



Written by [Brian Koenig](#) on December 20, 2012

Gun Sales, NRA Memberships Boost After Conn. School Shooting

In the wake of the horrific Sandy Hook school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, the contentious debate over gun control has been reignited, spurring new policy proposals by lawmakers and mobilizing gun-rights advocates. While the National Rifle Association (NRA) has remained quiet in the aftermath of the shooting, the organization has registered some 8,000 new members per day since the harrowing tragedy.



In addition to an explosion of membership requests, an NRA source [told](#) Fox News that individual contributions to the organization have also spiked, according to an internal memo contrived by the group's membership division. "While this broadly aligns with trends seen after similar incidents in the past, the surge in membership this time is said to dwarf past trends," Fox reports.

Along with noticeable increases in NRA memberships, firearm sales also have experienced a sharp boost in the wake of last Friday's massacre, which left 26 people dead, including 20 children between the ages of six and seven. This side effect is reportedly spawned by political debates over tightened regulations on the nearly \$32-billion gun industry.

Simultaneously, the "Sandy Hook Effect" has left several gun manufacturers with notable reductions in their shares. [Smith & Wesson's stock](#) plunged eight percent from Friday to Monday, and on Tuesday the stock tumbled an additional 10 percent. Additionally, [Sturm Ruger & Company's](#) shares plummeted by almost eight percent, after losing about nine percent of its value since the shooting.

In states such as Texas, Ohio, Oregon, and Colorado, reports have [indicated](#) a significant boost in gun purchases occurring immediately after the shooting, also creating a "national shortage" of weapons and ammunition, according to one Texas gun shop owner. "All of our suppliers are almost sold out of items across the board," he [said](#), adding that he projects his gun sales to boost anywhere between 200 and 400 percent. "At a minimum we'll double our sales from last year," he noted.

According to a representative for Colorado's Bureau of Investigation's (CBI) InstaCheck Unit, gun background check requests are in a state of "record setting volume," and that the day following the Connecticut shooting the CBI incurred a single-day total of 4,154 requests — a new record.

Amid the surge in memberships and gun sales, the NRA is preparing for a "major" news conference on Friday, announced in a [public statement](#) released Tuesday by an aide to NRA President Wayne LaPierre. In the statement, the group expressed its condolences to the victims' families and noted its willingness to provide "meaningful contributions to help make sure this never happens again."

"The National Rifle Association of America is made up of four million moms and dads, sons and daughters — and we were shocked, saddened and heartbroken by the news of the horrific and senseless murders in Newtown," the statement read. "Out of respect for the families, and as a matter of common decency, we have given time for mourning, prayer and a full investigation of the facts before commenting."



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Sources told Fox News that while emphasizing its sympathy for the victims' friends and family members, the NRA would soon begin to "push back" against gun-control advocates, who have launched a campaign against the NRA's efforts to safeguard constitutional gun rights. Among those forces leading the campaign for new gun control laws are Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (D-N.Y.), Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), and New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

The NRA conference on Friday could change the landscape of the debate, critics predict, arriving days after President Obama announced a new White House task force, led by Vice President Joe Biden, to analyze and propose policies to curb gun violence. Expecting "concrete" proposals on his desk by the New Year, the president indicated that the task force would focus largely on gun-control initiatives.

But despite the campaign by Congress and the Obama administration for new firearm restrictions, the NRA and other gun-rights advocates are unlikely to back down, as industry lobbyists spend millions of dollars to ward off laws that would violate their Second Amendment rights. Adding celebrities such as Chuck Norris and Charlton Heston to its spokesperson roster, the NRA is renowned for effectively mobilizing its four million members.

"The whole fire arms community is very powerful, because gun owners see their relationship to this democracy through the eyes of the gun issue," [affirmed](#) Richard Feldman, a former lobbyist with the group and president of a gun-rights organization called the Independent Firearm Owners Association.

In 2012, the NRA spent \$17 million on federal elections, a significant amount when stacked up against the size of the industry, which totals about \$3.5 billion annually. In comparison, Goldman Sachs' employees and political action committee spent \$7.5 million on candidates running in this year's election.

"But Goldman Sachs doesn't have 4 million members who are very passionate, vocal and well-distributed from coast to coast," asserted Sheila Krumholz, executive director for the political spending-tracker Center for Responsive Politics. "Certainly money is part of that, but the NRA is one of the most powerful lobbies in Washington, because they can draw on such a huge base."

All in all, the influential group has been very effective in the past, managing to push laws such as relaxed gun bans in national parks and Amtrak trains in 2009, a year when Democrats dominated both Congress and the White House. And despite the Connecticut tragedy, which critics say would have occurred regardless of stricter gun control laws, the NRA and those supporting the right to keep and bear arms are unlikely to back down.

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