



John Kerry`s Voting Record on Second Amendment and Hunting Issues

Thursday, July 29, 2004

His voting record makes John F. Kerry the most anti-gun Presidential nominee in United States history. Since his election to the U.S. Senate in 1984, John F. Kerry has cast 59 votes (NRA did not score 4 of them) on issues involving firearms rights and hunting. These votes included votes to ban guns, to impose waiting periods on gun buyers, to financially punish gun manufactures for operating a legal business and to restrict the free speech of Second Amendment advocates.

In addition, Kerry currently is a co-sponsor of S. 1431, which would ban all semi-automatic shotguns, all detachable-magazine semi-automatic rifles and many other guns, calling the whole lot "assault weapons."

Following are highlights of those votes that demonstrate Kerry`s unwavering record of opposition to gun owners` rights.

Overview

In a 20-year career, Kerry voted with gun owners only four times, and each of those votes comes with qualifications. He voted:

- 1) against a bill NRA opposed for final passage only after Kerry helped sabotage the bill by adding anti-gun amendments (S. 1805)
- 2) for a non-binding sense of the Senate motion that had no actual impact (S. 2521 in 2000)
- 3) for a study of "armor piecing" ammunition—a vote he made moot a few minutes later by voting for a broad ban of center-fire rifle ammunition (Votes 27 and 28 in 2004 on S. 1805)
- 4) to allow airline pilots to carry firearms (vote 210 in 2002 on HR 5005).

In all, he cast only one real vote for gun owners` rights, and it in support of a narrow group of people charged with responsibility for the safety of others.

Comparing Kerry`s votes to other well known anti-gun Senators who have served with him shows:

- 1) he voted with Ted Kennedy on all but three votes, and only one of those three had any impact—the vote to arm pilots.



Email Signup

Enter your email to receive updates.

Get

Make a c
Support

- [Volun](#)
- [Find](#)
- [Write](#)
- [Get a](#)
- [Join t](#)

Tell Another NRA Member

Use this tool to let other NRA members know about this site.

Voti

NRA Help
Vote

- [Regis](#)
- [Vote](#)
- [Absentee](#)



2) he voted with Charles Schumer, the leading anti-gun voice in the Senate, on all but one vote, and that was the non-binding sense of the Senate motion mentioned above (Senate vote 1030).

3) Kerry has a much more anti-gun record than 2000 Democrat Presidential candidate, Al Gore, Jr., who cast votes on 12 key issues before becoming part of the most anti-gun administration in history. Gore voted to protect Second Amendment rights five times on votes related to passage of the Firearms Owners' Protection Act and once to stop a semi-auto ban. Kerry opposed gun owners in each instance.

Gun Bans

Kerry has voted on nine separate occasions on issues directly related to banning semi-auto firearms. In 1990 he voted three times to support a ban on semi-autos. He was one of only 17 to vote for Howard Metzenbaum's amendment to S. 1970, that would have banned not only a list of specific firearms but would have banned any firearms similar to those specified. On two other occasions, Kerry voted to support Dennis DeConcini-sponsored legislation to ban nine specific firearms for three years.

In 1993 Kerry voted for the Dianne Feinstein-sponsored Clinton Gun Ban and further supported the passage of that legislation in 1994 by voting to support the Omnibus Crime bill on three key votes. Finally, in 2004 he voted to reauthorize the Clinton Gun Ban.

Ammunition Ban

Kerry voted in 2004 to ban most center-fire rifle ammunition, including the most common rounds used by target shooters and hunters. Kerry voted in support of Ted Kennedy's amendment to S. 1805 that would have banned rifle ammunition capable of penetrating soft body armor. Congress has repeatedly rejected such a "performance-based" approach.

Federal Firearms Licensees (FFLs)

Kerry voted in 1985 to allow BATF to conduct unlimited warrant-less inspections of FFL holders. Well-documented and shocking BATF abuses of license holders were a primary reason the Firearms Owners' Protection Act was introduced in Congress and signed into law by President Reagan. Kerry was one of only 18 Senators to vote to allow such abuses—which liberal Democrat Congressman John Dingell called the acts of "jack-booted fascists"—to continue.

In 1993 Kerry was one of 30 Senators who supported an amendment to H.R. 2403 that would have increased the fee for a FFL by more than 37 times. The result of this amendment would have been to force many small or part-time firearms dealers out of business. This would have had a significant impact on both the availability and price of firearms particularly in rural areas of the nation.

Campaign Finance Reform

Kerry consistently supported passage of campaign finance "reform" legislation. NRA consistently and vigorously opposed such efforts to prohibit the exercise of free speech during the crucial weeks leading up to elections. Kerry voted in 1996 and 1997 for legislation that failed to win final passage and voted in 2001 for S. 27, the bill that became law.

When NRA announced it was considering acquiring a television or radio outlet and seeking the same exemption from campaign finance rules that news organizations have, Kerry sent the Federal Election Commission a letter urging the commission "to prevent the NRA from hijacking America's airwaves with the gun lobby's money." (Associated Press, Dec. 9, 2003)

Civilian Marksmanship Program

Kerry voted twice to eliminate the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP). In 1993 he voted in support of an amendment to eliminate its funding, and in 1996 he voted to abolish the CMP's successor, the Corporation for the Promotion of Rifle Practice and Safety, a federally chartered civilian marksmanship program.

Mandatory Storage

Kerry twice supported legislation that would have mandated the inclusion of trigger locks with any handgun sale. In 1998 he supported the Barbara Boxer amendment to S. 2260, and in 1999 he voted for the Herb Kohl amendment to S. 254. Both required that trigger locks be included with all handgun sales. In 1998 he voted against Larry Craig's amendment to S. 2260 that would have recognized that gun locks are not the only method to safely store a firearm by simply requiring the availability of gun locks, but would have left the choice of the best safety method to the individual gun buyer.

Gun Shows

On a number of different occasions, Kerry has voted to regulate gun shows by imposing a background check requirement on private gun owners that goes beyond the requirements for FFL holders operating in a gun store. Kerry twice voted in 1999 to require that all gun sales at a gun show go through an FFL holder. That legislation would have allowed authorities up to three days to conduct the checks, threatening the operation of gun shows, which are typically two-day, weekend events. Kerry placed two additional votes supporting passage of this legislation.

In 2004 Kerry again voted to regulate gun shows by mandating background checks on guns sold by private individuals at gun shows, again allowing up to three days to complete the check.

Hunting

Kerry voted in 1994 to close off 1,181,000 acres of California's Mojave Desert to hunting. He supported a proposal to designate tens of thousands of acres of the Mojave desert as a national park, where hunting would have been prohibited. He voted against a proposal to make the area a national monument which would have allowed hunting to continue.

Kerry, unlike 56 of his fellow Senators, is not a member of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus. With more than 300 members in the House and Senate, it is one of the largest Caucuses in the U.S. Congress, and is "open to Congressmen and Senators who are sportsmen or who support the concept of sustained use and wildlife management, even if they do not themselves take to the fields and waters to fish, hunt or trap."

Firearms Owners' Protection Act (FOPA)

In 1985 Kerry was one of only 26 Senators to support a Kennedy amendment to FOPA to continue the ban on the interstate sale of handguns to law-abiding Americans. He also was one of only 15 Senators who voted against final passage of FOPA, a bill designed to specifically protect the constitutional rights of law-abiding gun owners by removing the ban on interstate sales of rifles and shotguns, curtail BATF abuses of FFL holders by limiting the number of routine inspections and other provisions. Magazine Bans,

On two occasions, first in 1998 and again in 1999, Kerry voted to ban the importation of high-capacity magazines. On both occasions he voted to support a Feinstein amendment to block importation of magazines manufactured before the ban on these magazines was implemented in 1994. He also voted for the 1993 Crime Bill, that included the ban on these magazines.

Gun Law Prosecutions and Penalties

Kerry voted in 1999 against an amendment to the Juvenile Justice bill that called for increased mandatory minimum and maximum penalties for the illegal transfer or use of a firearm. Instead of supporting this legislation that focused its impact on criminals, Kerry supported broad regulation of law-abiding gun buyers.

In contrast, the year before Kerry voted to impose excessive penalties of a year in prison and a \$10,000 fine on an adult if a juvenile gains access to their firearm, even by theft, and then merely displays it in a public place.

Reckless Lawsuits

In 2004 Kerry returned from the campaign trail for the first time that year to cast votes against gun owners and to argue against the passage of the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act. This bill would have protected gun manufacturers from the politically motivated lawsuits that are being filed with the intent of bankrupting the industry. The bill was defeated after it was amended to include renewal of the Clinton Gun Ban and gun show regulation, both supported by Kerry.

In 2000 Kerry was one of only 29 Senators to vote to prohibit gun manufactures from discharging debts created by the reckless lawsuits filed by municipalities. This move was a clear attack on the viability of gun manufacturers, designed to punish them even as they continued to win in court.

Waiting Periods

Kerry has consistently supported the imposition of a waiting period on gun purchases. In 1985 he voted to require a national 14-day wait. In 1991 he voted for a 7-day wait, and in 1992 he supported a 5- day wait. He also voted in 1993 to specifically allow the continuation of state waiting periods after the advent of the National Instant Check system (NICS), and he voted to strike the sunset of the federal waiting period after implementation of NICS. In all, Kerry voted 11 times to force law-abiding citizens to wait to exercise their Second Amendment rights..

Other Issues

- Kerry denounced NRA` s successful efforts to eliminate monies being spent by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to advance gun control policies. (Boston Herald, Aug. 14, 1996)
- Voted against the confirmation of John Ashcroft.
- Voted to spend \$15 million intended for housing programs on ineffective gun buy-back programs.
- Voted to commend the Million Mom March in 2000 for their march on Washington that included calls for gun owner licensing, gun registration and other restrictions on law-abiding gun owners.

Archive

John Kerry`s Anti-Gun Record  [Read](#)

Copyright © 2004, National Rifle Association of America, Political Victory Fund
This may be reproduced. It may not be reproduced for commercial purposes.
Paid for by the NRA Political Victory Fund and not authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee.

11250 Waples Mill Road | Fairfax, Virginia 22030 | 800-392-8683 | [Contact Us](#) | [Privacy & Security Policy](#)

