enough money in Missouri to make someone vote for or against this thing," he said. "You can only reinforce the beliefs of people. They are going to go out and vote their consciences."

The other side received just one-fourth the funding but had help from Hillary Rodham Clinton, who recorded a telemarketing message targeted at women. The first lady said Proposition B is "just too dangerous for Missouri families."

St. Louis County Prosecutor Robert McCulloch was among the law enforcement officers who feared the measure would court trouble: "We don't want to be going back to the old Wild West days with everyone wearing a gun."

James, the Wild West's most notorious outlaw, was a native of Kearney. Missouri banned concealed weapons in a crackdown on gunslinging in 1875, seven years before James was shot to death in St. Joseph, Mo., by a member of his gang.

Under Proposition B, state residents would have needed a second permit to carry a concealed weapon.

Applicants would have had to undergo criminal and mental health background checks, take at least 12 hours of state-approved training and have no violent offenses on their records for at least five years.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 7, 1999

49TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1999 The New York Times Company
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April 8, 1999, Thursday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Page 24; Column 4; National Desk

LENGTH: 675 words

HEADLINE: Missouri Rejects Bid to Allow Concealed Guns

BYLINE: By ANDREW BLUTH

DATELINE: CHICAGO, April 7

BODY:

Missourians have narrowly voted down the nation's first statewide ballot proposal to allow concealed weapons.

The measure was approved on Tuesday in all but 12 of the state's 116 counties, but voters in metropolitan St. Louis and Kansas City overwhelmingly rejected it, leading to its defeat statewide by 52 percent to 48 percent. In the City of St. Louis alone, 74 percent of votes were against the measure.

Election officials said the 1.3 million votes cast in the referendum set a state record for voter turnout in an April election. The high turnout was mainly attributed to the relentless lobbying of supporters on both sides in recent weeks, saying that for the first time the public, as opposed to politicians, would have a say in the issue.

Prominent gun advocates like the actor Charlton Heston, who is president of the National Rifle Association, made frequent visits to the state, as did gun opponents like Sarah and James S. Brady, the former press secretary for President Ronald Reagan who was shot in an assassination attempt on Mr. Reagan.

Hillary Rodham Clinton also lent her voice to the campaign against the proposition. In a recorded telephone message that backers said was mainly intended for women and was sent automatically to 75,000 homes statewide, Mrs. Clinton said of the proposition, "It's just too dangerous for Missouri families."

Mrs. Brady, the chairwoman of Handgun Control Inc., a lobbying group in Washington, called defeat of the gun measure "a huge step forward for public safety."

"The idea of putting more guns on the street is just a disaster," Mrs. Brady said, "and this vote shows people agree with that. People in Missouri understood that this would've allowed people to take guns into bars and stadiums and made the streets much more dangerous. Common sense prevailed."

The New York Times, April 8, 1999

Citing broad support for a concealed-weapons law among the state's rural population as a way law-abiding people could keep the criminals guessing, proponents vowed to continue the fight.

"You win some and you lose some, and we've won our fair share elsewhere," said James J. Baker, the rifle association's chief lobbyist. "You can be sure we'll be back in Missouri at some point, and you can be sure we're in this for the long haul."

The campaign had drawn national attention and huge amounts of resources from the rifle group, which spent close to \$4 million, more than five times what its opponents spent.

Today, gun opponents cited the measure's defeat as a major gain for their cause, and part of a trend of victories. They cited a referendum in Florida that requires background checks for gun buyers at trade shows and the filing of lawsuits against gun manufacturers by New Orleans, Chicago and other cities.

"Election after election, referendum after referendum and poll after poll are showing that what the gun lobby is pushing is not what the public wants," Mrs. Brady said.

Mayor Clarence Harmon of St. Louis said the vote showed that "the power of the people is greater than the power of the N.R.A."

The measure's supporters had hoped to add Missouri to a list of 31 states that permit concealed weapons. The Missouri Legislature had passed legislation to permit concealed weapons, but Gov. Mel Carnahan, a Democrat, vetoed it.

"You can be sure we will be doing everything we can to elect a pro-gun governor in Missouri," said Mr. Baker, the rifle association lobbyist. "And I predict the citizens in Missouri will have their right to carry concealed weapons in the not too distant future."

Mr. Baker said that his group and other pro-gun lobbyists would continue to push for such laws in other states, but that their strategy would probably return to achieving their goal through the legislatures.

"I just don't think it makes sense to spend that kind of money for one state's concealed-weapon referendum," he said.

Mr. Baker said immediate attention would shift to Colorado and Kansas, where similar bills are likely to come out of the legislatures in the current sessions.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 8, 1999

48TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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April 8, 1999, Thursday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Page 26; Column 1; Editorial Desk

LENGTH: 230 words

HEADLINE: A Big Loss for the N.R.A.

BODY:

The National Rifle Association poured \$3.8 million into its bid to win passage of a ballot referendum in Missouri that would have lifted the state's longstanding prohibition against carrying a concealed weapon -- at least three times the amount spent by the other side. But Missouri voters proved too sensible to be swayed. On Tuesday they defeated the "right to carry" referendum, and the idea of looser gun laws, by a 52-to-48-percent margin.

Although a majority of state legislatures have passed concealed-weapons laws at the behest of N.R.A. lobbyists, this is the first time the matter has been put before voters. For the N.R.A., which grandly billed the showdown over the Missouri referendum as "the last great gun battle of the 20th century," the outcome was a major defeat that can only add to the momentum for reasonable gun control. The Clinton Administration, particularly Hillary Rodham Clinton, who taped an effective message pointing out the proposal's dangers, can justly take pride in the outcome. So can Missouri's Democratic Governor, Mel Carnahan, who strongly opposed the ballot measure. Senator John Ashcroft, a Republican, actively supported the proposition.

The national Republican Party, if it is smart, will heed this week's loud message from the nation's heartland. This is an apt moment to consider declaring independence from the N.R.A.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 8, 1999

46TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1999 The Buffalo News
The Buffalo News

April 8, 1999, Thursday, CITY EDITION

SECTION: EDITORIAL PAGE, Pg. 2B

LENGTH: 447 words

HEADLINE: SAYING 'NO' TO CONCEALED GUNS

BODY:

The decision of Missouri voters not to let citizens carry concealed weapons was a clear rejection of gun lobby drive. That's singularly important because it is the first time the public has spoken directly on the issue.

It proves that if you take political intimidation and legalized bribery out of the equation, the gun lobby is not nearly as potent or persuasive as is sometimes thought.

Residents in Missouri wisely voted 52-48 percent against repealing that state's ban on concealed weapons, a ban that dated to Wild West times but which the gun industry wanted to overturn.

A victory by the gun lobby would have made Missouri the 32nd state to allow concealed weapons. They could have been carried there by virtually any sane person except a recent violent offender. (Eleven other states, including New York, allow concealed weapons to be carried by qualified persons who can prove a need to do so.)

But in the 31 other states that allow concealed weapons, the permission was granted by state legislatures. It's at that level, as well as on Capitol Hill, that the National Rifle Association is legendary for scaring lawmakers or pumping huge amounts of money into campaigns.

However, those strategies were useless this time because the Missouri decision was made by the public in a referendum. While giving money to legislators to sway their votes is legal, giving it to citizens isn't. Nor can average citizens be intimidated by the threat to assist an opponent in the next election, which has been another favorite gun lobby tactic.

That meant that the NRA had to argue the issue on its merits this time. And the result indicates that the public doesn't see much merit in the NRA position.

The referendum pitted appeals from "Moses" -- NRA President Charlton Heston -- against those from first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, who made taped messages warning against the dangers of lifting the ban. It also saw the NRA spend some \$ 3.8 million, far more than its opponents.

Yet residents ultimately decided they didn't want the prospect of turning practically any public place into an armed camp, or of allowing those convicted of some crimes like stalking or assault to carry concealed guns.

The Buffalo News, April 8, 1999

That the right to carry concealed weapons in other states hasn't resulted in more mayhem probably results from the fact that so few people take advantage of it. After all, it wasn't something they asked for, it was something their legislators decreed.

When the public gets to decide for itself, it's a different story -- and one that indicates that the public is sometimes more courageous than the people it elects when it comes to standing up to the NRA.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 10, 1999

43RD STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1999 St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Inc.
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

April 11, 1999, Sunday, FIVE STAR LIFT EDITION

SECTION: METRO, Pg. D2, JO MANNIES ON POLITICS COLUMN

LENGTH: 705 words

HEADLINE: FIGHT AGAINST PROP B PUSHES ROBIN CARNAHAN INTO SPOTLIGHT

BYLINE: Jo Mannies

BODY:

She's a lawyer who hasn't held public office, yet is regarded by many as the sharpest and most aggressive tactician in her high-profile political family. She's also related to the highest public official in the land.

The land of Missouri, that is.

Robin Carnahan, the daughter of Gov. Mel Carnahan, is, by all accounts, the brains behind Tuesday's come-from-behind victory of the opponents to Proposition B, the concealed-weapons proposal pushed by the National Rifle Association.

"I sent her roses this week with a card saying, 'The NRA never played racquetball against you,' " said Saul Shorr, a national Democratic consultant who has worked with the Carnahans for years.

Robin Carnahan orchestrated the strategy for the anti-B effort and handled much of the fund raising. She called the professional sports teams to persuade them to go public with their opposition, and called the White House to woo Hillary Rodham Clinton to make an anti-B telemarketing message sent to 75,000 Missouri voters.

Some compare Robin Carnahan's tenacity to that of Mrs. Clinton, although others say she's more in the steel-magnolia image of Rosalynn Carter.

Carnahan, 37, is uncomfortable with any such comparisons. "I'm just a girl who grew up with three brothers," she said. While acknowledging her leadership role, she says the credit for Tuesday's victory goes to the 675,000 Missourians who went to the polls to reject Proposition B.

"This was a coalition of business leaders, Republicans and Democrats, religious leaders of all stripes, health care professionals, the sports teams. . . ." She pauses, then makes her main point. "This was a broader thing. It was not just the Carnahans."

Still, her success is fueling speculation that the elder Carnahan will use the urban-based strategy - 10 counties overruled 104 others - in his effort next year to oust Sen. John Ashcroft, R-Mo.

Said the governor last week: "I think you could draw too many conclusions

St. Louis Post-Dispatch, April 11, 1999

about it. I have not drawn any analysis. I leave the analysis to others."

He did offer conclusions about his daughter's job. "I think she did a very good job on limited resources. Her performance was extraordinary."

Her concern about keeping partisan politics out of the anti-Proposition B effort was the reason that Robin Carnahan refused to be a spokesman or give interviews before Tuesday's election. "I'm not a shrinking violet, but in this campaign, it was pragmatic for me to keep a low profile," she said.

The one glitch was that Uzi ad featuring the wrong gun; she blames it on a production error.

Carnahan has kept a low but influential political profile through most of her adult life. She grew up in Rolla - "the country is probably the place I'm most comfortable" - where the Carnahan kids grew up digesting politics at the dinner table.

She attended William Jewell College outside Kansas City, got her law degree from the University of Virginia and practiced law briefly in St. Louis in the 1980s. She's also a licensed pilot.

She managed her father's 1988 campaign for lieutenant governor, when he was the only Democrat to win a statewide office. Then she took off for Europe to work for the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, a group that helped Hungary and Czechoslovakia hold their first elections and form real political parties.

In 1993, after helping her father win his bid for governor, Robin worked for the Export-Import Bank in Washington. She returned to St. Louis three years ago, and now runs a trade-consulting business.

She jumped into the Proposition B fray last fall, she said, when she saw a pro-Prop B sticker on a car, made a few phone calls and found out that there was no organized opposition effort. "I got in like most women get involved; they have an issue they believe in, and then they find themselves up to their eyeballs in making it come out right."

For the moment, she expects to resurrect her trade-consulting business. But she's not discounting a political future, either. "I'm obviously interested in politics. I'm obviously interested in my state. But right now, I'm pretty focused on Dad and getting him elected to the U.S. Senate."

Racquetball, anyone?

GRAPHIC: PHOTO Photo headshot - (Robin) Carnahan

LANGUAGE: English

LOAD-DATE: April 11, 1999

40TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1999 Palm Beach Newspaper, Inc.
The Palm Beach Post

April 12, 1999, Monday, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: OPINION, Pg. 15A

LENGTH: 651 words

HEADLINE: IF ONLY FLORIDA HAD LAWMAKERS AS SMART AS MISSOURIANS

BYLINE: George McEvoy

BODY:

The National Rifle Association spent \$ 3.7 million trying to abolish a Missouri state law banning the carrying of concealed weapons, and lost.

The NRA sent out as many as a million mailings, put up 60,000 yard signs and made huge advertising buys on television and radio, but it might as well have been firing blanks.

Last week, the people of Missouri - by a vote of 52 percent to 48 percent - rejected Proposition B. It would have abolished the concealed-weapons law that has been in effect since 1875, a time when native sons Jesse and Frank James were running wild.

Of course, the James boys and their gang usually wore their revolvers out in plain sight, in hip holsters. But later criminals preferred the shoulder holster under a suit coat or a small pocket pistol.

It wasn't fear of the criminal element, however, that appears to have influenced the vote but what can happen when ordinary people start packing iron.

Missouri state Sen. Harry Wiggins put it this way, "Missourians have said they do not want guns carried into football games and bars and schools."

The NRA's argument was that if honest citizens had the right to carry concealed weapons, crime would be deterred. "It would keep the criminals guessing," one NRA supporter said.

The trouble with that argument is that it would also keep decent folk guessing as to whether the guy they are passing on the street might be a homicidal lunatic with a snub-nosed .38 under his sport shirt.

The Missouri vote was one of the worst defeats sustained by the NRA in recent years.

The campaign manager for the NRA effort, Fred Myers, complained about the forces arrayed against his group, Missourians Against Crime. Those forces included the woman who will never be the NRA's favorite pinup, Hillary Rodham Clinton, as well as Democratic Gov. Mel Carnahan, top police officials and the state's leading newspapers.

The Palm Beach Post, April 12, 1999

Mrs. Clinton taped television spots calling Proposition B dangerous for families.

Meanwhile, in Florida, a gun issue also occupied the minds of our state's lawmakers.

Here we have a Legislature ruled by a GOP majority answerable to a Republican governor, which is like allowing a bunch of 16-year-olds to have an all-night party, chaperoned by a 14-year-old. You know nothing praiseworthy is going to come out of it.

Anyway, our esteemed legislators have two bills going - one in the House and a similar one in the Senate - that would make it legal for someone who holds a concealed-weapons permit from another state to carry a hidden gun in Florida. The Senate bill last week survived a Democratic attempt to scuttle it and moved to the House.

While they were working hard to allow the gun nuts from other states to pack their pistols here, Florida's forward-thinking lawmakers also paid their dues to the anti-choice crowd by attempting to put up another obstacle to legalized abortion.

Under a bill that cleared a Senate committee, parents of a minor would not have to approve of their daughter's abortion but would have to be notified. A psychologist, Dr. Angela Woodhull, testified in favor of the bill. She said young girls who have abortions often go into withdrawal, and informed parents can be supportive.

Of course, if the parents were supportive in the first place, the kid would have confided in them, right?

But why should we get depressed? The Republican members of a House committee also managed to eke out passage of a bill that would allow student-initiated prayer at public school functions if a majority of the students agree.

In other words, to hell with the minority.

The Christian Coalition backs the bill, of course. The Constitution of the United States probably does not, but why worry about that?

Anyway, we have more reasons to pray than they do in Missouri.

George McEvoy is a columnist for The Palm Beach Post. His e-mail address is gfamx4faol.com

TYPE: COLUMN

COMPANY: NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (94%);

LOAD-DATE: April 14, 1999

39TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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Knoxville News-Sentinel (Knoxville, TN)

April 12, 1999, Monday

SECTION: A Section; Pg. A10

LENGTH: 869 words

HEADLINE: Missouri voters reject NRA-backed bill

BYLINE: Theotis Robinson Jr.

BODY:

In what Charlton Heston -- the anti-Moses who would lead the people into the wilderness -- had promised would be "the gun fight to end all gun fights," the people of Missouri rejected a National Rifle Association effort to legalize the carrying of concealed weapons in their state.

Heston, the president of the NRA, made several trips to Missouri during the campaign. He and the NRA worked hard to end the ban that dated to 1875 when Jesse James terrorized the state. But, in the end, the Show Me state showed Heston and his buddies that Missourians wanted no part of putting more guns on their streets. Enough hand gun carnage already exists.

When the wide gap in spending between the NRA and the people preferring a safer society is considered, the defeat of the referendum is rather surprising. The NRA spent nearly \$ 4 million in its campaign for a permissive gun law. They outspent the opposition by nearly a 5-to-1 ratio. In the heartland of America, the expectation was that the NRA could not lose. Indeed, in 104 of the state's 116 counties, the referendum passed.

But in the more populated urban areas, the measure went down in flames. The city of St. Louis voted 74 percent against the measure. It lost heavily in Kansas City, too. This loss in the urban areas seems almost ironic. The NRA touted the proposition as affording law-abiding citizens a legal means of protecting themselves and their loved ones from becoming victims of crime. People living in cities and urban areas experience a higher crime rate than do rural dwellers.

The people the NRA claimed they wanted to protect, however, voted no in resounding numbers. The idea of having more guns on the streets, in stadiums and in bars did not appeal to those the NRA claimed would benefit most from this liberalizing of Missouri's gun laws. Cities have seen what too many guns on the streets can do.

Missouri's referendum to make the state's gun laws more permissive was a first for the nation. While 31 states, including Tennessee, have laws that allow the carrying of concealed weapons, Missouri was the first state to hold a referendum on the question.

State legislatures in the 31 other states have made it legal for people to

pack hidden guns as they go about their daily activities. In the environment of back-room deal making and campaign donations that is part and parcel of many state legislative processes, the NRA is at its best.

This was the process the NRA initially followed in Missouri. But Heston and his organization ran into an obstacle they could not overcome. The Show Me state has a Democratic governor, Mel Carnahan, who has refused to kowtow to the political intimidation of the NRA. When the Missouri Legislature passed a bill to permit carrying concealed weapons, Carnahan vetoed the legislation. That set up last week's referendum to get around Carnahan's veto.

Without the capacity to introduce large sums of out-of-state money into the campaign as did the NRA, those opposed to more guns on the streets relied on appearances by Sarah and James Brady. He is the former press secretary of Ronald Reagan who was rendered permanently disabled in an assassination attempt on the former president. The Bradys have been tireless campaigners against the unchecked flow of guns into our society.

Opponents of the gun initiative also had the support of Hillary Rodham Clinton. The first lady recorded a telephone message that focused on women voters. The message was sent automatically into 75,000 homes statewide. In the message, Mrs. Clinton said the proposition was "just too dangerous for Missouri families."

As could be expected, the NRA has sought to downplay their embarrassing defeat by the people of Missouri at the polls.

"You can be sure that we will be doing everything we can to elect a pro-gun governor in Missouri," said James Baker, the NRA lobbyist. Carnahan, who is prohibited from seeking a third consecutive term under the state constitution, is planning to run for the U.S. Senate against the right-wing Republican incumbent, Sen. John Ashcroft. Last week's referendum will add an interesting dimension to the race with Ashcroft having backed the concealed weapons proposition.

In trying to legalize pistol-packing in Missouri, the NRA resorted to its usual misrepresentation of the Second Amendment claiming the right of people to bear arms. But the Constitution does not say that, and the right does not exist as interpreted by the NRA.

The "right of the people to keep and bear Arms" is conditioned on the people's need to maintain "A well-regulated Militia being necessary to the security of a free State" That does not include people carrying a Saturday-night special in their inside jacket pockets.

Defeated by the people they claim they want to protect, the NRA will now return to influencing state legislatures through intimidation by its members and through coercion with its money. Politicians fear the NRA. But the voters of Missouri proved they do not. Their only fear is what the NRA, with its agenda of irresponsible gun slinging, is doing to our society.

Theotis Robinson Jr. is a Knoxville free-lance writer and longtime political observer.

Knoxville News-Sentinel (Knoxville, TN) April 12, 1999, Monday

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 13, 1999

36TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1999 The Washington Post
The Washington Post

April 16, 1999, Friday, Final Edition

SECTION: OP-ED; Pg. A29

LENGTH: 773 words

HEADLINE: NRA Defeat

BYLINE: E. J. Dionne Jr.

BODY:

Memo to next year's candidates: Soccer mom lives. The gun issue matters. City voters and suburbanites share interests and values.

That's what you learn from the surprise result in Missouri's referendum last week on concealed weapons. The defeat of the proposal -- it would have allowed citizens to get permits to carry concealed weapons -- was a major setback for the National Rifle Association, which spent \$ 3.8 million on its behalf. The outcome confirmed the new politics of gun control.

A decade ago, pro-gun forces were politically dominant. Rural voters were passionate in opposing gun control. City and suburban voters favored tougher gun laws, but rarely mobilized on their behalf or made gun control decisive in choosing candidates.

The significance of the Missouri referendum is not simply that the concealed-carry law lost, by 52 percent to 48 percent, but also how it lost. As expected, the proposal lost overwhelmingly in the state's urban centers, St. Louis and Kansas City. But it was crushed by a wave of suburban no votes, particularly in the often conservative areas near St. Louis.

In off-off-year contests of this sort, turnout is usually low, around 20 percent. A low turnout was expected to favor the pro-gun side. This time, the anti-gun side showed at the polls -- with soccer mom in the lead van.

"It was clear from the beginning that suburban women were our targets -- women everywhere, but suburban women especially," said Robin Carnahan, manager of the campaign against the referendum. "The challenge to us was to make it less like a special election and get the turnout up."

In St. Louis County, for example, nearly half the voters cast ballots. "There's clearly a recognition that security issues in suburban and metro areas are different from those (in rural areas) out-state," Carnahan said.

Saul Shorr, the media consultant for the no side, notes that "there were Republican, upscale precincts that voted 6, or 7, or 8 to 1 against" the .

The Washington Post, April 16, 1999

proposition. "It was the country club moms, the waitress moms and the soccer moms altogether." Also significant was the alliance of white suburbanites with urban African Americans. The gun issue, Shorr says, "overcomes the politics of race."

The Missouri vote is a triumph for Democratic Gov. Mel Carnahan, who is Robin's father. The governor passionately opposed the referendum. He is running for the Senate next year against Republican incumbent John Ashcroft, who favors concealed carry. The gun issue could cut Ashcroft's margins in the suburbs.

The NRA is furious with Carnahan and issued a post-referendum press release charging the governor with "meddling with the democratic process," a strange accusation against an elected official. James J. Baker, the NRA's chief lobbyist here, explained in an interview that the gun organization was furious that Missouri's Democratic secretary of state, Rebecca Cook, "rewrote" the language of the ballot proposition that had been passed by the legislature.

It's true that after a court battle the pro-gun forces lost, Cook rewrote the ballot summary of the proposal to make it less favorable to the NRA. But Robin Carnahan argues that the original ballot language was so slanted toward the pro-gun side that a rewrite was inevitable. In any event, says Fred Yang, a pollster who worked against the proposition, "The people who went to the polls knew what they were voting for."

Baker argues that while the NRA outspent its opponents -- by almost 5 to 1, as it happens -- the anti-gun side brought a strong "power base" to bear, including Hillary Rodham Clinton. Her voice went out in 75,000 recorded phone messages to boost the opposition. Even pro sports joined the anti-gun side. All the state's professional football and baseball teams opposed concealed carry, as did the players' associations. None relished a grandstand populated by gun-toting fans.

Baker is right: There now is political might on the anti-gun side. Shorr thinks the NRA may now have to worry that gun control advocates will put their own proposals on ballots in other states -- thus getting to pick the issues and the venues for future fights.

The philosophical message is just as powerful. Although the NRA doesn't frame the issue this way, citizens of cities and suburbs in fact have two choices. They can choose to live with high crime rates and carry weapons to defend themselves. Or they can decide that we don't want to become a nation armed to the teeth and insist that public authorities have an obligation to their communities to get crime under control. In Missouri, voters took the better path.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 16, 1999

31ST STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1999 The Denver Post Corporation
The Denver Post

April 18, 1999 Sunday 2D EDITION

SECTION: PERSPECTIVE; Pg. H-02

LENGTH: 782 words

HEADLINE: Gun foes show muscle

BYLINE: E. J. Dionne

BODY:

Memo to next year's candidates: Soccer mom lives. The gun issue matters. City voters and suburbanites share interests and values.

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Saul Shorr, the media consultant for the no side, notes that "there were Republican, upscale precincts that voted 6, or 7, or 8 to 1 against" the proposition. "It was the country club moms, the waitress moms and the soccer moms altogether." Also significant was the alliance of white suburbanites with urban African Americans in the cities. The gun issue, Shorr says, "overcomes the politics of race."

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The philosophical message is just as powerful. Although the NRA doesn't frame the issue this way, citizens of cities and suburbs in fact have two choices. They can choose to live with high crime rates and carry weapons to defend themselves. Or they can decide that we don't want to become a nation armed to the teeth and insist that public authorities have an obligation to their communities to get crime under control. In Missouri, voters took the better path. E.J. Dionne is a Washington Post columnist and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

LOAD-DATE: April 21, 1999

30TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1999 U.S. News & World Report
U.S. News & World Report

April 19, 1999

SECTION: U.S. NEWS; Pg. 48

LENGTH: 378 words

HEADLINE: Missouri showdown

BYLINE: By Angie Cannon

HIGHLIGHT:

Voters in the Show-Me State shoot down a bid to allow carrying of concealed weapons

BODY:

The Rev. Willie J. Ellis, pastor of the New Northside Baptist Church in a poor part of St. Louis, knows the pain and misery guns can cause. That's why he fought hard against the nation's first ballot measure that would have lifted a century-old ban on carrying concealed weapons there. "We didn't need any more guns," Ellis says. "There is no need for us to be policemen."

The campaign paid off. As a result of last week's voting, Missouri became the first state in the nation to defeat an initiative that would have permitted residents to carry hidden weapons if they passed background checks and completed 12-hour training courses.

Loaded debate. The election was a major setback for the National Rifle Association, which had pumped nearly \$ 4 million into a megablitz to pass the controversial measure. Gun-control advocates spent less than \$ 1 million to nix Proposition B, which lost by a 52 percent to 48 percent margin. The vote closed weeks of debate that brought out heavy hitters on both sides. First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton recorded a message against the measure that was telephoned to 75,000 voters; James Brady, who was wounded in John Hinckley's 1981 attack on President Reagan, went down to fight it. NRA president Charlton Heston and Sen. John Ashcroft led the charge from the other side.

Not surprisingly, neither saw the contest or its outcome the same way. Gun-control advocates say hidden weapons increase gun violence. The NRA insists residents have a right to carry concealed guns to protect themselves. Bob Walker of Handgun Control says the Missouri example will throw cold water on similar efforts in other states. "For the second time in six months, the NRA has been repudiated by the voters directly in a referendum," says Walker. "That is not lost upon officeholders, who will see the political clout of the NRA is waning."

Not so, says the NRA. James Baker, the NRA's chief lobbyist, says the group plans to step up efforts to pass "conceal-carry" laws in other states. Among

them: Nebraska, Kansas, and Colorado, where the NRA is holding its annual convention later this month. "We've never professed to win 'em all, but we certainly win our share," says Baker. "We're in this thing for the long haul." GRAPHIC: Picture, Actor Charlton Heston, president of the National Rifle Association, meets with the press. (Bill Haber-AP)

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 15, 1999

28TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1999 Johnson Publishing Company, Inc.
Jet

April 26, 1999

SECTION: NATIONAL REPORT; Pg. 14

LENGTH: 305 words

HEADLINE: Missouri Voters Refuse To Toss Out Ban On Concealed Guns

BODY:

Missouri voters recently rejected a bill to lift a ban on concealed guns.

With 99 percent of votes counted, Proposition B, which would have lifted the ban, failed 52 percent to 48 percent, or 674,378 votes to 625,689 votes.

The vote marked the first time a state put the question of concealed weapons to the voters. Thirty-one other states allow citizens to carry concealed guns, but those measures were enacted by legislators.

"Missourians have said they just do not want guns carried into football games and bars and schools," said state Sen. Harry Wiggins, D-Kansas City.

Proposition B was an attempt by pro-gun lawmakers to pass a concealed weapons law without having to contend with a threatened veto by Gov. Mel Carnahan.

The National Rifle Association (NRA) almost singlehandedly bank-rolled the campaign for Proposition B -- providing more than \$ 3.7 million, well over 95 percent of the money behind the measure -- in what was viewed as an important test of gun sentiment in Missouri.

The NRA paid for 700,000 mailings and huge advertising buys on television and radio.

"It just shows that you can't buy an election in Missouri," declared Carl Wolf, president-elect of the Missouri Police Chief Association, which opposed the measure.

The other side received just one-fourth of the funding but had help from first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, who recorded a telemarketing message targeted at women. The first lady said Proposition B is "just too dangerous for Missouri families."

St. Louis County Prosecutor Robert McCulloch was among the law enforcement officers who feared the measure would lead to trouble. "We don't want to be going back to the old Wild West days with everyone wearing a gun."

Supporters of the measure said allowing law-abiding people to pack guns would keep the criminals guessing.

GRAPHIC: Picture, St. Louis Mayor Clarence Harmon holds a collection of receipts

to indicate that he sought prayer support from the Pink Sisters, a Catholic order in St. Louis, to pray against the passage of Proposition B on the Missouri ballot. Missourians voters defeated the measure.
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 24, 1999

22ND STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1999 The National Journal, Inc.
The National Journal

May 1, 1999

SECTION: POLITICS; Pg. 1210; Vol. 31, No. 18

LENGTH: 1517 words

HEADLINE: Ammunition for Liberals and Conservatives

BYLINE: William Schneider

HIGHLIGHT:

After the bloodbath in Littleton, Colo., gun control is back on the public agenda.

BODY:

In human terms, what happened in Colorado last week was tragic. In political terms, it was ironic. Colorado has been trending Republican. It was one of only three states that voted for Bill Clinton in 1992 and then switched to Bob Dole in 1996 (the others were Montana and Georgia). Now that Colorado has a Republican Governor and a Republican state legislature for the first time in 12 years, the National Rifle Association has decided to showcase its clout in Colorado. Starting with its convention in Denver this week.

Prodded by the NRA's 60,000 Colorado members, the legislature was ready to pass new gun laws. One law would have made it easier for citizens to carry concealed weapons. Another would have wiped out local gun regulations, including Denver's highly restrictive laws that banned the display of assault weapons at the NRA convention. Republican Gov. Bill Owens was expected to sign those new laws. "The American Constitution does give people a right to keep and bear arms," Owens has said. The NRA expected to come to Denver in triumph. Especially after suffering a bitter defeat on April 6 in Missouri, where voters narrowly defeated an association-backed ballot proposition that would have lifted that state's ban on concealed weapons.

Then came Littleton, and everything changed. After such a bloody event, gun control always gets thrust onto the public agenda, and it's happening now. Last week's Gallup Poll asked Americans where they place the blame for tragedies such as the one in Colorado. More than any other single factor, people blame the easy availability of guns (60 percent). Next come parental shortcomings (51 percent) and popular entertainment--"TV,

movies, and music'' (49 percent). Guns, family, culture: There's the agenda. With guns at the top.

The debate has begun to take on a predictable quality. Liberals blame the guns. Conservatives blame the culture. ''It's not a gun control problem. It's a culture control problem,'' argued Rep. Bob Barr, R-Ga., an NRA board member.

You know how President Clinton likes to steal issues from Republicans? So does his wife. Speaking at a teachers conference in New York, Hillary Rodham Clinton (who might or not run for that state's open Senate seat) blamed guns first: ''Why on earth would we permit any young person access to the firearms those two young men brought into that school?'' Then she blamed the culture, in remarks that echoed Bob Dole's 1996 anti-Hollywood campaign: ''We can no longer shut our eyes to the impact the media is having on all our children, and the potentially violent impact it is having on some of them.''

So what is to be done? The truth is, it's hard to do much without violating someone's rights. Pass gun control laws, and people will complain you're violating their gun rights. Pass laws to regulate the culture, and people will cry censorship. Pass laws to promote family values, and people will complain you're trying to tell parents how to raise their kids.

An overwhelming majority of Americans--nearly 80 percent--reject the view that Littleton was an isolated event. They believe it means that something is seriously wrong in the country. But the public is divided over whether government and society can do anything to prevent such tragedies. Something's deeply wrong, and Americans doubt they can do anything about it. Hence, the frustration. And the anger.

In Colorado, community leaders are taking out their anger on the gun culture and its foremost advocate, the NRA. Gun-rights advocates argued that the Littleton tragedy was caused more by bombs than by guns. Gun control supporters, like Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., answered right back: ''If high-powered weapons with big clips weren't available, at the very least they would have killed fewer people.''

Gov. Owens blamed ''the day in and day out demeaning of human life that we see in this country, where euthanasia is excused, where infanticide is excused, where violence is glorified.'' Gun control supporters, like Vice President Al Gore, responded: ''In times past, it was not uncommon for kids who fell into anger and got on the wrong path to break windows with bricks or get into fistfights. But now, with the availability of these semiautomatic weapons and pipe bombs, the consequences are truly horrific.''

The legislators who sponsored Colorado's new gun laws quickly got the message and pulled their bills. ''We could not

The National Journal, May 1, 1999

rationally deal with this bill this year and come up with good policy," one sponsor said. The NRA got the message, too. After initially blaming the parents and the school, association President Charlton Heston wrote to his members that the organization would "modify our schedule to show our profound sympathy and respect for the families and communities." The convention was scaled back to one day.

But it's only a tactical retreat. In the end, the gun lobby is likely to have the last word. That's because, as many politicians have learned, public anger over gun violence is usually not sustained for very long. By election time, the only people who vote the issue are gun owners. They remember every vote for gun control as an infringement on their rights. As one gun-rights advocate said last week--insensitively, but not incorrectly--anti-gun groups "make their headway only when there are fresh victims" of gun violence. Like now.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: May 04, 1999

6TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1999 The New York Times Company
The New York Times

June 19, 1999, Saturday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Page 11; Column 1; National Desk

LENGTH: 827 words

HEADLINE: GUNS AND SCHOOLS: THE SCENE -- CAPITOL SKETCHBOOK;
A Congresswoman Is Defiant in Defeat, and the G.O.P. Is Anxious

BYLINE: By FRANCIS X. CLINES

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, June 18

BODY:

"Let me go home," came the weary plea to the House from Representative Carolyn McCarthy as she watched her gun-control measure go down to defeat in the middle of the night, beyond the waking notice of most Americans.

"Let me go home," she repeated, teary-eyed in the early morning, transfixing the House in her moment of exasperation at the bare-knuckled political machinations that befell her cause. Far from quitting, the second-term Congresswoman was vowing to work at her new career until some progress was enacted on her signature issue of gun control.

Mrs. McCarthy, the Nassau County Democrat who became a citizen-politician after she was widowed by a gunman in a random shooting on the Long Island Rail Road in 1993, was free to go home at 2:40 P.M. today. That was when the effort by House Republican leaders to pass a minimalist gun measure in place of her own amendment collapsed in a furious round of Republican chagrin and cross-party recriminations.

Democrats and Republican moderates, crying sham, rose up to defeat the Republican leadership's measure almost 2 to 1. The thwack of the gavel left the House drifting off in an inconclusive hubbub as members wondered how the nation would deal with their inaction in the face of the schoolhouse shootings.

"I'm re-energized by this," Mrs. McCarthy said as she left the Capitol, far from tears. She seemed every bit the resilient professional politician as she vowed to go to the voters with a message that the National Rifle Association had won, gutting the issue of gun control to the point that not even a nominal measure could pass the House as political cover for the Republicans.

"I am Irish and I am not supposed to cry in front of anyone," Mrs. McCarthy had cautioned herself in Thursday's midnight debate, when dozens of Democratic Congresswomen rallied down the aisle to her side, speaking up for slain schoolchildren and shattered parents.

The emotional scene was viewed by angry Republicans as political stagecraft. "Regular order!" came the booming shouts of Republican men demanding that the

The New York Times, June 19, 1999

line of women be gaveled out of order.

"Bullies!" came the chorused response of the Democratic women.

In this, Mrs. McCarthy was at the heart of far more than just sisterly solidarity. With an eye for the national elections next year, the Democrats carefully used every dominant tableau and keynote speech this week to present gun control as a prime issue among women alarmed for the safety of their families. In the duel of sound bites and photo opportunities, Mrs. McCarthy led the Democratic Congresswomen in crowding maternally at the microphones, in contrast to the Republicans' usually male-dominated offerings of cultural jeremiads and celebrations of the rights of hunters.

Representative Tom DeLay of Texas, the Republican whip who belittled the gun issue and drove the culture-war argument for his party, went down whipping. As he rallied his troops for late-night debate on Thursday, Mr. DeLay invoked the anti-Clintonism that underlies House Republican passions. "It does not take a village to raise a child," he declared, sounding triumphalist in a rebuff to Hillary Rodham Clinton. "We have created a culture that raises children to kill children."

Mr. DeLay won his midnight skirmish as the McCarthy gun-control measure was defeated. But he failed in the larger war this afternoon as the House rejected his plea for a measure that the N.R.A. helped to write in the name of gun control as a device to counter a stronger bill approved last month by the Senate.

Premonitions of the outcome were in the air as lawmakers gathered for the final vote. "If we really want to do something, this is our last chance!" one member cried out. And another arose to announce darkly, "This House is in a state of denial."

In a measure of the Republican leaders' anxious state, Representative Henry J. Hyde of Illinois, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, which was noticeably bypassed in composing the leadership bill, was dispatched for the final rallying cry. Carefully praising Mrs. McCarthy, Mr. Hyde pleaded the urgent case for the House to pass something for their constituents, however imperfect.

As the depth of the final Republican defeat mounted on the House tally board, Representative Jo Ann Emerson of Missouri, the Republican woman who carried much of the symbolic brunt in her party's floor arguments, looked stunned in staring up mutely at the vote count. She stood starkly alone. Across the aisle, the Democratic women huddled together to stoke fresh resolve.

Amid the acrid void of the final vote, with no new gun controls passed by the House, Mrs. McCarthy indeed headed home -- as a politician tempered in some fiery debate that seemed to suit her.

"So you have a defeat, you feel tired, but the next day you go back at it with fresh energy," she said, sounding eager for more of the bittersweet lessons of her on-the-job training as a politician.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: June 19, 1999