



Clark favors gun safety locks

By James Pindell 10/29/03

DURHAM , Oct. 29 – Wrapping up a two day trip through New Hampshire on Wednesday, retired General Wesley Clark said he favored safety locks on firearms as a general principle though he said he needed to review the situation more before he would make any specific suggestions on how, if elected president, he plans to mandate such an action.

Clark said guns were always in his house while growing up in Arkansas , but he never touched them because his father warned they were always loaded. And even during a 35 year career in the military he said he always stored guns in an "arms room" away from his son.

"My son was never exposed to guns back then because I didn't believe it was necessary and I don't believe it now," Clark said.

Clark gave these remarks in answer to a question at the Every Child Matters presidential candidate forums at the University of New Hampshire . At the same forum he also said he was "concerned" about the federal No Child Left Behind education act because the standards were to "narrow" on the items tested and the penalties "too tough" for public schools. He also reiterated his health care plan mandating all children receive health insurance, a plan he announced Tuesday on the same university campus.

The issue of guns has emerged as more of an issue in the presidential race in coming

weeks as many question how the different Democratic candidates handle the issue. Some Democrats have argued that Al Gore's tough stance on gun control was the reason he lost states like West Virginia and his home state of Tennessee.

Front-runner Howard Dean says he favors local control when it comes to gun laws while John Kerry said he favors strict control.

Earlier in the day Clark spoke with workers and a patient at an Exeter non-profit health care facility that provides affordable, and in some cases free, care for those without health insurance.

Christine Eichelser, of Dover , told Clark that many like her work by her employer makes sure she only works part time so they don't have to provide health insurance.

"Well you'd have in insurance under my plan," Clark said.

The event was also indicative of many of his events recently where the members of the press outnumber the amount of supporters there to greet him. This effect has probably less to do with the amount of support he has in the Granite State and more to do with the fact that events are generally announced the night before they happen.