

THE Gun Owners

44 YEARS OF NO COMPROMISE – 1976-2020

GOA Racks Up Legal Victories from Coast to Coast During Pandemic

by Erich Pratt

Gun Owners of America has remained on the frontlines, fighting for your rights around the country.

And because of the support of GOA members, we have experienced some tremendous victories.

Beginning in March, several states and localities around the nation have used the COVID-19 pandemic to order gun stores closed.

So our legal team drafted a very important letter, which was sent by Gun Owners of America and Gun Owners of California to the Trump administration in late March. The letter urged officials to revise their official policy regarding what constitutes an essential business during a state of emergency.

Thankfully, the administration responded favorably and issued a revised guidance that now classifies gun stores as “essential.” As reported by *The Washington Times*:

“That [revised] guidance came on the heels of a Friday letter to the Trump administration from the Gun Owners of America (GOA) and Gun Owners of California (GOC), which requested such classification.”

— *The Washington Times*, March 28, 2020

This revised classification from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has created ripple effects from coast to coast.

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GOA Successfully Petitions White House to Protect Gun Stores/Ranges



In March, Gun Owners of America and Gun Owners of California successfully petitioned the Trump Administration to declare gun stores and ranges as “essential” businesses. Pictured here is GOA Chairman Tim Macy (right) with Donald Trump, Jr.

Trump Administration to Allow Firearms on Over 11 Million Acres of Public Land

by Michael Hammond

“The real gun lobby in Washington is the GOA.”

— **Senator Tom Coburn**
August 14, 2009

During the 111th Congress and under President Barack Obama, GOA was successful in working with Oklahoma Senator Coburn to add a pro-gun “national parks” amendment, S. Amdt.

1068, to the *Credit Card Act of 2009*.

The amendment recognized your right to defend yourself and your family by carrying a gun in national parks — to the same extent that you could do so in the state where the park was located.

Contrary to anti-gun predictions, Yellowstone did not become a “Boot Hill” burial ground because honest Americans could defend themselves.

However, Barack Obama, still lick-

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GOA Achieving Legal Victories from Coast to Coast

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In Los Angeles County, the sheriff did an about-face and is allowing gun stores to remain open.

In New Jersey, the Governor reversed himself and declared that gun stores can remain open.

In other states, GOA also used the DHS reclassification to pressure localities to retract their earlier opposition to gun rights.

For example, when several counties and cities in North Carolina ordered gun stores to close, GOA teamed up with Grass Roots North Carolina (GRNC) to send half a dozen letters threatening legal action.

One by one, each jurisdiction recanted by raising the white flag.

The mayor of Greensboro reversed herself and allowed gun stores within city limits to remain open, after being contacted by GOA and GRNC. The Mayor had previously told the media that gun stores were not “essential” businesses.

Likewise, Wake County, North Carolina, reopened its gun stores after a similar legal opinion sent by GOA and GRNC. The sheriff in that same county began reissuing permits after receiving a legal “shot across the bow” from Gun Owners of America.

And when all was said and done, gun grabbers were furious. In one of the more comical articles, the headlines blared:

“Gun Nuts Demanded That Durham Declare Gun Shops Essential. Durham Gave In.”

Well, if you guessed that GOA and, by inference, that YOU are the aforementioned “gun nuts,” then advance to the head of the class!

Reading the article, one senses the disgust of the author for GOA and GRNC.

“GOA teamed up with Grass Roots North Carolina to send half a dozen letters threatening legal action. One by one, each jurisdiction recanted by raising the white flag.”

And the article ends with this lament by the mayor of Durham, Steve Schewel, who is a virulent anti-gunner:

“Our lawyers said we couldn’t win,” Schewel [said]. “And not only that they were gonna win, but that we were gonna have to pay [GOA and GRNC’s] legal fees.”

“And so that’s why we made the decision [to reopen gun stores] — which is, you know, awful. Gun stores are not essential. In fact, they are damaging. It’s terrible to be forced into this position.”

Again, GOA is able to take on cases like these because of our members’ generous donations. And we are very grateful for our exceptional legal team that was able to achieve multiple victories in March and April.

GOA Takes the Fight into Repressive States

Even while there were many exciting legal victories around the country, officials in several repressive states dug in their heels.

This has prompted GOA’s legal team to become active in several anti-gun states, including Massachusetts, New Mexico, New York and Washington.

In Virginia, GOA teamed up with the Virginia Citizens Defense League (VCDL) to win a big victory to reopen indoor

GOA Wins Court Case in Virginia



GOA’s Erich Pratt (left) and Philip van Cleave of VCDL helped bring the successful challenge to the Virginia Governor’s order that shut down gun ranges.

gun ranges across the Commonwealth.

Anti-gun Gov. Ralph Northam deemed indoor gun ranges nonessential and ordered them closed.

When GOA and VCDL brought suit to challenge that decision, Northam attempted to remove the suit out of state court and have it considered by a federal court.

That tactic backfired, however, when the federal judge sided with GOA/VCDL, and sent the case back to state court. The complaint was subsequently heard by a state judge, who also ruled in favor of GOA and VCDL, handing Governor Northam back-to-back losses in April.

GOA will continue to update readers on progress with our legal cases. To get the latest information, make sure to sign up for free email alerts at gunowners.me/FreeActionAlerts (*case sensitive*).

GOA grassroots made a huge difference in regaining freedom in Pennsylvania

After some sheriffs stopped issuing Licenses to Carry Firearms (LTCF) in March, GOA sprang into action.

I coauthored a letter with our Pennsylvania State Director, Dr. Val Finnell, and sent it to every sheriff in the state.

We explained to them that, by law, they are required to process these applications. Not only that, Dr. Finnell outlined specific measures that other sheriffs were taking to reduce the risk of infection.

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“GOA is even worse than bad.”

-Former Senate Minority Leader
Harry Reid, Nevada

“Gun Owners of America... has taken a hard line against any new gun controls.”

- Wall Street Journal

“The best Second Amendment defense organization in the country is Gun Owners of America.”

- Joseph Farah, founder of
WorldNetDaily.com



Gun Owners of America



▲ The Coronavirus Pandemic Highlights the Dangers of Background Checks

With a surge in gun buying, many experienced firsthand why GOA has warned about the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) since its inception. Many gun buyers experienced delays when trying to purchase weapons — with firearms transfers being delayed up to thirty days. GOA's Alan Rice joined America's Voice to discuss this and more. To watch this interview, visit: gunowners.me/AlanOnAV (case sensitive).



▲ Recognizing Those Who Put in Pro-Gun Work

Gun Owners Foundation (GOF), a sister organization to GOA, is proud to support the efforts of Maj Toure, who takes a "no compromise," Second Amendment message to urban centers. With GOF's support of \$25,000, Maj is bringing this message to the urban areas of several cities around the country. Pictured here is Maj (left) and GOA's John Velleco, presenting the check at the kick-off event in Annapolis, Maryland.



▲ Hundreds of GOA Activists Testify for Constitutional Carry

GOA works tirelessly for pro-gun legislation like Constitutional Carry and repealing gun-free zones. At the Texas Senate State Affairs Committee interim hearing on gun rights, hundreds of GOA activists flooded the state capitol to advocate for these pro-gun measures in February. In fact, the committee's chairman, Sen. Bryan Hughes, was very receptive to our message. Pictured to the left is GOA's Texas Director Rachel Malone, who helped rally others to testify that day.



▲ GOA Shows the Way for Second Amendment Sanctuaries

GOA is the leading national organization advocating for Second Amendment Sanctuary Ordinances (SASOs). As of late April, more than 1,100 localities have adopted measures supporting the right to keep and bear arms. Pictured here is GOA's Jordan Stein (left) with North Carolina's Randolph County Commissioner Kenny Kidd. GOA worked closely with Commissioner Kidd to pass a SASO in Randolph County. If you'd like to bring a SASO to your community, please visit gunownersaction.org/SASO.

America on the Frontlines



◀ Pro-Gun Students Lead Charge for Campus Carry

GOA's Antonia Okafor (right) leads several students to lobby state legislators in favor of Campus Carry legislation at the Tennessee Lobby Day in March. Across the country, many college campuses are gun-free zones, prohibiting professors, staff and students from carrying firearms. GOA seeks not only to change the hearts and minds of those on campus, but also to end the dangerous policy of gun-free school zones.



GOA Equips New Gun Owners with Gun Safety During Pandemic ▶

Due to uncertainty surrounding the Coronavirus, gun sales around the country have soared. In March, over 3.7 million background checks were completed, shattering the previous record for background checks performed in one month. In response to these numerous new gun owners, GOA released a pistol safety video, demonstrating how to safely handle a semi-automatic pistol. To view this video, please visit: gunowners.me/PistolSafety (case sensitive).



▲ Hero Stephen Willeford Supporting the 2A Sanctuary Movement

While on tour in Pennsylvania, the hero of Sutherland Springs, Texas — Stephen Willeford — attended an event in Blair County to voice his support for the adoption of a Second Amendment Sanctuary Ordinance. Willeford is pictured with GOA's PA Director Dr. Val Finnell (center) and Lois Kaneshiki (left).

◀ Rallying Grassroots Gun Owners

GOA's Jordan Stein addressed grassroots gun owners at a rally in Fauquier county, Virginia in February. He shared the stage with GOA's Virginia Director John Crump, Maj Toure, Congressman Denver Riggleman, State Senator Amanda Chase and other pro-gun activists.

GOA Achieving Legal Victories from Coast to Coast

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But bottom line: The letter served as a reminder to these government officials that it is imperative they carry out the letter of the law and issue concealed weapons permits — even during the Coronavirus pandemic.

GOA followed this letter with a grassroots action alert in the

GOA Working with Sheriffs to Reinstate Concealed Carry



GOA's Pennsylvania Director Dr. Val Finnell (right) with Sheriff Robert Fyock of Indiana County.

Keystone state. Our activists deluged their sheriffs, demanding that they get back to work and preserve their constituents' constitutional rights protected by the Second Amendment.

Well, the sheriffs were amazed at the outpouring of support for the Second Amendment. Westmoreland County Sheriff James Albert said: "Wow, we got a lot of blowback" from residents of the county. And guess what? Sheriff Albert has started reissuing permits, and so have many other sheriffs as well.

This shows the power of grassroots activists in Pennsylvania, as they have made a tremendous difference in their state! GOA is grateful that many Sheriffs have now resumed the process of issuing permits to their county residents.

GOA Pushing Constitutional Carry



In March, Gun Owners of America and the Tennessee Firearms Association held the state's first annual Lobby Day. Pictured here is GOA's Director of State and Local Affairs Matthew Patterson speaking in front of gun activists in favor of Constitutional Carry.

Constitutional Carry would fix the COVID-19 fears in Pennsylvania

Tragically, this snafu in the Keystone State is the inevitable result of the government forcing good people to get permission from local officials before exercising their rights.

Whenever our natural rights are infringed, you can expect there to be negative repercussions.

But in 17 states, honest citizens can carry firearms without permission and without a permit.

Permitless carry means no delays ... no infringements ... and no denials of people's God-given rights.

All of which underscores the need for passing Constitutional Carry all across the nation.

Again, we want to thank you for your support. That keeps Gun Owners of America on the frontlines, fighting for your rights which are protected by the Second Amendment.

We can't do all this without your help! ■

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gunowners.org/legacy

Trump Administration to Allow Firearms on Over 11 Million Acres of Public Land

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ing his wounds, refused to extend the amendment's protections to Corps of Engineer lands, as the authors of the amendment intended.

For the last nine years, this dichotomy has persisted. National Park Service concedes that the GOA-supported amendment forces them to recognize the Second Amendment. The Army Corps of Engineers has not.

Until now.

On April 13, Trump's Army Corps of Engineers published a request for comment on its proposed regulation to bring its land in sync with the federal park



GOA's John Velleco (right) presents a "Friend of the 2A" award to Senator Tom Coburn in 2009.

provisions of GOA's amendment.

Thus, you would be able to possess and use firearms on these lands to the same extent as the state in which the land is located.

In many parts of the country, the Army Corps of Engineers has jurisdiction over huge parcels of land — managing over 400 lake and river projects in 43 states. It makes no sense that your right to protect yourself differs from one part of a state to another merely because you cross an arbitrary line. Furthermore, the logistics of such a rule have been virtually impossible to comply with.

States have, since 2009, changed their laws on the assumption that all federal lands have adopted rules similar to those in national parks.

The proposed rule should become final at some point after June 12, 2020.

Stay tuned for further updates. ■

GOA Celebrates McDonald's Ten-Year Anniversary

Ten years ago this June, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down a landmark decision in *McDonald v. Chicago* (2010).

The Supreme Court built upon the earlier *Heller* decision by recognizing the Second Amendment protects a fundamental right which cannot be denied by states and localities.

And in doing so, the Court used the Fourteenth and Second Amendments to strike down Chicago's ban on handguns.

The *Heller* case was decided in 2008. In that landmark Supreme Court case, GOA's legal analysis offered a uniquely principled perspective in defending the right to keep and bear arms.

After examining all the briefs in the case, the editors at *USA Today* argued that GOA's brief was the only one employing a no-compromise analysis based upon the "shall not be infringed"



Otis McDonald (left) appeared in 2013 with GOA's then-Exec. Dir. Larry Pratt on Fox News.

language in the Second Amendment.

In fact, the legal theory in the GOA brief is the one which actually won out. In *Heller*, the Court adopted a text/history test for the Second Amendment — which is exactly what the GOA brief had argued.

Not only did the brief state that the amendment itself "establishes the standard of review," it also criticized other briefs which tried to defend the Second Amendment using a "reasonable" standard.

Justice Antonin Scalia's opinion in

Heller also stated that the Second Amendment is about fighting tyranny, which the GOA brief discussed heavily.

As in *Heller*, GOA was pleased to see that the Court in *McDonald* rejected "judicial interest balancing" in favor of a textual and historical analysis of the Second Amendment.

GOA was very pleased to see that the contents of its brief especially resonated with Justice Clarence Thomas, who wrote a very powerful concurring opinion for the majority.⁽¹⁾

In fact, it was the Thomas opinion that was later quoted heavily by a Wisconsin judge who specifically used Thomas' reasoning in ruling that the state ban on concealed carry was unconstitutional.⁽²⁾

Illinois' ban on concealed carry would fall roughly three years later.⁽³⁾

So the *McDonald* case has already resulted in gun control laws being struck down — not only in Illinois, but in the rest of the country, as well. ■

(1) "GOA and GOF Praise Gun Rights Victory in the *McDonald* Case," June 29, 2010, See: <https://gunowners.org/fs1003/>

(2) "The Year in Review: GOA Members Force Improvements in Gun Laws," December 20, 2010. See <https://gunowners.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/n20101220.pdf>

(3) *Moore v. Madigan*, 702 F.3d 933 (7th Cir. 2012).



GOA Activists Send Over 1 Million Letters to the Senate, Help Nix Anti-Gun Agenda

by Erich Pratt

Never let a crisis go to waste. How many times have you seen politicians use that mantra as their opportunity for mischief?

Well, the current Coronavirus pandemic is no exception.

As a condition of passing one of the recent COVID-19 relief packages, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) were looking to sneak their liberal wish-list into the legislation.

Many items were concerning to conservative constitutionalists, generally.

Democrat Representative James Clyburn of South Carolina said the COVID-19 relief bills presented “a tremendous opportunity to restructure things to fit our vision.”

Of specific concern to gun owners was an anti-gun agenda that could have included Red Flag gun confiscation orders, mail-in ballots, and more.

So Gun Owners of America sprang into action.

GOA rallied its grassroots activists and urged Senate Republicans to oppose any and all gun control. And gun owners responded in huge numbers:

“Just on the GOA side,” said YouTuber Jared Yanis of *Guns & Gadgets*, “over one million emails were generated through their [action center]. Over one million were sent out. And according to GOA, it’s working.”

Indeed, it always helps when gun owners take action to bolster the resolve of their elected representatives.

Because to date, Senate Republicans have rebuffed all

efforts to include gun control or mail-in ballots in the COVID-19 spending bills.

It’s no secret that gun grabbers desperately want to force all states to adopt mail-in ballots — a system that is already rife with fraud and which disproportionately benefits anti-gun Democrats.

They have already tried to use other relief packages to change the “playing field” so that anti-gun Democrats will be elected in perpetuity.

If you’re familiar with the term “ballot harvesting,” this is precisely how anti-gun Democrats were able to take control of the Congress during the last election and put Pelosi in charge.

Mail-in ballots facilitate fraudulent voting, and as already stated, these always benefit the anti-gun side.

But thanks in large part to the encouragement from GOA activists, we are glad to report that, thus far, the COVID-19 relief bills have been free of any of the new gun control restrictions that anti-gun Democrats were seeking.

In fact, there’s even some pro-gun language that passed in the fourth COVID-19 relief bill. As stated by GOA’s Legal Counsel Michael Hammond, who analyzed the massive bill:

Language in this legislation makes the Dickey Amendment applicable to all of the spending in the bill — thus, prohibiting any executive agency from using the bill’s half a trillion dollar pot to advocate for gun control.

Undoubtedly, there will be more Coronavirus relief packages. So we can’t let our guard down.

GOA will continue to monitor legislation in Congress and mobilize grassroots gun owners if there are any threats to our rights protected under the Second Amendment. ■



Jared of *Guns & Gadgets* reported how GOA activists bombarded Senators with more than ONE MILLION emails in April.

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