

# NRA criticizes weapons bill

By Tim Richard  
staff writer

Sen. William Faust's bill requiring adults to lock up guns that children might find is being shot at by a key senator as well as sportsmen. Senate Judiciary Chair Rudy Nichols, R-Waterford, says the "careless use of firearms" law may be sufficient to charge adults when children shoot them off.

"I do not like to stretch the law," replied a key witness, Wayne County Prosecutor John O'Hair, who favors Faust's Senate Bill 702. O'Hair wants clearer statutory authority.

A National Rifle Association lobbyist objected that the bill singles out firearms and "punishes grieving parents after the fact."

NICHOLS CONDUCTED his panel's first hearing on the bill last week at the urging of Faust, D-Westland. The bill would require adults (18 and over) to store firearms in locked containers or use a trigger lock if a minor (16 and under) could gain access without parental permission.

With only three of its five members attending, the Judiciary Committee took no vote Thursday.

Nichols said the panel has a week to act if the full Legislature is to vote by the summer break. The chair said he was cool toward it.

A similar bill is stalled in a House committee. The measure's prospects appear dim.

"ONCE A MONTH," O'Hair said, "our office writes up a report from the Detroit Police Department (of children's use of firearms)."

"If there is great remorse on the part of the parent, we forego prosecution, believing the death of a child is sufficient punishment."

But the county will prosecute the doorman of a crack house who puts down a gun to take a break and a child picks it up and fires it, usually at another child.

"Guns are attractive to young children. They see them in comics and on TV."

A former circuit judge, O'Hair says his office can prosecute under two statutes: manslaughter and contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

"This bill would give prosecutors another option to charge adults," he said. The "reckless use" statute Nichols cited would apply where the firearm was under the adult's "immediate control." O'Hair asked a more precise legal tool.

CHARLES CUNNINGHAM, a Washington-based spokesman for the National Rifle Association, said firearms accidents are at their lowest point in 50 years and declining. "Thanks to NRA's educational programs."

"Prevent the tragedy rather than punish the parent after the fact," Cunningham said.

He cited public service TV spots in which actors well known to kids say three times: "Guns aren't toys. If you find a gun, leave it alone. Don't touch it. Tell an adult."

The 135,000-member NRA has a long list of other objections to the Faust bill, Cunningham said.

• It punishes one person for the act of another.

• It singles out firearms, ignoring poisons, alcohol, farm equipment and knives. Bicycle accidents kill more kids than gun accidents.

• Guns with trigger locks are worthless to adults for self defense.

• The bill exempts police and military personnel, who should be subject to it like everyone else.

• The bill punishes an act of mere negligence as a felony.

• The bill applies to homes with children of 16, although children are able to understand firearms at 15.

SPOKESMEN for the Michigan State Police, Michigan Sheriffs Association, Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police and Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce supported the bill.

The chiefs spokesman praised the NRA TV spots but said, "They're usually after the 11 o'clock news. They're not sandwiched in between the cartoon programs."

# OU hikes summer school tuition

By Pat Murphy  
staff writer

If summer school tuition is going up, can fall tuition increases be far behind?

Oakland University is raising summer tuition about 6.5 percent, in anticipation of less state aid this fall.

The OU Board of Trustees last week authorized a \$4.75 per credit hour increase for freshmen and sophomores and a \$4.25 per credit hour hike for juniors and seniors. Graduate students will pay \$9.25 per credit hour more.

Raising summer tuition was a bitter pill for OU officials, but one that was "absolutely necessary. If we are to continue providing quality education," said Jim Llewellyn, OU spokesman.

"Nobody wants to raise tuition,"

he said. "But you can only cut so far before quality starts to suffer."

Ken Morris, the only trustee to vote against the increase, called the tuition hike "indecent." He warned that OU is close to putting the price of an education beyond the means of many students.

Llewellyn said the tuition hike is necessary if, as expected, the State of Michigan cuts its appropriation for the 1990-91 budget.

Gov. Blanchard has recommended a 5 percent increase over the \$37 million in state aid it received in 1989-90. But OU officials are concerned it will be cut when the appropriations are announced later this summer.

OU is in the middle of summer registration. Thus, the total number of students affected is not known.

Last year, however, 3,398 students

enrolled in summer classes, according to Anne Sandoval, associate director of admissions.

UNDER THE NEW rates, freshmen and sophomores taking three hours — the equivalent of one course — will pay \$197.25 this summer, instead of \$185; juniors and seniors will pay \$225, instead of \$209.25 and graduate students will pay \$303.75, instead of \$285.

While the recently approved tuition hike will be noticed, Sandoval said she expects most students — particularly "guests," or students attending other schools during the year

who take summer classes at OU — to again be "pleasantly surprised" at the cost.

Many of them pay much higher rates, Sandoval said, and enjoy OU's lower tuition.

"There are many reasons for attending summer school," she said. "There are as many different reasons as there are students. Some, for example, might need a calculus course to enroll in another course. Others just want to lighten their load this fall."

Many summer students already have degrees, but enroll in other courses just for the content, she said.

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