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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 29, 2004
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Ogan Amendment Strengthens Gun Rights *Senate Approves Change To Homeland Security Bill*

(Juneau)—Gun owners passing through checkpoints would be entitled to retain possession of weapons “reasonably justifiable for the person’s lawful use” under an amendment offered by Sen. Scott Ogan (R-Mat-Su/Chugiak) and approved by the full Senate 17 to 2 Wednesday.

“This is an important balance between the cherished rights of our citizens to keep and bear arms and the government’s interest in protecting us against terrorism and enemy attacks,” said Sen. Scott Ogan. “I strongly believe that patriotic Americans should not have their weapons seized by government in the name of protecting us. We are a free country because we are an armed country, and this amendment protects that cherished principle.”

Ogan proposed the amendment to Senate Bill 385, which updates civil defense statutes to address imminent threats of enemy or terrorist attack, and combines the response structure with emergencies and disasters. The bill combines the divisions of Emergency Services and Homeland Security in the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs into a single Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

The bill gives the Department of Military Affairs, in coordination with the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Transportation, a limited ability to establish and operate checkpoints along roadways serving critical property or facilities at the direction of the Governor. The bill limits inspections to searches for explosives or other instruments capable of causing “widespread severe injury” and allows a person to choose to turn around rather than go through the checkpoint.

Senate Bill 385 now goes to the House for consideration.

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