

Charlotte, NC - U.S. Congressman Mike Pence addressed the National Rifle Association's annual convention today. The following remarks are excerpts from his address, as prepared for delivery:

“For 128 years the NRA has been the vanguard of one of America’s most cherished individual rights: the right to keep and bear arms.

“I believe that firearms in the hands of law-abiding citizens make our families and communities safer. And year after year, as the NRA has faithfully worked to defend that right, we have seen crime statistics reflect that truth, which is why it’s so vital that you continue to advocate against laws that would infringe on the constitutional rights of the American people.”

“We must rein in runaway federal spending through fiscal discipline and reform, and we must end this era of bailouts once and for all at home and abroad.

“The American people deserve to know we are bailing out Greece to the tune of up to \$6.8 billion in loan guarantees, and future Americans may be picking up the tab for as much as \$50 billion in additional loans for a larger European bailout.□

“Here’s how it works. The European Union’s members and the IMF (International Monetary Fund) recently pledged \$145 billion in the Greek bailout. Forty billion dollars of that came from the International Monetary Fund. Since the United States pays 17 percent -- we are the largest contributor to the IMF -- American taxpayers could be on the hook for \$6.8 billion in loan guarantees from the IMF, and it may just be a down payment.□

“The EU this last weekend talked about a \$1 trillion bailout plan that could put U.S. taxpayers on the hook for \$50 billion in additional loan guarantees to bail out Europe.□

“Yesterday, I introduced the European Bailout Protection Act that would require the Treasury Secretary to oppose any IMF loans to fiscally irresponsible EU nations.□

“Look, the EU was formed to compete with the U.S.A. economically. It is simply not right to ask the people of the United States of America to provide loan guarantees to bail out an economic competitor in Europe. Nobody wants to see the EU fail, but we are not asking Europe’s help in New Jersey or California. Europe shouldn’t be getting our help with Portugal, Spain or Greece.”

“And, a vision for a better America means having a judiciary that applies and interprets the Constitution, instead of legislating from the bench. For our new justice on the Supreme Court, the American people deserve an independent jurist who will defend their rights and not be a rubber stamp for this or any administration.

“But the president’s new Supreme Court nominee, Elena Kagan, is a political lawyer with no judicial experience and Americans who cherish the Second Amendment should be concerned.

“In 1987 the Supreme Court was asked to take a case involving a D.C. man who had been convicted of carrying an unlicensed pistol. A lower court ruled that the Second Amendment applied to militias and not to individual gun rights. When the man appealed to the high court, Elena Kagan was a clerk for Justice Thurgood Marshall, and she urged Marshall to vote against hearing the case.

“In her comment to the Justice, Kagan wrote that the D.C. man’s ‘sole contention is that the District of Columbia’s firearms statutes violate his constitutional right to keep and bear arms.’ To which she concluded, ‘I’m not sympathetic.’

“Sympathy for the express language of the Bill of Rights should be a prerequisite of service on the Highest Court in the land. America doesn’t need one more justice on the Supreme Court who is “not sympathetic” to the constitutional rights of individual Americans!”