



Rotary International Reverses Its Anti-gun Policy Following Membership Complaints

Rotary International, the international service organization with 35,000 chapters and 1.2 million members worldwide, [reversed itself last week](#) and lifted nearly all of the board's anti-gun policies inserted surreptitiously into its Code of Policies in January.

One is hard-pressed to find the anti-gun language in the Code, which runs to 461 pages. But it is found on pages 227 and 228, under Section 36.010, Paragraphs 2 and 8:



2. RI [Rotary International] will not accept a sponsorship that ... supports the use of addictive or harmful products and activities, including but not limited to ... guns, weapons or other armaments....

8. In no instance shall any of the Rotary Marks be used in any visual that includes guns, weapons or other armaments. The Rotary Marks may not be used in combination with the name or logo of any entity whose primary business is the sale or manufacture of guns, weapons or other armaments.

The anti-gun policy, which was passed by the 19-member board of directors, only four of whom are Americans, didn't come to light until the Rotary Club of Presidio Tucson e-mailed a summary of the new policies to Rotary governors throughout the country. The policy revisions had been considered for more than a year:

In early 2016, Rotary and the Board discovered that there is a lack of clarity around RI's policy governing Rotary clubs, districts, and other Rotary entities when participating in activities involving guns, weapons, and other armaments, and when interacting with gun companies, including for sponsorship purposes.

And so, thanks to this "lack of clarity" that, it should be noted, had not been discovered during the first 111 years of the organization's existence, Rotary of Presidio Tucson summarized the new anti-gun restrictions:

Prohibiting Rotary clubs, districts and other Rotary Entities from transferring ownership of weapons.

Prohibiting clubs, districts and Rotary Entities from conducting or sponsoring gun shows.

Prohibiting clubs, districts and Rotary Entities from accepting sponsorships from gun/weapon companies or stores, and preventing use of Rotary's logo with the name or logo of a gun/weapon company or store.

Prohibiting clubs, districts and Rotary Entities from using any visual that includes weapons.

Prohibiting licensing by RI of guns or weapons.

Within days the National Rifle Association's Institute for Legislative Affairs (NRAILA) published its



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“Rotary International Gives the Boot to Gun Owners” alert to its five-million plus members. That membership included Rotarians who not only owned firearms but manufactured them and sold them, and the complaints began pouring in to RI. The NRAILA was clear:

The new policy bans any Rotary entity — including clubs and districts — from selling raffling, or transferring firearms. It also bans these entities from participating in activities where any sort of firearm or other transfer occurs, whether or not Rotary is the owner of the item. Rotary entities are also prohibited from sponsoring or conducting gun shows or other exhibitions involving guns.

The alert also remarked that while the board was within its rights to enact such policies, individual members also had the right to terminate their memberships and focus their philanthropic and eleemosynary efforts elsewhere:

Of course, RI is within its rights to enact the new policy.

And its many members in the U.S. and elsewhere where firearm ownership is common and respected are just as clearly within their rights to channel their philanthropy and civic engagement into other groups.

The alert also included a sales pitch to those not already members of the NRA:

Some who oppose the RI board’s anti-gun stance may even wish to consider supporting groups that actively promote responsible firearm ownership, America’s constitutional values, and the basic human right of self-defense.

It didn’t take long for the board to reconsider the matter, announcing in an e-mail to its members last week that changes were made “in response to comments from our members.” Under the revised “guidelines,” all Rotary entities are now expressly allowed to “participate in activities involving the sale, give-away or transfer, including raffles, or guns, weapons or other armaments.” The ban on sponsorship of Rotary activities by firearm-related companies was also lifted. The only caveat was that each Rotary entity is required “to consult with legal and/or insurance professionals to ensure that they are adequately protected.”

Perhaps the board had an epiphany, remembering “Rotary’s 4-Way Test,” and then checking each box in accordance with its original anti-gun policy, finding it wanting:

Is it the truth?

Is it fair to all concerned?

Will it build goodwill and better friendships?

Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

The original policy and its reversal serve once again to remind those in the freedom fight of the need to be eternally vigilant. The original phrase can be traced back to Irish politician John Philpot Curran, who said it first and perhaps best:

The condition upon which God hath given liberty to man is eternal vigilance, which condition if he break, servitude is at once the consequence of his crime and the punishment of his guilt.

Image of child: [Screenshot of a Rotary International ad](#)

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