

From: Dave Schwartz <dave=scpolicycouncil.org@mail56.suw15.mcsv.net>
To: Veldran, KatherineKatherineVeldran@gov.sc.gov
Date: 11/16/2016 3:05:34 PM
Subject: FW: read this and let's discuss

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Hi Katherine,

Back in September, our research team [posted an analysis](#) showing how the gun debate has been driven more by emotion than reason, and more by inflated rhetoric than real data. And in October the team examined several [recent years' trends](#) on Second Amendment-related legislation – and found those trends to be anything but encouraging.

All this came up yesterday when SCPC president Ashley Landess came across an [article in Politico](#) suggesting that opponents of the Second Amendment are repackaging their message to sound less alarmist and more reasonable – and by extension making the pro-Second Amendment side sound alarmist and *unreasonable*.

Rather than try and relay Ashley's thoughts, I thought I'd just forward her email to you. We're wondering what you think. Are lawmakers in the South Carolina State House – Republicans and Democrats – also repackaging their message on guns? That certainly seemed to be the case over the last several months, as lawmakers held a series of public hearings on "reasonable" and "common sense" gun control laws (see Ashley's testimony [here](#)).

Read her email below and ask your legislators for their views on "reasonable" infringements on Americans' right to defend themselves. (Find your legislators [here](#).) And let us know what you hear. We'll be watching the Second Amendment issue closely when the 2017 legislative session starts, and we'd appreciate hearing about any of your interactions with state lawmakers.

Dave

-----Original Message-----

From: Landess, Ashley <alandess@scpolicycouncil.org>
Date: Tues, Nov 15, 2016 at 4:13 PM
Subject: read this and let's discuss
To: SCPC staff <allusers@scpolicycouncil.org>

All,

Take a look at this piece from Politico.

<http://www.politico.com/story/2016/07/democrats-gun-messaging-225722>

I missed it when it came out in July, but it strikes me as even more significant now. The piece explores the strategy behind the concerted, organized movement to enact gun control across the country.

It leaves no doubt that Second Amendment opponents are deliberately changing their messaging to make gun control seem “reasonable” and “common sense.” That is a deliberate strategy, and so is twisting our message to suit their purpose – which they openly admit to.

South Carolinians don’t believe they have to worry about gun control in our state. They may have been justified in that attitude a decade ago, but the situation has completely changed. In fact, the incremental erosion of the Second Amendment is already happening in in South Carolina.

My thought: Why don't we forward this to our members so they can see for themselves that gun control advocates are deliberately softening their language and manipulating emotions to appear “sensible,” and branding opposition as unreasonable and even dangerous.

We know this strategy is fully engaged in South Carolina – not only are aggressive bills being introduced in greater numbers, but a bi-partisan committee of SC senators held hearings all over the state.

Our own lawmakers are using the very tactics created by some of the country’s most left-leaning organizations. The truth isn’t on their side – the evidence just isn't there. There is no "epidemic" of gun violence, and I suspect many of them know it. But that isn’t stopping them from trying to implement what they believe is the first major step toward a full ban – the expanded background checks.

We have the advantage if we'll use it. Americans do not like the erosion of their rights, and have always expected public officials to do their duty to defend those rights even in the face of unreasonable partisans. **Our job is to remind South Carolinians there’s nothing courageous about taking the rights of the law-abiding majority to avoid the discomfort of the angry few. In fact, that’s precisely when they’re supposed to defend them most vigorously.**

Our message is simple: we must not allow the erosion of any constitutional right except in the very rare and narrow instance in which there is clear, compelling evidence that another right is at greater risk. In other words, the threat of our lives is not even close to threatened by the legal ownership of guns by law-abiding citizens. Rather, evidence is very much to the contrary: we’re much more vulnerable when we cannot defend our lives ourselves.

We don’t have to defend our rights to politicians. Rather, they must be forced to defend any attempt to take them away from us. That’s what we need to remind South Carolinians to do – every time, all the time and for every right we have as Americans. This movement against the Second Amendment is smart and focused. To some degree, it's proving successful – the discussion of “reasonable, rational” gun control is happening even among so-called conservatives in the General Assembly.

I don't think they're winning, though. Our job is to make sure all citizens are equipped with the truth – real facts in the right context – and right message to

send to the politicians, both in Columbia and all the way in DC: You won't get away with taking our Second Amendment right or any other right – not in South Carolina.

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