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# FEMA REVERSES NO GUNS POLICY FOLLOWING SAF WHISTLEBLOWING

October 24, 2005

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) today reversed a policy of prohibiting firearm possession in emergency evacuee trailer parks – so-called “FEMA villages” – and other temporary housing provided by the agency. The reversal followed complaints by the Second Amendment Foundation that the original policy violated the Second Amendment civil rights of evacuees and that it was discriminatory as well.

“Victims of natural disasters should not be victimized a second time by FEMA or other relief agencies,” noted Alan Gottlieb, founder of the Second Amendment Foundation. “A citizen doesn’t give up his or her civil rights simply because a disaster strikes.”

The issue first came to light when the News Hour with Jim Lehrer aired an episode about the opening of a “FEMA village” in Baker, Louisiana. In the broadcast a local official noted that guidelines for residents included a “no guns” policy. SAF immediately called the official, then tracked the origin of the policy back to FEMA. Following SAF’s calling attention to the issue with several FEMA officials, the agency’s legal counsel reviewed the policy and suggested the reversal.

The FEMA action follows the successful lawsuit filed in the U.S. District Court in Baton Rouge by SAF to prevent the City of New Orleans and nearby parishes from confiscating firearms and forcing the return of those already taken from Hurricane Katrina victims.

“FEMA should have known better after the lessons of New Orleans.” continued Gottlieb. “Protection of homes and businesses fell on the shoulders of private citizens as law enforcement and other emergency services were overwhelmed. We saw this in the Los Angeles riots in 1992 where Korean-American storekeepers guarded their businesses with firearms, as well as the protective use of privately-owned firearms to arm neighborhood patrols in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew in Florida that same year. One of the purposes of the Second Amendment is to ensure that citizens retain the ability to provide their own security and family safety in the event of any crisis.”

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