

News from Assembly Minority Leader Brian M. Kolb

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ASSEMBLY MINORITY LEADER BRIAN KOLB, NYS RIFLE & PISTOL ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT TOM KING, TAKE AIM AT KEEPING FIREARM COMPANIES – AND THOUSANDS OF PRIVATE SECTOR JOBS – IN NEW YORK STATE

Urge Regional Economic Development Councils to work with companies such as Remington Arms, Just Right Carbines, Kahr Arms, Kimber Manufacturing, Turnbull Restoration & Dan Wesson Firearms and support the firearms industry that employs thousands of New Yorkers

At a time when nearly 760,000 New Yorkers are unemployed, Assembly Minority Leader Brian M. Kolb (R,I,C-Canandaigua) and New York State Rifle and Pistol Association (NYSRPA) President Tom King, today said Governor Cuomo's Regional Economic Development Councils should make the retention of firearm companies such as Remington Arms; Just Right Carbines; Kahr Arms; Kimber Manufacturing; Turnbull Restoration and Dan Wesson Firearms – along with the thousands of private sector jobs they provide – a top economic development priority for the Empire State.

Leader Kolb and President King also urged the rejection of government mandates such as micro-stamping, which drive up the cost of firearms, hurt the economic competitiveness of New York's gun industry and could lead to firearm manufacturers leaving the state altogether.

Pointing to a recent [New York Times story "States Pitch a Lifestyle to Lure Gun Makers From Their Longtime Homes,"](#) Leader Kolb said the Councils should recognize aggressive steps taken by other states to steal away firearm companies and work to retain the thousands of private sector jobs in New York that are involved with the manufacture and sale of firearms.

Leader Kolb and President King asked the Councils to work closely with firearm companies such as Remington Arms (Ilion); Just Right Carbines (Canandaigua); Kahr Arms and Kimber Manufacturing (Yonkers); Turnbull Restoration (Bloomfield); and Dan Wesson Firearms (Norwich) to make the sector more competitive by bringing the Empire State's labor, energy and transportation costs in line with those of other states.

"Thousands of New Yorkers are presently employed in some form or fashion by the firearms industry. More than ever, we have to fight to keep these jobs as states such as Idaho, Alabama, and Montana are aggressively trying to lure away New York's firearm industries. Losing these private sector jobs would be a devastating hit to our already fragile economy," said Leader Kolb, the only Legislative Leader in state government who has started and run successful private sector manufacturing businesses.

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“We need to make sure that job creating companies such as Remington Arms, Just Right Carbines, Kahr Arms, Kimber Manufacturing, Turnbull Restoration and Dan Wesson Firearms stay right here in the Empire State. With New York facing fierce competition from 49 other states trying to lure our businesses and jobs away, listening to, and working with, private sector job creators such as these should be a top priority for the Councils,” Leader Kolb said.

Besides tax breaks and other financial incentives states are using to entice firearm companies to relocate, the [New York Times](#) also cited the impact of government mandates such as micro-stamping as a leading factor why some businesses may possibly leave New York State (and Connecticut), relocating to areas without micro-stamping requirements.

The [New York Times article](#) stated the following: “*Gun manufacturers say proposed micro-stamping laws could drive Colt out of Connecticut and Remington out of New York, which are among more than half a dozen states where the legislation has been introduced. California, which employs more firearms industry workers than any other state, has already approved a micro-stamping law that is pending. Carlton S. Chen, a vice president at Colt, said the company would have few qualms about leaving Connecticut if micro-stamping became law.*”

“Having the Regional Economic Development Councils listen to the needs of the firearms industry in New York would mark a good start to a much-needed partnership. Next, the state Legislature needs to do its part and stop considering costly government mandates, such as micro-stamping, that do little to keep New Yorkers safe, yet drive up the cost of owning a firearm and create a climate where companies that produce them no longer feel welcome. In this tough economy, we have to do whatever it takes to keep quality employers like Remington Arms, Just Right Carbines, Kahr Arms, Kimber Manufacturing, Turnbull Restoration and Dan Wesson Firearms part of the Empire State,” Leader Kolb stated.

“NYSRPA has long recognized the economic impact of ill-conceived legislation that seeks to diminish our constitutional freedoms. The NYSRPA is proud to partner with a Legislative Leader like Assembly Minority Leader Brian Kolb, a former private sector businessman who understands that our heritage industries need legislative protection, not harassment, which is one of the reasons Leader Kolb was our legislator of the year for 2010,” said Tom King, President of the NYSRPA.

“There are more than 10,000 New Yorkers employed in the firearms manufacturing, and related industries. We need to retain these jobs here in New York not drive them elsewhere through poorly conceived legislation,” President King stated.

Editor’s Note: Attached with this press release is a copy of the recent [New York Times story “States Pitch a Lifestyle to Lure Gun Makers From Their Longtime Homes”](#) describing how Idaho, Alabama and Montana are actively trying to lure firearm manufacturers away from New York and other states.

The New York Times

August 9, 2011

States Pitch a Lifestyle to Lure Gun Makers From Their Longtime Homes

By **TIMOTHY WILLIAMS**

For more than a century, the nation's firearms industry, including iconic brands like Colt, Smith & Wesson and Winchester, has been concentrated in Northeastern and Midwestern states that now have restrictive gun-control laws.

But recently, states like Idaho, Alabama and Montana have presented a novel argument as part of an effort to lure the firearms industry's high-paying jobs south and west: Gun makers would be happier and more successful among citizens who regularly use firearms than they would be remaining in states trying to limit gun rights.

The approach is the latest twist in the interstate competition for scarce jobs, with hard-pressed states supplementing or even bypassing traditional enticements like tax breaks in favor of pitches that sell a lifestyle: greater personal freedom, low or no state taxes, minimal regulation, the absence of troublesome unions and of course, the unfettered right to bear arms.

"When we approach gun makers, we first make the cultural argument," said Gov. Dennis Daugaard of South Dakota, a hunter who recruits firearms makers at gun shows. "People in business want to feel their business is wanted and welcome in the communities where they are located. In South Dakota, the culture is there. We don't regulate firearms businesses out of existence."

Irv Stone, owner of Bar-Sto Precision Machine, which makes competition pistols, moved to Sturgis, S.D., from California last year because he said he found it increasingly difficult to operate in an environment where guns are shunned.

"The cultural thing is like night and day," he said. "I felt like the bastard child in California. It is not a firearms culture. In California, it was like: 'Eww, firearms. Really?' Here, on the other hand, you are looked at kind of weird: 'Oh, you don't shoot or fish? What do you do?'"

The nation's \$3.8 billion firearms industry, which includes more than a thousand small companies as well as the famous brands, is not huge in terms of jobs. But because it employs 90,000 people amid the worst economic downturn since [the Great Depression](#), competition for those jobs has become fierce.

For the past several months, states vying for gun manufacturers have been making hay of legislation in Massachusetts, where some 10 percent of the nation's small arms makers are based, that would limit the number of guns people can buy and require "micro-stamping" (placing a mark on the firing pins of handguns that could allow casings to be identified). And in Illinois, home to several large firearms manufacturers, a law would ban assault rifles and would prohibit manufacturers from selling guns to state residents.

"They are pitched by places like South Dakota, Alabama and Montana, and undoubtedly part of the sales pitch is: 'We have a better environment. Our Legislature respects the Second Amendment,' " said Lawrence G. Keane, senior vice president of the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the industry's trade group.

Gun manufacturers say proposed micro-stamping laws could drive Colt out of Connecticut and Remington out of New York, which are among more than half a dozen states where the legislation has been introduced. California, which employs more firearms industry workers than any other state, has already approved a micro-stamping law that is pending.

Carlton S. Chen, a vice president at Colt, said the company would have few qualms about leaving Connecticut if micro-stamping became law.

"At that point, we and other firearms manufacturers doing business in Connecticut would need to seriously consider whether we should completely move ourselves out of Connecticut and relocate to a friendlier state," Mr. Chen said in written testimony to a state legislative committee in 2008. "The upshot would be a loss of thousands of jobs."

In the South and the West, several states have recently sought to burnish their gun-friendly images by approving largely symbolic measures, like designating an official state firearm. Some states have also declared themselves exempt from federal gun policy by passing Firearms Freedom Acts, which maintain that guns made and kept within a state are not subject to the authority of Congress.

Last November, when the Olin Corporation announced that it would move an ammunition facility and 1,000 jobs to Mississippi from Illinois, it said it decided to do so because the company had failed to reach a deal with its main union and had received \$25 million in incentives.

But an official in Mississippi said that what helped sway the company was most likely the state's right-to-work culture and that unlike Illinois, it has no pending legislation that would require micro-stamping.

"They understood the culture, the work force, and the surroundings," said Christy Knapp, an executive vice president of the Oxford-Lafayette County Economic Development Foundation in Mississippi.

Oklahoma, Montana, Wyoming and Idaho, among others, have also advanced the cultural argument.

“There’s no question that the culture in states like Montana, where people are comfortable with firearms, gives a comfort level to manufacturers in other states who are assaulted with anti-gun forces,” said Evan Barrett, chief business development officer for Montana.

But the attempted poaching of its gun makers is not being taken lightly in Massachusetts, which is home to Smith & Wesson, the nation’s largest handgun manufacturer (founded in 1852) and the Savage Arms Company (1894), or in neighboring Connecticut, where Colt (1836), the Marlin Firearms Company (1870) and O. F. Mossberg & Sons (1919) are located.

In 2005, this small region produced 1.8 million firearms, according to the Western Massachusetts Economic Development Council, about one-third of all firearms made in the country.

Pushing back, Massachusetts has published a brochure promoting its firearms makers that traces the state’s gun culture back to 1777, when George Washington chose Springfield as the site of the country’s first arsenal.

And last year, when Massachusetts sought to ensure that Smith & Wesson stayed in Springfield, the state gave the company \$6 million in tax credits to relocate one of its New Hampshire factories there. While the factory employs a modest 225 people, Massachusetts wanted to make sure the company would not start shifting operations elsewhere.

“Although several states and cities have approached us to entice expansion into their locations,” Massachusetts had demonstrated “the commitment of both the commonwealth and the city to not only Smith & Wesson, but to our employees, the local community, and to manufacturing in Massachusetts,” the company said in a statement.

The quest for firearms jobs has made for some unexpected partnerships.

In New York, Senator Charles E. Schumer issued a news release in May praising Remington after it agreed to move a factory from Maine, bringing with it 40 to 50 jobs.

The release made no mention of Senator Schumer’s record supporting gun control. Instead, it said Mr. Schumer had “led the effort in Congress to repeal the law that limited competition for small arms contracts, so that Remington can now compete for small arms contracts with the Department of Defense.”

But as an indication of how surreptitious some of the interstate recruitment has been, officials in Illinois, whose firearms businesses appear to be among the most sought after by other states, say they know of no attempts to lure their gun makers away.

In recent years, Illinois has lost Les Baer Custom Inc., a small company that moved to Iowa, as well as 1,000 Winchester jobs.

Marcelyn Love, spokeswoman for the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity wrote in an e-mail, "I am not aware of an increased effort by other states to lure specific manufacturing sectors from Illinois."