

# 2 join Florio to urge

By JIM GOODMAN  
Staff Writer

SEATTLE, Wash. — Gov. Jim Florio went national here yesterday with his crusade against assault weapons.

Joined by Govs. Michael Castle of Delaware and William Schaefer of Maryland, Florio lobbied fellow governors to petition President Bush to enact a federal law banning the manufacture, sale and possession of assault weapons.

And, just to make Florio feel a little like home, National Rifle Association lobbyist Richard Manning, who has led the fight to repeal Florio's ban on assault weapons in New Jersey, lurked outside the governors' press conference to denounce the new initiative.

Florio, Schaefer and Castle signed a letter to Bush, commending him for banning the importation of assault weapons and asking him to do the same to domestically produced weapons.

The three governors, flanked by law enforcement officials, said national laws are needed because no one state can eliminate the assault weapons on its own.

In the letter to Bush, the governors asserted that "the danger resulting from the availability and use of assault weapons totally outweighs any conceivable value these weapons may have to law-abiding citizens."

Schaefer said that he, like Florio, has had to fight the NRA whenever he has tried to enact gun control laws.

All three governors pointed out that, with interstate highways crisscrossing their states, it is hard to control weapons on a state-by-state basis.

WHEN THE governors finished their pitch, Manning responded with an attack on the gun control proposal as an unconstitutional confiscation of legally owned weapons.

Manning said the NRA will continue its efforts to repeal Florio's as-

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## weapons ban

sault-weapons ban.

The NRA, he said, will not endorse members of the New Jersey Legislature who voted for the Florio ban on weapons even if the legislators later voted to amend the gun bill.

Manning said the NRA may make one exception to that rule but would not say which legislator they might forgive.

Florio, informed of Manning's statement, said the NRA would probably endorse Assemblyman Anthony Marsella, D-Washington, Gloucester County, who was a prime sponsor of the effort to repeal the law.

Florio's comments here were similar to those he has made in New Jersey.

The assault weapons, he said, "were weapons of war suited for the Persian Gulf and not for Wilmington, Baltimore and Trenton."

Schaefer said the NRA's argument against what it calls the confiscation of legal weapons doesn't make sense.

"If you carry that argument to its logical conclusion, people could have Scud missiles in their back-



Jim Florio

... pressing gun controls

yards."

In addition to sending the letter to Bush, the three governors are attempting to get the governors' association to adopt opposition to assault weapons as an official policy.