



Michael Bloomberg Pledges \$50 Million to Push Gun Control

Former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg has announced that he will pledge \$50 million to create a new umbrella gun control organization called Everytown for Gun Safety.

In an April 15 interview with the *New York Times*, Bloomberg effectively declared a spending war on the National Rifle Association (NRA), the largest and most well-known organization working to defend the right of Americans to keep and bear arms, as guaranteed by the Second Amendment.



In his interview with the *Times*, Bloomberg specifically addressed the NRA, saying that gun control advocates need to learn from the gun-rights organization and to seek retribution against those politicians who do not support gun control. This would include even liberal Democrats who are in sync with Bloomberg's other political stances — for example, legalized abortion, same-sex marriage, and amnesty for illegal immigrants — but who do not fall in line on gun control.

Referring to the NRA, Bloomberg said, "They say, 'We don't care. We're going to go after you. If you don't vote with us we're going to go after your kids and your grandkids and your great-grandkids. And we're never going to stop.'"

Bloomberg then threatened political warfare against the NRA, saying: "We've got to make them afraid of us."

The *Times* was unable to obtain a comment from the NRA, but did quote Larry Pratt, executive director of Gun Owners of America: "He's got the money to waste," Pratt said of Bloomberg. "So I guess he's free to do so. But frankly, I think he's going to find out why his side keeps losing."

Though Pratt did not articulate the reason, the majority of Americans have historically jealously guarded their right to keep and bear arms — a right that predates even the Second Amendment, going back to English common law and the 1689 English Bill of Rights.

That most Americans are opposed to more gun control is borne out by opinion polls, including a recent Rasmussen poll of 1,000 likely voters conducted in March, in which 53 percent of those surveyed do not think the country needs tougher gun control laws. Only 40 percent think the United States needs stricter gun control laws, which was down nine points since last May's survey.

As to how Bloomberg arrived at the \$50 million figure, that is apparently the billionaire's standard grant to advance his pet causes.

"I put \$50 million this year, last year into coal, \$53 million into oceans," he said, referring to his donations to the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign, which aims to close one-third of America's coal-fired power plants by 2020 (to counter "global warming"), and his support of the Vibrant Oceans



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Initiative (to encourage governments to reduce fishing quotas). “Certainly a number like that, \$50 million. Let’s see what happens.”

Forbes listed Bloomberg’s net worth as \$31.2 billion and ranked him as the 17th richest person in the world, as well as 29th on its list of “Powerful People.”

Abram Brown, a *Forbes* staff writer, noted of Bloomberg’s latest venture: “Two things are clear: Bloomberg can put more money into his anti-gun plan — make that into *any* plan — and the N.R.A. has probably never faced a better-funded adversary.” (Emphasis in original.)

Bloomberg intends that two gun control groups that he already funds, Mayors Against Illegal Guns and Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, will be merged under the new Everytown for Gun Safety. Umbrella.

The mayor of Danbury, Connecticut, Mark Boughton, who is a candidate for governor of the Constitution State, recently made news by resigning from Mayors Against Illegal Guns. Explaining his reasons for quitting the group, Boughton said: “It’s really become about Bloomberg instead of going after illegal guns. Mike Bloomberg overwhelms the entire group. I think its mission has been lost.”

Boughton also said that his membership in the Bloomberg-funded group has alienated him from gun owners, who are well aware of the former New York mayor’s anti-gun position.

“The general public sees them as one and the same,” Boughton said, referring to the distinction he makes between going after “illegal” gun owners and across-the-board gun control.

The *Connecticut Mirror* reported that a statement posted on Boughton’s campaign website emphasized his support for gun rights.

“As a member of the Connecticut General Assembly, I was a strong supporter of the rights of law-abiding gun owners and sportsmen in Connecticut,” said Boughton. “This remains my position today.”

In response to accusations that his resignation from the Bloomberg-funded group was motivated by political considerations, Boughton said, “I’m not doing it to move the needle. At the end of the day, I have a record as it applies to Second Amendment issues.”

Bloomberg himself has come under fire for his often outrageous positions on a wide range of issues. Last May, the libertarian *Reason* magazine named him as its “Nanny of the Month” after his city’s Department of Consumer Affairs fined the the owner of a Manhattan tourist shop \$60,000 for selling three-inch cigarette lighters shaped like pistols, because city officials said they might be mistaken for real firearms.

It was the third time *Reason* gave the Nanny designation to Bloomberg. He was named the magazine’s “Nanny of the Year” in 2009, when he proposed a ban on outdoor smoking and a one-cent tax on sodas. Bloomberg also campaigned against food and drinks containing sugar. The anti-sugar crusade followed a 2007 ban on the use of trans fats that also featured a public campaign against school bake sales.

In September 2012, the New York City Board of Health approved Bloomberg’s proposal to ban the sale of many sweetened drinks that are more than 16 ounces in volume. On March 12, 2013, hours before the ban was scheduled to take effect, state Supreme Court Justice Milton Tingling struck the ban down, ruling that the Board of Health lacked the jurisdiction to enforce it and that the rule was “arbitrary and capricious.”

While Bloomberg’s attempts to impose Nanny-like regulations on the citizenry are bad enough, the



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issue of gun control is unlike the violations of other rights. That is because it has historically been recognized that the right to keep and bear arms is the right that enables free men to defend their freedom. In other words, it underlies all other rights.

Too often, those attempting to cater to this right offer reasons that are too weak to sustain the right in the long run, such as Mayor Boughton's reference to the rights of "sportsmen." While the sport of hunting is certainly a legitimate use of firearms, the authors of the Second Amendment most certainly had stronger reasons in mind to devote an amendment to protecting the right to keep and bear arms. At the time the amendment was adopted, in 1791, the battles of Lexington and Concord in 1775 were only 16 years in the past.

History records that when the British regulars arrived at Concord, Major John Pitcairn knew that cannon had been buried on the property behind the tavern of Ephraim Jones, and Pitcairn ordered Jones at gunpoint to show where the guns were buried. While today's gun-control extremists want to ban anything resembling an "assault rifle," the colonists had cannon in their possession!

Many advocates of gun control claim that the words of the Second Amendment referring to "a well regulated militia" pertain only to today's National Guards, but the colonists resisting the British regulars at Lexington and Concord were known as the Massachusetts militia, which had been created by order of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress (a rebel shadow government) for the very purpose of defending the rights of the colonists against British tyranny.

So while the authors of the Second Amendment undoubtedly engaged in hunting (more to feed their families than for sport), they had larger game in mind when they wrote the amendment. The Second Amendment has always been about protecting the rights of free men (and women) to defend all their other rights, and any attempt to infringe on that right is an attack on the freedom of all Americans.

Photo of Michael Bloomberg: AP Images

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