



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on April 13, 2012

Romney Expected to “Reassure” NRA on Second Amendment

Joe Tartaro, president of the Second Amendment Foundation, says the alternative would be a disaster: “If President Obama is re-elected as a lame duck there would be no political restraints on him.” He would be free, according to Tartaro, to push through a long list of anti-gun measures just waiting to be enacted, including reinstatement of the federal “assault-weapons” ban that expired in 2004.



Democrats defending Obama say he has no such agenda. Matt Bennett, an official in the Clinton administration and now head of the progressive think tank [Third Way](#), said “There is zero appetite for new gun laws in Congress, and the president cannot act on his own.” Alan Gottlieb, the founder of the Second Amendment Foundation, disagreed, reminding Bennett that Obama’s expanded use of executive orders are likely to impinge on those gun rights regardless of lack of “appetite” for such measures in Congress. Obama could use executive orders to curb the import and export of guns and ammunition, for example. And, given the opportunity, Obama could try to pack the courts with judges favorable to further restrictions on the Second Amendment. Said Gottlieb:

With all the Second Amendment litigation going on right now, if Obama is able to stack the courts with his kind of judges, he basically will be slamming the courthouse doors in the face of gun owners.

Some observers are expressing doubt that Romney, if elected, will be any better. In 2007 David Kopel, [writing for National Review](#), questioned Romney’s veracity about his claim to being “a hunter pretty much all my life” when it was learned later that he had been hunting just twice. And his claim that he owned a firearm in “one of his homes” proved to be false as well: the gun referred to belonged to his son, but Romney “sort of” considered that it belonged to him.

But the Second Amendment has little to do with hunting anyway. As Frank James, an attendee at the NRA convention, [noted](#):



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Mittens will give a well-rehearsed speech celebrating our 2nd Amendment and how after he is elected president he will do everything in his power to protect those rights *but all the sub-text...[will relate to] firearms possession to preserve hunting.* [his emphasis]...

If Mittens goes the weekend without once referencing the 2nd Amendment to “hunting” and would further explain how that part of our Bill of Rights is designed to help us as citizens to own the tools necessary for our own defense, then I might start taking him seriously as possibly someone who could be on our side, but if we hear this same ole [irrelevancy] about guns and hunting then I know he’s just another stooge the bosses at party headquarters are trying to feed to us peasants....

Romney’s record concerning the Second Amendment is clear: he has supported bans on so-called “assault” weapons (employing the media’s steadfastly determined inaccurate description of everything that looks military must be an “assault weapon” despite the fact that they are one-pull-one-shot rifles and not fully automatic) from the beginning, making Massachusetts’ ban on such weapons permanent when the federal ban expired in 2004.

Earlier Romney made clear his position in opposition to the rights guaranteed by the Second Amendment when, in 2002, he bragged:

We do have tough gun laws in Massachusetts. I support them. I won’t chip away at them. I believe they protect us and provide for our safety.

When he endorsed the “Brady Bill” - [a federal piece of legislation](#) that would require all purchasers of firearms to wait five days before receiving their purchase — he said this was “not going to make me the hero of the NRA” because on that issue “I don’t line up with the NRA.”

[The Political Guide](#) provided numerous notable instances and statements from Romney that confirm his lack of commitment to, or even understanding of, the Second Amendment. For example, when he signed into law the permanent ban on semi-automatic weapons in 2004, Romney said:

Deadly assault weapons have no place in Massachusetts. These guns are not made for recreation or self-defense. They are instruments of destruction with the sole purpose of hunting down and killing people.

In an interview with *ABC News* talking head George Stephanopoulos, Romney was asked about his support of the Second Amendment:

I’m a strong proponent of Second Amendment rights. I believe people, under our Constitution, have the right to bear arms.

We have a gun in one of our homes. It’s not owned by me, it’s owned by my son, but I’ve always considered it sort of mine.

Stephanopoulos: When did you join the NRA?

Romney: Within the last year [2007] and I signed up for a lifelong membership. I think they’re doing good things and I believe in supporting the right to bear arms.

I’ve been a hunter all my life, not frequently, but as a boy, when I worked on a ranch in Idaho, we used to go out shooting rabbits, because they were eating all the barley, and I got pretty good with a single shot .22 rifle, and been quail hunting more recently.

So I’m a hunter and believe in Second Amendment rights, but I also believe that assault weapons



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are not needed in the public population.

During an interview with *Meet the Press* Romney was asked once again for clarification on his position on the Second Amendment and background checks:

My position is that we should check on the backgrounds of those that try to purchase guns. We also should keep weapons of unusual lethality from being on the street. Finally, we should go after people who use guns in the commission of crimes or illegally, but we should not interfere with the rights of law abiding citizens to own guns, either for their own personal protection, or hunting, or any other lawful purpose. I support the work of the NRA, I am a member of the NRA.

That's the message convention attendees are likely to hear on Friday in St. Louis: I'm for the Second Amendment except when I'm not. What they won't hear is the primary reason that amendment was placed behind the first: to back up the guarantee of the right of sovereign citizens to speak their peace and defend it, if necessary, with their weapon of choice.

Photo: Mitt's quadrennial, election-year appearance: Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney gestures while addressing the National Rifle Association of America (NRA) annual meeting, May

16, 2008, in Louisville, Ky.: AP Images



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