

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3208

February 15, 2013

Mr. Wayne LaPierre
Executive Vice President
National Rifle Association of America
11250 Waples Mill Road
Fairfax, VA 22030

Dear Mr. LaPierre,

I write with respect to your recent editorial, "Stand and Fight," that was published by the Daily Caller on February 13. There are several brazenly unsubstantiated claims that you make about neighborhoods on the Coney Island Peninsula that I represent in the Congress. The carelessness of your assertions is striking.

To begin with, your suggestion that the residents of southern Brooklyn were in grave danger due to "looters" that "ran wild" is baseless. Superstorm Sandy struck on Monday, October 29. The next morning and throughout that week, I spent countless hours in the communities of Coney Island and Sea Gate. Nothing about your characterization of lawlessness rings true.

Further, you depicted the area as a "hellish world" after the storm hit. The facts that you have disregarded, either out of ignorance or with malicious intent, tell a very different story. The overwhelming majority of residents demonstrated the grace and resilience we have come to expect from New Yorkers during times of crisis.

Conversely, there were only an infinitesimal number of bad actors who engaged in sporadic instances of negative behavior. Indeed, according to the New York Police Department, overall crime dropped in southern Brooklyn during the week that immediately followed the storm, and there were no murders, rapes or shootings in the neighborhoods of Coney Island and Sea Gate.

Lastly, your claim that Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg did not permit National Guardsmen into the city as a result of an aversion to guns lacks merit. The police department in this instance, and throughout the Mayor's administration, has aggressively worked to keep the City safe. In southern Brooklyn, law enforcement resources were expeditiously deployed in the aftermath of the storm to maintain the quality of life we have come to expect.

The people I represent are hardworking Americans struggling to recover from the devastation wreaked by Superstorm Sandy. Your insulting manifesto served only to add insult to the significant injury my constituents continue to experience.

I urge you to formally apologize to the residents of southern Brooklyn for your insensitive and factually inaccurate statements. In addition, I extend an invitation for you to visit the neighborhoods of Coney Island and Sea Gate, witness the devastation first hand and meet the patriotic American citizens you have chosen to insult. The people of southern Brooklyn look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hakeem Jeffries', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Hakeem Jeffries
Member of Congress
New York, 8th District