



Anti-gun Group Challenges the National Rifle Association

Just hours after Americans for Responsible Solutions (ARS) [announced](#) that the anti-gun group's two leaders, Gabrielle Giffords and her husband Mark Kelly, were headed to the Saratoga Springs Arms Fair in New York on Sunday, the media splashed headlines as if it were a major event. ABC News announced, "Giffords to Attend 1st Gun Show Since Shooting," followed by the *New York Daily News*: "Gabby Giffords to attend first gun show since being shot in the head." Newsmax proclaimed, "Gabby Giffords to Attend Gun Show."

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Because Giffords is a favorite of the mainstream media owing to [her atrocious voting record](#) while a member of the House of Representatives from Arizona's 8th District from 2007 until her shooting in January 2011 (and because of the ARS's anti-Second Amendment stance), the media took special pains to make a big deal out of nothing. The press release issued by Kelly gave the media plenty of ammunition(!):

At the federal level we still have no requirement for background checks at gun shows, but states like New York are fixing the loophole. [New York's] model helps keep guns out of the hands of people who shouldn't have them — like criminals and the dangerously mentally ill — without infringing on our Second Amendment rights.

This is a chance for Gabby and I [sic] to visit New York's largest arms fair and highlight this background checks system which we believe can serve as a template for gun shows around the country.

ABC News made sure that the message was delivered. Giffords and Kelly are attending the show along with New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman to celebrate the "voluntary agreement" Schneiderman wrung out of hapless gun show owners in New York and imposed upon citizens attending gun shows in the state, calling them "stringent new rules to track sales" of guns. Newsmax expanded on just how the Second Amendment is supposedly being protected and defended in New York:

Under the agreements worked out by Schneiderman, all firearms are tagged at the entrances to gun shows. Operators must provide computer stations for sellers to do national background checks. Guns are checked as they are taken away through a limited number of exits to make sure background checks are performed. No buyers can leave a show without documentation of a proper sale.

Freedoms guaranteed under the Second Amendment were further limited as gun show operators must "voluntarily" alert local police departments of the location and hours of the shows so they can send cruisers to patrol the parking areas around the shows to assure that no private sales are taking place there. In addition, "Schneiderman also has a staff member at each gun show to work with operators to monitor compliance with the new gun control 'agreement.'"



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In other words, in New York, members of the staff of the attorney general's office will be attending and enforcing the agreement through careful monitoring and tracking of individual sales.

Delighted with all the attention the press release generated, Mark Kelly took advantage and announced that in the 10 months since his group began, it has raised "over \$11 million from 130,000 donors" and "we would like to spend in the 2014 elections what the NRA spent in 2012" — approximately \$19 million. He proclaimed, "We've got the resources to be effective for the 2014 elections."

To out-influence the NRA is going to take some doing. The National Rifle Association has nearly a century of influencing legislation and lobbying members of Congress, both at the state and federal level. Its membership just hit five million in May of this year, and its annual budget is approaching a quarter of a billion dollars. It is held in high esteem among not only gun owners but the general public as well. In six out of seven surveys conducted by Gallup since 1993, the majority of Americans held a favorable opinion of the organization, and recent polls are showing both Republicans and Democrats holding similar favorable opinions.

In its history, notable members of the NRA have included eight presidents of the United States, two vice-presidents, two chief justices of the U.S. Supreme Court, and numerous members of both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Liberals such as Whoopi Goldberg, Roy Innis, and James Earl Jones have held memberships, along with NBA player Karl Malone, screenwriter John Milius (*Red Dawn*), actor Chuck Norris, musician Ted Nugent, former Governor Sarah Palin, and actor Tom Selleck.

Americans for Responsible Solutions is swimming upstream. Despite Democratic control of the Senate, the Obama administration was unable to pass anti-gun legislation, and the recent recall of two anti-gun liberal Democrats in Colorado has encouraged gun owners.

What the ARS lacks in financial and membership firepower it is also missing in experience. For instance, when anti-gun billionaires Michael Bloomberg and Eli Broad contributed \$600,000 to the war chest of those supporting the Colorado anti-gun legislators (bringing the total to more than \$3 million and outspending the opponents [more than five to one](#)), pro-gun shoe-leather activists more than made up for the discrepancy. Colorado now has two new state senators hopefully more sympathetic to the Second Amendment and its adherents.

The point is that even if the ARS is able to attract significant out-of-state financial support from billionaires, it's not likely to make much difference.

The ARS also has a public relations problem. Back in March, Mark Kelly tried to score political points by attempting to buy an "assault rifle" for himself — the same kind of firearm he was railing against — but his plan backfired and revealed him to be a [hypocrite of the first order](#).

The noise that the mainstream media made over the press release of the ARS reminds one of the 1955 cold war satirical novel by Leonard Wibberley entitled *The Mouse that Roared*, wherein the tiny fictional European Duchy of Grand Fenwick decides to declare war on the United States. In that satire, the Duchy wins. In the real world, the newly-hatched Americans for Responsible Solutions is likely to disappear from view altogether as a result of suffering from excessive hubris and hypocrisy in an increasingly unwelcome environment.

A graduate of Cornell University and a former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at www.LightFromTheRight.com, primarily on economics



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and politics. He can be reached at badelmann@thenewamerican.com



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