



Despite Big Bloomberg Money, Veto Protects Gun Rights in Nevada

Despite a massive influx of funds from billionaire New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, an anti-gun extremist using his fortune to bankroll nationwide attacks on the Second Amendment, Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval (shown) [vetoed](#) legislation on Thursday that would have mandated “universal background checks” on gun purchases. Gun-rights activists successfully mobilized to stop the bill, inundating the Republican governor’s office with phone calls asking him to veto it.



The defeat of the controversial legislation was viewed as a major development with implications that extend far beyond Nevada’s borders. Gun-rights supporters celebrated the veto, saying it showed that out-of-touch billionaires and their [bogus polls](#) were losing the nationwide battle to strip Americans’ God-given right to keep and bear arms. Anti-gun zealots, meanwhile, howled about the embarrassing defeat and vowed to press forward with their attack on the Second Amendment.

If the S.B. 221 legislation had been signed into law, all firearm purchases would have to be approved by authorities, essentially making firearm ownership a revocable privilege rather than a constitutionally guaranteed right. Even more alarming to critics were the potential abuses of the background check system to [compile records of all gun owners and create a database](#) — historically a precursor to confiscation. Officials continue to claim that records of the check are promptly destroyed in accordance with the law, but experts are not buying it.

“The instant background check is gun registration,” [Gun Owners of America](#) chief Larry Pratt told *The New American*, adding that it was crucial for citizens to continue fighting back against efforts to infringe on the Second Amendment. “The government will not answer when we ask how they are destroying the names and addresses, as required by law, of those that have been checked. They just don’t respond; ‘so sue us’ is kind of the attitude that they have.”

The controversial bill would have also turned mental-health workers into mandated government informants by requiring them to report patients who may be a threat to themselves or others. Among other major concerns, analysts contend that as soon as a lawsuit is filed against a psychiatrist for failing to report a patient who later did something wrong, the norm will become reporting virtually everyone who seeks therapy.

Critics of such mental-health provisions [come from all across the political spectrum](#). Among them: psychiatrists and others who warn that people in need of assistance would be less likely to seek it if they could lose their gun rights; advocates of patient confidentiality; experts concerned about [Big Psychiatry’s increasingly outlandish claims](#) that almost every sort of human behavior should be labeled a “mental illness;” and more.

Already, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the psychiatric industry [claim](#) that some 50



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percent of Americans will suffer from mental disorders, an allegation blasted as ludicrous by credible psychiatrists. The potential for abusing “mental health” diagnoses to restrict individual rights is enormous, experts [say](#), citing mountains of data.

In a [statement](#), Gov. Sandoval outlined his reasons for vetoing the legislation. While expressing support for many of the bill’s goals, the governor said the background check provisions would “constitute an erosion of Nevadans Second Amendment rights under the United States Constitution.” It could also subject otherwise law-abiding citizens to prosecution, he added.

Law enforcement leaders in the state agreed with the governor’s analysis and requested a veto. According to the Nevada Sheriffs’ and Chiefs’ Association, the mandatory background check provisions on private sales “place an unreasonable burden on law-abiding citizens, with the potential to make them criminals.” The association also said the scheme would be “unenforceable” by law enforcement and would “do little to keep firearms out of the hands of criminals.”

Another problem with the legislation, Gov. Sandoval continued, was a change in state law that would shift the burden of proof in prosecutions of people who sell firearms. Current law makes it a crime to transfer firearms if there is “actual knowledge” that the buyer is a “prohibited person.” If the bill had become law, sellers would be prosecuted just for having “reasonable cause to believe” — a radical change that the governor noted could subject law-abiding Nevadans to criminal prosecution.

As such, after receiving at least tens of thousands of calls from citizens seeking a veto, the governor decided not to support the controversial legislation. “Senate Bill 221, while laudable in its efforts to strengthen reporting requirements concerning mentally ill persons, imposes unreasonable burdens and harsh penalties upon law-abiding Nevadans, while doing little to prevent criminals from unlawfully obtaining firearms,” he said in the veto statement.

Gun rights activists who helped rally opposition to the bill promptly celebrated the victory, but warned that the nationwide battle to preserve the Second Amendment was far from over. Gun Owners of America, widely considered the most principled gun-rights organization, pointed out that citizens made the difference — defeating big money from out-of-state Astroturf groups like Bloomberg’s “Mayors Against Illegal Guns,” which spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on its effort in Nevada.

“Despite Bloomberg’s fortune, his anti-gun MAIG simply doesn’t have the grassroots behind it,” noted Gun Owners of America in an e-mail blast to supporters announcing the victory. “The Governor was inclined to veto the gun control bill all along, but gun owners can be sure that — had the poll results gone the other way — he could have been easily persuaded to bow to Bloomberg’s pressure.”

The implications of the veto extend far beyond Nevada, however. “Nevada is a key state as it is home to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D) and to ‘swing vote’ Senator Dean Heller (R),” GOA continued. “Defeating Universal Background Checks in the Silver State — with overwhelming numbers of callers opposing it — sends a powerful message from a Purple State, that Americans do NOT want additional gun control!”

As has become typical in the ongoing assault on gun rights, anti-Second Amendment forces were quick to trot out [easily debunked polls](#) claiming that “90 percent” of Americans support schemes to require government permission before a person can exercise his or her unalienable rights. Bloomberg and his gun-control group, [which has numerous mayoral members embroiled in outrageous scandals](#), were particularly furious about the victory for gun rights.

“Rather than sign sensible legislation that keeps guns out of the hands of convicted felons and the



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mentally ill, Governor Sandoval has decided to preserve the loopholes that they use to buy guns,” whined Bloomberg in a [press release](#), citing [bogus statistics and polls](#) to support his extremist views. “The state legislature and 86 percent of Nevadans support comprehensive background checks, but this veto means that criminals and the dangerously mentally ill will continue to get a free pass in Nevada.”

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.), a key figure in the crusade to further restrict gun rights who spoke with Gov. Sandoval about the bill, was upset as well. “I am deeply disappointed in Gov. Sandoval’s decision to veto this bill,” he was [quoted as saying](#) in the *Washington Post*. “People convicted of a felony or suffering from a severe mental illness should be prevented from buying a gun with a simple background check.”

While states like Colorado, New York, and Connecticut have passed statutes infringing on the right to keep and bear arms in recent months, others have gone in the opposite direction, with some expanding gun rights and a few even nullifying unconstitutional federal gun control rules. Kansas, as one recent example, [passed nullification legislation](#) earlier this year making it a crime for federal agents to enforce certain unconstitutional restrictions on gun rights within the state. Meanwhile, South Dakota [passed a law](#) allowing teachers to carry firearms at school.

However, as *The New American* has been reporting for months, President Obama and his anti-Second Amendment allies are quietly working to foist more restrictions on America [through “executive actions.”](#) Recent news reports also suggest that anti-gun members of Congress are preparing for [another showdown](#) after their [embarrassing Senate defeat](#) in April. If gun rights are to survive in the long term, analysts say, Second Amendment proponents will have to stay on high alert.

Photo of Nevada Governor Brian Sandoval: AP Images

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