

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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Attorney General Will Focus on Defending District's Current Gun Law; Won't Appeal Handgun Decision Involving Superseded Law

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Attorney General Karl A. Racine today announced that, in consultation with other District officials, he will ask a federal appeals court to dismiss the District's appeal of a lower court decision declaring unlawful the District's previous ban on carrying handguns. Instead, he said, his office will focus on defending challenges to the District's current handgun laws, passed by the Council of the District of Columbia last fall.

"We need to focus our energies not on litigating old laws, but defending new ones that our leaders enacted in good faith to comply with court rulings while still protecting public safety," Attorney General Racine said. **"The Council enacted a law that sets a process by which individuals may apply for gun licenses, which has superseded the law at issue in *Palmer v. District of Columbia*. Going forward, our energies are best spent focusing on defending the current law. We are vigorously defending it in the district court, and we are confident that it will be upheld."**

After the *Palmer* decision was announced in late July, District officials immediately went to work to ensure the city's laws complied with the ruling. The Council initially approved emergency legislation in October 2014 and temporary legislation that became effective March 7, 2015. After a hearing with testimony from Metropolitan Police Chief Cathy Lanier as well as more than 15 public witnesses and submissions from numerous organizations reflecting an array of views on gun control, the Council enacted permanent legislation on December 12, 2014. That legislation is currently pending before Congress and will take effect in May unless Congress disapproves it.

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