



NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION *of* AMERICA

# THE PATRIOT NEWSLETTER

ENDOWMENT • PATRON • BENEFACTOR

## More Than Two Million Americans are Now First-Time Gun Owners

by Garrett O'Leary

The first half of 2020 saw a record amount of firearm sales, with roughly 40% reportedly being first-time firearm owners, according to new data from the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF).

“May’s adjusted NICS background check figures are the highest on record for any May since record keeping began on point-of-sale instant background checks. Americans are being confronted with decisions regarding their personal safety and are voting with their wallets on their right to keep and bear arms. Our recent survey of firearm retailers shows us that 40 percent of these gun buyers are buying a firearm for the first time. Of those first-time gun owners, 40 percent are women and these buyers are overwhelmingly purchasing handguns for personal protection,” said the NSSF in a statement.

The NSSF analyzes National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) numbers and adjusts the data to more accurately reflect the number of firearms being purchased by removing background checks that are unlikely to represent those being done for the purpose of sales.

The data also indicates that handguns were the primary firearm of choice, “outpacing the second-most purchased firearm, shotguns, by a 2 to 1 margin,” according to the



NSSF. This all equates to roughly 2.5 million new gun owners in a relatively short amount of time.

In fact, just a couple of months ago, firearm sales numbers spiked so much that the NICS system was effectively overwhelmed by the sheer number of background checks that needed to be processed.

Many in the mainstream media have reported these numbers with an ominous tone, as if these new buyers are panicked and irrational. Actually, the decision to defend oneself in the face of uncertainty is a natural and reasonable reaction.

This increase in sales was able to occur, in part, thanks to the NRA’s recent efforts to make sure that firearm dealers were included as essential businesses during this pandemic, as well as past efforts to ensure the Second Amendment was protected during any declared state of emergency.

## Freedom Is An Issue That Stirs Voters

by Charles C.W. Cooke

The American gun-control movement has long insisted that public opinion is firmly on its side, and that its aims are thwarted not by their political unpopularity but by the obstinacy of a handful of over-powerful players. What happened in Virginia at the beginning of this year

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# In This Crucial Election Battle, Your Patriot Life Leadership is More Important Than Ever

*That's Why I've Reserved a Special Gift and a Deep Discount in Your Name*

by Wayne LaPierre,  
Executive Vice President

As a Patriot Life Member, you're a tried-and-true leader in freedom's cause.

And as we face the biggest threat to the Second Amendment in American history, I've never needed your leadership more than I do right now.

Anti-gun radicals all across America are fighting to outlaw ammunition sales, impose sky-high taxes on

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guns and ammunition, and ban millions of commonly-owned firearms.

And, if we lose this year's critical General Election, you and I could be facing the total destruction of our gun rights once and for all.

That's why I'm asking you to plant your personal flag against freedom's enemies today – by making a special contribution to NRA or upgrading to the next level of Patriot Life Membership.

In fact, if you can take this critical step by July 24th, I'm ready to offer you both an extraordinary discount and a special commemorative gift to honor your decision and your unmatched leadership as a Patriot Life Member.

If you're an Endowment member, you can upgrade to a Patron Life Membership for just \$250 (*normally \$1,500*). Plus, you'll receive our exclusive NRA Black Mesa Elite Backpack (*a \$99.00 value*) as an extra way for me to say thanks.

If you're a Patron member, you can upgrade to a Benefactor Life Membership – NRA's highest level of membership – for just \$250 (*normally \$1,500*). And I'll



send your Black Mesa Elite Backpack with gratitude from all of us at NRA.

Or, if you're already a Benefactor Life Member and continue your leadership with a special NRA contribution by July 24th, I'll make sure you receive an extraordinary gift to honor your generous support.

Please understand that these discounts will only be available for a limited time and *they're unlikely to ever be offered again*.

So don't miss out on this opportunity to lock in your deep discount and help NRA win the make-or-break fight we're facing right now. Visit our special website [NRA2020.org](http://NRA2020.org) or call us toll-free at 833-NRA-2020.

Believe me, I recognize better than anyone the extraordinary sacrifices you've made to protect and defend our Right to Keep and Bear Arms.

But with the biggest election battle of our lives staring us straight in the face, I've never needed your continued



**YOUR DISCOUNT AND GIFT OFFER  
EXPIRES JULY 24, 2020**

leadership as a Patriot Life Member more than I do right now.

Thank you in advance for your generous support as we fight arm-in-arm to save our guns and our freedom in this crucial election battle.

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# More Women are Finding that Gun Ownership is Empowering

by Alan Peterson

This year's months of March, April and May brought us face-to-face with unprecedented events related to the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, applications for concealed-carry permits have soared, as have gun sales.

In these uncertain times, women are increasingly taking responsibility for their own safety. To serve this growing community, the NRA launched [NRAWomen.com](http://NRAWomen.com) this spring.

“The momentum created by the millions of women who have chosen to exercise their Second Amendment rights, particularly for reasons of personal protection, has evolved into the women’s movement of our time. The most-important facet of this movement is that it welcomes all

women, regardless of their demographics, into a unique freedom-loving sisterhood,” says Ann Smith, editor in chief of NRA Women.

To meet some of these women who are new to gun ownership, I went to an event run by The Well Armed

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## *Freedom Is An Issue That Stirs Voters* Continued from Page 1

demonstrates once again that this claim of public support is flatly untrue.

By now, we are well-accustomed to hearing that “Republicans!” or “the NRA!” or “extremists!” have hijacked our elections and set about destroying the prospect of meaningful “gun-safety” reforms in the United States. But, if that is true, what should we make of Virginia’s failure to push through the gun ban that the governor and others had so confidently promised?

Certainly, one cannot blame the Republican party, which fared so poorly during the last set of state elections that the Democrats were left in charge of every branch of state government. Nor can one blame the country’s pro-Second Amendment advocacy groups, which, as usual, were outspent in the state. And one cannot claim with a straight face that the Democrats did not care enough about the issue, given that they campaigned on imposing new restrictions, promised after they won that they would impose new restrictions and, at the first opportunity, tried to impose new restrictions. Could it be, perhaps, that when push comes to shove, limiting the right to keep and bear arms is a losing proposition in America?

The scale of the reaction in Virginia suggests the answer is “yes.” Gov. Ralph Northam and the Democratic legislature insisted they were going to prohibit the sale of the most-commonly owned rifle in the United States and ban and confiscate standard-capacity magazines. In return, the people of Virginia insisted they were going to do no such thing. Six cities and 91 out of the state’s 95 counties passed resolutions declaring themselves Second Amendment “sanctuaries.” In Richmond, NRA-ILA organized lobby day, where more than 2,000 members met with lawmakers to voice their opposition to new gun laws. A week later a

rally against the proposals drew more than 22,000 peaceful protesters. And the letters and phone calls flew in by the day. Eventually, the legislature backed down—first by pretending to water down the proposals in a number of entirely meaningless and wholly unconvincing ways, and then by pulling bills before they got out of committee.

At the heart of the gun-control movement lies a terrible misconception as to who American gunowners are—a misconception that explains a great deal about our debates over the Second Amendment and helps to explicate what happened in Virginia. In the gun-control activists’ imagination, meaningful support for the right to keep and bear arms is a fringe phenomenon, present only among society’s oddballs and outliers, and gun owners are a small, rural, homogeneous and dangerous minority.

In reality, that support exists across the spectrum. Why? Because gun owners are half of the country. Electricians are gun owners. Bankers are gun owners. Teachers are gun owners. Stay-at-home moms are gun owners. Your neighbors are gun owners. They may be quiet about it most of the time, but, when the government tries to strip them of their elementary rights in the name of protecting them, they will break that silence in an instant and stand up to say “no.” In Virginia, it looked for a while as if all the chips had fallen in the wrong place. For the first time in decades, the Democrat Party not only controlled the entire State government, but it seemed determined to use its power to infringe upon the Second Amendment. The game was up, we were told.

And then, it lost its central attempt at a gun ban and possible confiscation.

What happened? You happened. I happened. “We the People” happened. Not today, Virginia.

Woman (TAW).

“I think because of the virus, the majority of women that talk to me are saying they just feel unsafe and insecure. They are looking for a way to feel more comfortable. Their sense of security has been undermined,” said Debby Jackson, a chapter leader of TAW.

Jackson said she is seeing a huge increase in phone, email and website traffic. “A lot of women are curious and want to know more.”

Cindy (not her real name) was one of those curious women who was looking at buying a gun prior to the outbreak of recent events. She told me: “I’ve always really just seen responsible gun ownership as the great equalizer. As a single woman living on my own who likes adventure, I like to be on my own but be safe. Having a tool to protect me and people I’m with in the unlikely event that something bad happens just seemed like a good way to have peace of mind.”

“I was bracing myself for the worst; sickness, economic collapse, international turmoil—I didn’t want to be in a situation where I couldn’t buy a gun, being single and alone,” said Cindy.

Another leader with The Well Armed Woman, Alison Sunderland, says she has seen many women in Cindy’s position. “This pandemic is bringing home the idea of how fragile society is,” said Sunderland.

The interest in firearms from women seems to cross all demographics—experienced, first-timers, mothers, young women and the not-so-young.

I met Janet (also not her real name), who is 82 years old. With encouragement from her daughters, she decided to give shooting a try. She went with them to a meeting with The Well Armed Woman community. “When I first started, I didn’t know anything about it. TAW helped me learn to safely handle a gun. Each time I got more confident and got a little bit better.”

Women are sometimes intimidated by guns and gun culture. Husbands, boyfriends and other well-meaning males may not provide the support necessary for women to find success with guns. According to Sunderland: “Some women have spent a lifetime hearing guns are bad. Sometimes they feel men might want to show off. Some chafe under a man’s training. It’s nice to see skilled and experienced women in the training/mentor role.”

Janet agrees, “Being with other women has made it easier. I wouldn’t mind shooting with men, but I enjoy the women’s group.”

The experience of buying a gun can be as daunting as that first time shooting. Janet said, “I tried several guns and couldn’t work them. But I could work the .22, so I bought one.”

Cindy recommended finding someone with experience to



help in the buying process. “I did online research and then went to try them out by holding lots of different models. Talking with someone who knows what they are talking about was the most helpful.”

The real test is shooting the gun and finding out what is comfortable. “After practicing, I’m really excited. I want to go through some more rigorous courses. I plan to do a concealed-carry course as soon as the lockdown recedes,” said Cindy.

For TAW, Jackson fills the role of an experienced, knowledgeable mentor. “I took an NRA class and then got with The Well Armed Woman, and it just snowballed and became so much fun. I realized there were all these women who needed this. So, I got my FFL so I could help women choose a gun, order it and get the best price,” said Jackson.

“I went camping this weekend and was really glad I had [my gun],” said Cindy. “A friend I was with knew that I had it and she was glad. It gave us both peace of mind.”

Janet also talked about her experience and the confidence she gained: “In Texas, you have to take a shooting test for your concealed-carry permit. So, when we went to do that, I had to test with a 9mm because I didn’t have my .22 with me. The man who gave the test was surprised and pleased I did so well with a 9mm. I’d like to get a 9mm.”

Debby Jackson said, “A lot of the women I teach have been in relationships where they’ve been abused or have been through a divorce or something where they feel like they don’t want to have to depend on someone else to take care of them, especially if they have children. They come in and a lot of them are scared of guns and have little self-confidence. Then, when I see them learn the fundamentals of shooting and they find they can hit the target and it isn’t as scary as they thought, they realize, ‘Hey, I can do this!’”

“I see confidence. I see power and empowerment,” said Sunderland. “They may be very hesitant—frightened. Then, every time they pull the trigger, their heart races, and you see the confidence and the smile on their face. All of a sudden, they realize: I do have a way to defend myself and protect myself.”