



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on July 9, 2022

New York to Spy on Social Media Under New Gun Control Bill

New York is taking aim at the Second Amendment with a new statewide policy intended to make it harder for citizens to carry concealed weapons.

In a new requirement that is part of a law passed on July 1, applicants for concealed carry permits must now hand over a list of their social media accounts in order to be subjected to a review of their “character and conduct.”

While Democrats and other gun control advocates celebrate the provision, arguing it will crack down on the ability of mentally disturbed individuals with questionable social-media track histories from being able to carry out mass shootings, others question both the constitutionality and efficacy of such a requirement.

Among the skeptical are local sheriff’s offices, who are the ones that will have the job of reviewing social media content and who are now wondering whether the state will provide them with the resources to do so.

Peter Kehoe, the executive director of the New York Sheriffs’ Association, told the [Associated Press](#) (AP) that sheriffs have thus far not received money with which to perform the new concealed carry application requirement. He also insisted that the new law violates the Second Amendment. While he acknowledges that the legislation requires applicants to list their social media accounts, he does not expect local police to actually go through those lists.

“I don’t think we would do that,” Kehoe maintained, adding that it would be a “constitutional invasion of privacy.”

“Often the sticking point is: How do we go about enforcing this?” asked Metro State University criminal justice professor James Densley, who co-founded a research initiative known as The Violence Project. “I think it starts to open up a bit of a can of worms, because no one quite knows the best way to go about doing it.”

In Densley’s view, it could prove difficult to differentiate between mere “expression” and “wrongdoing,” including in situations in which youth are sharing or reacting to entertainment and media.

The new law is an attempt by the Democrat-run state Legislature to keep limits on guns in the wake of a recent Supreme Court ruling holding that Americans have a right to own a handgun for self-protection.

The law was signed by Democratic Gov. Kathy Hochul, who defended it on the basis that mass shooters sometimes hint at their future actions on their social media accounts.



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AP notes of the law's provisions:

Under the law, applicants have to provide local officials with a list of current and former social media accounts from the previous three years. It doesn't specify whether applicants will be required to provide access to private accounts not visible to the general public.

It will be up to local sheriff's staff, judges or county clerks to scroll through those profiles as they check whether applicants have made statements suggesting dangerous behavior.

The law also will require applicants to undergo hours of safety training, prove they're proficient at shooting, provide four character references and sit for in-person interviews.

But it isn't only traditional Republican or conservative voices who are taking issue with the law. Some in the social justice movement fear it could contribute to unfair surveillance of racial minorities.

Desmond Upton Patton, a University of Pennsylvania social policy professor who founded SAFElab, which studies violence involving minority youth, said to AP:

"The question should be: Can we do this in an anti-racist way that does not create another set of violence, which is the state violence that happens through surveillance?"

Thankfully, the Left is increasingly losing ground in the Second Amendment fight anywhere outside heavily Democratic strongholds like New York and California.

As I [previously wrote](#), constitutionalists have gained ground in the realm of ideas and the war of rhetoric. Even mass shootings and the accompanying sensationalist spin by the mainstream media no longer have the power they once did to sway Republican voters in favor of gun control. And Republican politicians, even the moderate ones, are seeing the writing on the wall and realizing that, whatever their personal inclinations, they have to vote in line with the base's staunch pro-gun attitudes if they want to keep their jobs.

Now, more than ever, is a prime opportunity for constitutionalists to not only hold the line against new gun control, but push for measures that would restore the Second Amendment, such as Constitutional Carry and the repeal of red flag laws.



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