

Devin Montero

From: Mayors Against Illegal Guns [info@mayorsagainstillegalguns.org]
Sent: Wednesday, December 16, 2009 11:22 AM
To: Mayors Against Illegal Guns
Subject: Update: New Editorials About Coalition Poll
Attachments: LA Times Editorial.pdf; Scranton Times Tribune.pdf; Newsday Editorial.pdf

Dear coalition members and staff,

The coalition's poll of gun owners and NRA members that was released last week has continued to receive media attention.

Over the past few days, the LA Times and the Scranton Times-Tribune have published editorials highlighting the poll's main finding: gun owners and NRA members support sensible policies to keep guns out of the hands of criminals. Based on the poll's findings, the editorials urge Congress not to be afraid to take on legislation to fight illegal guns.

The poll's findings demonstrate that the coalition's overall legislative agenda has the support of the majority of gun owners and NRA members. Just this week, Newsday published an editorial supporting legislation to close the Terror Gap—a measure that the coalition has endorsed.

For your reference, attached are copies of these editorials.

As always, if you have any questions or ideas about this or any other coalition matter, please do not hesitate to call us. We are available to help in any way we can.

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Thank you for your continued commitment.

--Staff of the coalition co-chairs

Los Angeles Times

latimes.com/news/opinion/editorials/la-ed-guns16-2009dec16,0,641659.story

Gun control's NRA supporters

A poll finds surprising support among NRA members for some aspects of gun control.

5:17 PM PST, December 15, 2009

Gun control is one of those culture-wars issues on which liberals and conservatives often don't even seem to be speaking the same language, let alone coming to consensus. Gun owners -- especially the hard-core enthusiasts who belong to the National Rifle Assn. -- are often thought to oppose any restriction on their 2nd Amendment right to bear arms. Except that, according to a recent poll, they don't.

The gun-control debate is replete with suspect polls and fishy statistical analyses, so when Mayors Against Illegal Guns set out to survey gun owners, it knew it would be accused of putting a liberal slant on the questions. That's why the group, a coalition of 500 mayors started in 2006 by New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino, hired a conservative pollster to do the job: Frank Luntz, an occasional commentator on the Fox News Channel. Luntz surveyed 401 NRA members and 431 gun owners who don't belong to the group, and came up with some surprising results.

When asked whether they supported or opposed a "proposal requiring all gun sellers at gun shows to conduct criminal background checks of the people buying guns," 69% of the NRA members and 85% of the nonmembers were in favor. This goes to the so-called gun-show loophole, in which used-gun merchants are allowed to sell firearms without doing background checks, which are required when selling new guns. Attempts in Congress to close this loophole have died after meeting strong opposition from the NRA.

Gun owners also were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with this statement: "The federal government should not restrict the police's ability to access, use and share data that helps them enforce federal, state and local gun laws." This goes to the Tiahrt Amendments, provisions attached to federal spending bills that interfere with the ability of police agencies to use federal gun-trace data. The NRA is a big supporter of these amendments, but it's out of touch with its members; 69% of those polled agreed there should be no federal restrictions on trace data, as did 74% of gun owners as a whole.

Why are the NRA's leaders more absolutist than its members? At least in part because they have a financial incentive. It's a common practice by the NRA to send out mailers

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when a firearms-related bill is proposed that exaggerate its provisions and claim that lawmakers are out to grab guns from law-abiding citizens. Fostering hysteria is a surefire way of increasing contributions, but when NRA members learn that these efforts are really focused at keeping guns out of the hands of criminals, they tend to support them. Knowing this won't change the behavior of the NRA's leadership, but it should help give lawmakers the courage to stand up to the organization. By simply countering NRA propaganda with facts, they can persuade liberals and conservatives alike to back sensible gun-control measures.

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thetimes-tribune.com

Members, NRA not in accord

Published: December 12, 2009

<http://www.thetimes-tribune.com/opinion/members-nra-not-in-accord-1.479523>

Like deer that scatter when they hear the crack of a rifle shot in the cold December air, too many Pennsylvania lawmakers bolt in fear when they hear the soft tread of National Rifle Association lobbyists in the Capitol hallways.

The politicians fear offending the NRA for fear of alienating voting members in Pennsylvania, where widespread gun ownership and hunting are deeply embedded in the state's history and culture.

But a new poll by a deeply conservative Republican pollster indicates that politicians, generally, wrongly assume that the official positions of the NRA leadership are shared uniformly by rank-and-file members.

The results are deeply significant relative to federal and state legislation regarding sensible, safety-oriented regulations that would not prevent any eligible citizen from owning a gun.

Conservative pollster Frank Luntz, whose best known recent enterprise has been advising Republicans who are against Democratic proposals for health-care reform, conducted the survey for Mayors Against Illegal Guns.

Mr. Luntz surveyed 832 gun owners, 401 of whom are NRA members.

Remarkably, federal law does not prohibit people on terrorist watch lists from purchasing guns. Mr. Luntz found an overwhelming majority of the gun owners favored such a restriction, including 82 percent of the NRA members.

Pennsylvania is among the states where laws requiring gun owners to report the loss or theft of guns have been under debate. In Pennsylvania, the measure has been defeated at the state level but passed by 21 city governments.

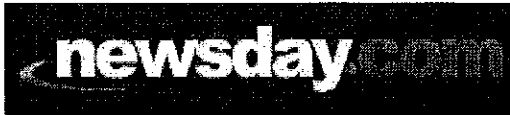
Mr. Luntz found, nationally, overwhelming support by gun owners for such a provision, including among 69 percent of NRA members.

Many gun owners seem to believe that gun ownership and gun safety are complementary, rather than contradictory concepts. In the poll, 86 percent of the gun owners agreed with this statement: "We can do more to stop criminals from getting guns while also protecting the rights of citizens to freely own them."

The NRA opposes many common-sense public safety measures relative to guns because it fears the "slippery slope," that passage of any gun restriction inevitably will lead to sweeping restrictions.

Common sense is a powerful weapon, however. Many gun owners, including the NRA members in the Luntz poll, disagree with the official NRA positions. Pennsylvania and federal lawmakers should use that weapon, stop cowering before the NRA and make the streets safer for everyone.

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<http://www.newsday.com/opinion/editorial-stop-those-on-terror-list-from-buying-guns-1.1653551>

EDITORIAL: Stop those on terror list from buying guns

December 14, 2009

Suspected terrorists shouldn't be able to buy guns and explosives easily. While that doesn't seem like a controversial position, all these years after 9/11, people suspected of plotting terrorist violence can still buy those weapons legally.

That's a dangerous hole in the nation's gun control laws. Congress should close the "terror gap" by passing legislation to allow authorities to block such sales.

The bill would expand the current law, which requires a background check for anyone buying from a licensed firearms dealer. Domestic abusers, felons and some mentally ill are already turned away. But, absurdly, suspected terrorists aren't. According to government auditors, known or suspected terrorists have made 963 attempts to legally buy guns or explosives since 2004, and 865 were successful.

Would a new law make it impossible for terrorists to get weapons? Unfortunately, no - there are too many avenues for illegal purchases. But it shouldn't be as easy as sauntering into a strip-mall gun shop. Could the law inconvenience some people mistakenly placed on terrorist watch lists? Unfortunately, yes. But the bill would require guidelines from the attorney general describing the circumstances in which gun purchases would be denied. And it would give people whose purchases are blocked the opportunity to challenge that decision.

There's just no good reason why it should remain legal for suspected terrorists to buy the tools of their deadly trade.

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