



Obama's Gun Control Op-Ed Evades Real Issues

An editorial by President Obama has appeared in Tucson's newspaper, the Arizona Daily Star, calling for further restrictions on gun ownership. Attempts by Democrats to politicize the tragic shooting in Tucson this past January sparked a strong reaction from many defenders of the right to keep and bear arms. Now, however, it appears that the president himself is prepared to exploit the shooting of Rep. Gabrielle Giffords (D-Ariz.) to advance the long-standing leftwing agenda of depriving the American people of their constitutionally-guaranteed right to defend one's self and one's liberty.



Immediately following Jared Loughner's alleged attack on Rep. Giffords, Pima County Sheriff Clarence Dupnik took to the airwaves, blaming the attack on those individuals who were making use of their rights under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. [As Dan Riehl wrote for BigGovernment.com:](#)

With profane Constitutional ignorance, how dare anyone fuel anger, or resentment of big government, or, heaven forbid, an elected official, Dupnik, or perhaps that should read Dupe-nik, stands on end the Constitution and the same First Amendment recently read by tragic shooting victim and U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords on the floor of the House of Representatives. Giffords even posted [the short video on her Facebook page](#).

A look at Dupnik's official, [public bought and paid for website](#) reads more like someone auditioning for a TV talking head gig, or job in Washington, than it does a law enforcement official. But then, what responsible, professional law enforcement official would seize upon every media opportunity afforded him to discuss, in intimate detail, such a horrific crime still under investigation and obviously headed for the courts? The answer is *none*.

Now President Obama has joined the ranks of the pundits, and although his rhetoric demonstrates a greater degree of refinement than Dupnik's absurd rant, it shares a common theme with that of the sheriff: The "solution" to the problems posed by the Loughners of this world is to eliminate the constitutional liberties which Dupnik and Obama think make them possible in the first place.

[Obama's op-ed](#) is carefully salted with quotes which liberal pundits will use in the following days to "prove" that the president does not want to take anyone's rights away. After all, he says,

Now, like the majority of Americans, I believe that the Second Amendment guarantees an individual right to bear arms. And the courts have settled that as the law of the land. In this country, we have a strong tradition of gun ownership that's handed from generation to generation. Hunting and shooting are part of our national heritage. And, in fact, my administration has not curtailed the rights of gun owners — it has expanded them, including allowing people to carry their guns in national parks and wildlife refuges.

It is nice that Mr. Obama will at least offer lip service to the text of the Second Amendment — and last



Written by [James Heiser](#) on March 16, 2011

year's *McDonald v. Chicago* ruling by the Supreme Court. It is also nice to see that he wants to co-opt President Bush's 2008 changes to the Department of the Interior regulations regarding firearms in the national parks and wildlife refuges, [and the efforts of Sen. Tom Coburn \(R-Okla.\)](#) to guarantee that those rights would not be undermined. However, while Obama offers up a few vague platitudes about the Second Amendment, he is very quite to proceed to his argument for further restrictions on those liberties:

However, I believe that if common sense prevails, we can get beyond wedge issues and stale political debates to find a sensible, intelligent way to make the United States of America a safer, stronger place.

I'm willing to bet that responsible, law-abiding gun owners agree that we should be able to keep an irresponsible, law-breaking few — dangerous criminals and fugitives, for example — from getting their hands on a gun in the first place.

I'm willing to bet they don't think that using a gun and using common sense are incompatible ideas — that we should check someone's criminal record before he can check out at a gun seller; that an unbalanced man shouldn't be able to buy a gun so easily; that there's room for us to have reasonable laws that uphold liberty, ensure citizen safety and are fully compatible with a robust Second Amendment.

Obama mocks those who disagree with his highhanded approach to curtailing the civil liberties of the American people by repeatedly juxtaposing “common sense” (i.e., agreeing with his plans for limiting our rights) with, of course, the “gun lobby.” (The “gun lobby” being evil, of course, while the “union lobby” and the “environmental lobby,” which appear to drive much of the president's agenda, have but the purest of motivations — at least in the mind of Mr. Obama.) In other words, he implicitly challenges either the rationality or the honesty (or both) of those who disagree with him.

It is worth challenging, at least in passing, Mr. Obama's attempt to make “irresponsible” citizens guilty of the moral equivalent of being “law-breakers.” Those who take the Constitution seriously would maintain that even “irresponsible” people still have rights protected by that cherished document.

The truth of the matter is, this nation has very stringent laws when it comes to background checks for gun purchases, and Mr. Obama knows it. There is nothing of substance in the president's “op ed” that would have prevented Mr. Loughner from buying a firearm, who was able to buy a gun because he could pass a federal background check.

Mr. Obama claims that “Most gun owners know that the word ‘commonsense’ isn't a code word for ‘confiscation.’ ” Mr. Obama is correct: Most Americans know it's not a code word for “confiscation” — but that doesn't stop it from being a code word.

The real target of the president's punditry is the ability of individual citizens to sell or give their firearms to other persons whom they know to be a “law abiding” citizens. The idea that such sales take place drives the Left into a frenzy, because it means that someone is exercising their constitutional rights without notifying the federal government. As the White House rallies the opponents of Second Amendment, watch for the next round of rhetoric to blast away at “gun shows” and “person-to-person” sales. It won't matter that Mr. Loughner bought his firearm at a store. And it won't matter that the firearms which have flowed into Mexico as part of various “stings” perpetrated by the BATF were also purchased at stores. The target of Mr. Obama's ire is the right of a private parties to buy and sell firearms, and the end result of the registration of every private transaction will be the creation of a national database of gun ownership. The White House may go so far as to deny this during the coming



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gun control debate—but they certainly won't deny it once they start building the database.

Then, well, it would be the only “sensible” thing for a “responsible” leader to do, right?

Photo: President Obama during a talk at Kenmore Middle School in Arlington, Va., on March 14 called for "a new discussion on how we can keep America safe for all of our people.": AP Images



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