



Will Obama Let You Keep Your Guns?

On November 7, the *New York Times* reported that “sales of handguns, rifles and ammunition have surged in the last week, according to gun store owners across the nation who describe a wave of buyers concerned that an Obama administration will curtail their right to bear arms.”



Buyers were stocking up on guns because during his time as an Illinois state senator, Obama earned a reputation as being as virulently antigun as one can get. Rich Pearson, longtime chief lobbyist for the Illinois State Rifle Association, released an open letter to sportsmen in October about Obama, saying, “I lobbied Barack Obama extensively while he was an Illinois State Senator. As a result of that experience, I know Obama’s attitudes towards guns and gun owners better than anyone. The truth be told, in all my years in the Capitol I have never met a legislator who harbors more contempt for the law-abiding firearm owner than Barack Obama.”

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Pearson went on: “While a state senator, Obama voted for a bill that would ban nearly every hunting rifle, shotgun and target rifle owned by Illinois citizens.... Obama supported a bill that would shut down law-abiding firearm manufacturers including Springfield Armory.”

Gun buyers also bought guns as investments, as hedges against turbulent economic times.

But despite the fact that Obama’s recent pro-gun rhetoric is obviously blatantly false, should Americans worry that Obama will take away their firearms? In my opinion: not just yet. To even contemplate such an action, Obama would either have to be sure that he had nothing to lose (the be-all and end-all of most politicians’ lives) or be sure that it would succeed with little political fallout for the Democratic Party. If nothing else, Obama is, after all, very politically savvy.

In recent years, attacking the Second Amendment has largely fallen out of favor at the federal level because the topic has been like kryptonite for most politicians: even approaching the subject leads to becoming a political dead duck in the next election (unless one hails from a big city and is immune). Obama would likely have trouble getting a gun-ban bill through even a Democrat-packed House.

That’s not to say that all is roses on the gun front with Obama as commander in chief. As Obama tries to live up to his many very expensive campaign promises, he’ll need to get the money to pay for his plans from somewhere, and a large tax increase on guns and ammunition is probable. Also, if Obama were to



Written by [Kurt Williamsen](#) on November 7, 2008

get reelected, it is conceivable that toward the end of his second term, he may be willing to expend the remainder of any political capital he has left in twisting Democrats arms to ban guns. Such a scenario could also play out toward the end of Obama's first term if he and fellow Democrats so ruin the economy that they stand little chance of getting a second term — there is one's legacy to look out for after all. Only time will tell, but for now, look for new taxes to come down the pipe — and maybe just stock up a little.



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