

## Menendez, Rothman Introduce Bill to Help Law Enforcement Prosecute Gun Crimes

For Immediate Release: March 27, 2006

### Contacts:

Kimberly Allen, Office of Congressman Rothman, (202) 226-8364

Desiree Ramos, Office of Senator Menendez, (973) 645-3030

### Menendez, Rothman Introduce Bill to Help Law Enforcement Prosecute Gun Crimes

#### Legislation Will Make Data from Gun Sales Available to the Public

(Washington, DC)– This week, United States Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) are introducing legislation to make data about guns used in crime and illegal gun sales public. This information was freely available until 2003, when a legislator from Kansas passed language known as the "Tiahrt Amendment" to prevent the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) from releasing data about the states where most crime guns originate.

"Denying police access to this information about crime gun traces helps no one but the bad guys," said Menendez. "Our families' safety should never take the back seat to the demands of radical interest groups seeking only to further their own narrow agenda. Congress needs to pass my legislation - we need to stand up to President Bush and the gun lobby, and stand up for our families."

"I am 100% with Senator Menendez on this issue," said Rothman. "There is absolutely no good reason to hide gun crime data from the public. I am fighting as a member of the House Appropriations Committee to see that the ATF can and does use its resources to better help prosecutors enforce the gun laws on the books and inform New Jersey's communities about the true scope of gun trafficking."

New Jersey has some of the toughest gun safety laws in the nation, but past crime gun reports show that they are undermined by weak laws in other states. More than 85% of all traced guns used to commit crimes in Jersey City and Newark were originally purchased outside of the state - most often in Florida, Georgia, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, or South Carolina.

"Gun violence, and the illegal gun trafficking that fuels it, is hurting New Jersey's communities," added Rothman. "Concerned parents want to know how criminals are obtaining violent weapons and my legislation would allow us to have this information."

The Tiahrt Amendment originated in the 2004 Science, State, Justice and Commerce appropriations bill, which funds the Department of Justice and other crime-prevention measures, and has been tacked onto the bill each year since then. The legislation introduced by Menendez and Rothman would strike the language prohibiting the use of funds to disclose the data and would require that the Attorney General provide public access to the Crime Gun Trace Report.

"The proliferation of guns into our cities is clearly not a federal problem, but rather a federal plague," said Jersey City Mayor Jerramiah Healy. "The increase in homicides throughout New Jersey's cities goes beyond a policing issue-a federal solution is required. I fully support the proposed legislation that Senator Menendez and Congressman Rothman are putting forth. We need to keep our public safe, not protect those who commit these violent crimes."

In addition to Mayor Healy, Ceasefire NJ, Hudson County Prosecutor Ed DeFazio, and Jersey City Police Chief Robert

Troy are working with Menendez and Rothman to make crime gun data available to the public in Jersey City and nationwide.

###