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**STATEMENT FROM THE CENTER FOR JUSTICE & DEMOCRACY  
ON GUN INDUSTRY IMMUNITY LEGISLATION**

The U.S. Senate is set to vote today on S. 397, legislation that gives the gun industry unprecedented immunity from lawsuits brought by gun violence victims, as well as cities and counties. The bill immunizes gun manufacturers, dealers, distributors and trade associations from lawsuits. Even dealers that negligently sell guns to traffickers would be immune from lawsuits. Individuals, such as the victims of the DC sniper, as well as local governments, would lose their rights.

Despite the fact that firearms kill nearly twice as many Americans as all household consumer products, no federal agency has the authority to ensure that guns with design or manufacturing defects are made safer or removed from the market. Guns are virtually the last unregulated consumer product in the United States. The Consumer Product Safety Commission, the federal agency established to oversee the safety of common household and recreational products, is prohibited from exercising any jurisdiction over firearms. In addition, the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms has no power to ensure that firearms and ammunition meet basic health and safety standards.

Since the gun industry remains unchecked by any regulatory or legislative authority, civil lawsuits remain the only mechanism that can force firearms manufacturers and dealers to change their behavior, thereby protecting the public from future harm.

The law enforcement community is strongly against this legislation. Opposition to this legislation from gun-control advocates has been unanimous. Denise Johnson, whose husband was killed by the D.C. snipers, wrote in a *Washington Post* column: "No other industry enjoys the protections that the gun industry is seeking. Gun sellers and manufacturers shouldn't be above the law. If any other product injured my husband and irresponsible sellers played a part, I would be able to bring a case in court. But because Conrad was shot with a gun, my lawsuit would not be allowed. Those who sell guns that are sought by criminals need to be more careful than sellers of other products, not less careful."

This bill would not only undermine efforts to make guns safer but also make it more difficult for victims of gun violence to seek redress. It would slam shut the courthouse doors to victims of gun violence and remove all incentives for gun sellers and manufacturers to act safely in the future.