

How to Talk About Gun Laws to People Who Love Guns



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Takeaways

In talking about guns, policymakers should reassert support and respect for the Second Amendment, note that rights come with responsibilities, and argue that policies that keep guns out of the wrong hands are the most effective protection for gun owner rights.

The Message:

Gun Rights and Responsibilities

More than 40% of the American electorate lives in a home with a gun. Today, there are approximately 300 million guns in private hands, and most people who own guns do so for protection or sport. Moreover, the Supreme Court has made clear that the Constitution confers an individual right to own a gun, but that this right allows for strong gun laws. And most gun owners support laws to keep guns out of the wrong hands. In talking to gun owners about gun laws, policymakers should:

- **Declare Support for Gun Rights**

I take a back seat to no one in my support for the Second Amendment. The Second Amendment protects an individual right to own a firearm. The Supreme Court has settled that question—the case is closed.

- **Assert that Rights Come with Responsibilities**

The right to own a gun does not extend to terrorists, criminals, or the severely mentally ill, and the Second Amendment does not apply to weapons designed for the battlefield.

- **Argue that Sensible Gun Laws are the Best Protection for Gun Rights**

No law-abiding person's gun rights are infringed by a two-minute background check or by rules designed to keep guns out of the black market and off the street. Laws that keep guns out of the hands of criminals and enable law enforcement to prevent and prosecute gun crime are the best protection we have, not only for the safety of our families and communities, but also for our constitutional rights.

People who abuse the Second Amendment—those who run dirty gun dealerships, buy guns illegally, sell guns without background checks to criminals, traffic firearms across state lines—imperil gun rights for everyone. It's time to close the loopholes in our laws and shore up our background check system so these criminals can be stopped.

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