

WAVE Educational Fund, Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence: Milwaukee Police Association misses the target

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Recently, the Milwaukee Police Association announced that it is suing the city of Milwaukee in a case related to the department-issued service weapons that have inadvertently discharged. The police union is right to be outraged that officers have been injured by these weapons, but they have failed to identify all the true culprits.

The obvious first bad actor is SIG Sauer, the manufacturer of guns that unintentionally discharge. Even after SIG Sauer was made aware of the issue, they did not make the changes necessary to prevent these dangerous events from happening.

SIG Sauer likely does not feel an urgency to fix the problem or concern about being held accountable for producing a shoddy product, because of the actions of the next set of offenders: Congress and the gun lobby.

In 1972, when Congress created the Consumer Product Safety Commission, they specifically and intentionally excluded firearms, at the insistence of the National Rifle Association. That means firearms are virtually the only consumer products with no government agency having the authority to provide oversight, set safety standards, or recall defective products.

Moreover, in 2005 and again at the behest of the NRA, Congress passed the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act, which provides the entire gun industry with a nearly armor-clad legal shield. The result is that lawsuits against gun

manufacturers, like SIG Sauer, are rare. Police unions, or anyone harmed by their poorly made products, seldom see the inside of the courthouse and are denied access to justice.

The Milwaukee Police Association need only look in the mirror to see the final culprit. Too often, the MPA, like many local and national rank and file police unions, has worked, arm in arm, with the gun lobby to weaken gun laws and eliminate gun industry accountability. By aligning themselves with the greed-driven gun lobby, they have shot themselves in the foot.

We encourage the Milwaukee Police Association to focus their future lobbying efforts on supporting the firearm oversight and accountability laws that are needed to create a safer environment for their officers and the public.