



Gun Owners, Filtered

Unfortunately, the editorial was rife with filters in the form of hot labels and emotionally-laden words and phrases that immediately impugned the validity of the results of the study.

For example, the opening sentence said, "The National Rifle Association has long fulminated...." [Fulminate](#) is a "hot label" that means "to issue or pronounce with vehement denunciation, condemnation, etc."

The second sentence calls Frank Luntz, the author of the study, a "conservative Republican," which he is neither. In fact, some would say that "conservative Republican" is an oxymoron in today's political climate. According to his own [website](#), he shows himself to be a captive of the left, with connections to most of the major news media, and holding the requisite "liberal establishment" educational pedigrees. The editorial continues with a "hot label" reference to "card-carrying" NRA members, an obvious reference to the McCarthy era of investigations into communist infiltration of the State Department.

Another example of the slanted nature and obvious bias of the editorial appears at the end when "marching orders" and "locked and loaded" appear in the same sentence, promoting the idea that members of the NRA are mindless robots awaiting directives from the NRA high command.

By looking at the background of the poll, the sources financing it, and the credibility of the pollster himself, the results can be clearly understood by the best filter of all, the bright clarity of sunshine.

Frank Luntz, the founder of The Word Doctor, completed the poll for the anti-gun Mayors Against Illegal Guns. This coalition of mayors, as it turns out, is [heavily financed](#) by billionaire Michael Bloomberg, currently the Mayor of New York City.

This [coalition](#) says "We support the Second Amendment and the rights of citizens to own guns [while believing] that we can do more to stop criminals from getting guns."

But it's also clear that the group's real enemy is the National Rifle Association. [In a moment of candor](#) on *Meet the Press*, Bloomberg was asked by host David Gregory, "How can you muster the clout and the power to take on the NRA?"

Bloomberg raised some eyebrows with his response:

If you look at what the real numbers are, I think that we can pull together here and raise enough money ... to take on this issue and explain to Congress this is just an outrage.... I'm going to not only do that myself, I'm going to ask plenty of other people to do it. If you want to beat the NRA, you have to go out and get your message out. And it costs money to do that.

And so what is this Mayors' organization anyway? Bloomberg claims he [has 500 mayors](#) as members.

But, [according to Chris Cox](#), Executive Director for the NRA-ILA, at least 25 members are not mayors at all. And 5 have already lost their re-election campaigns, or have retired. Nine members have been arrested or indicted on criminal charges, including bribery, corruption, money laundering, conspiracy, tax fraud, possession of child pornography, and sexual assault on a child.

Criminal cases against five other members of MAIG have been completed, and all five were convicted.

One particular mayor, Kwame Kilpatrick of Detroit, faced 10 felony charges, and has since been removed from MAIG's membership roster.

An additional 40 members have officially resigned from the group once they found out the real agenda



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behind it. For instance, Oldmans Township, New Jersey, Mayor Harry Moore resigned his membership in a letter to Bloomberg, which said in part,

I joined your coalition because of its purported purpose to combat the criminal acquisition and misuse of guns, which is a goal shared by all Americans. Regrettably, it has become abundantly clear to me that you are using this coalition of mayors to advance a hidden agenda of bringing lawsuits against members of the firearms industry and spreading anti-gun propaganda.

Regarding Bloomberg's recent "sting" operations against gun shop owners, Moore went on to say: "The Department of Justice warned you to refrain from these actions ... I do not want the blood of a police officer on my hands so that you can advance your anti-gun litigation campaign."

And this from her letter of resignation, Mayor Marlene Anielski of Walton Hills, Ohio, said,

Mayor, you and your coalition of allies have misrepresented yourselves to the mayors of America and its citizens. I can only hope that you will see my departure and the recent departure of other mayors from your coalition as a sign that things must change.

As noted earlier, Frank Luntz himself has all the credentials of an insider. His education includes a Doctorate in Politics from Oxford University, and he was named a Fellow at Harvard University's Institute of Politics. He was a primary night and election night commentator with Brian Williams on MSNBC in 2000 and for *Hardball* in 2004. In addition, Frank has conducted focus group sessions for all three major television networks, two of the three cable news channels, PBS and the BBC, as well as for *The Wall Street Journal*, *Newsweek*, *The New Yorker*, and *U.S. News & World Report*.

His specialty is "testing language and finding words that will help his clients sell their product or *turn public opinion on an issue* [emphasis added]."

While working for the Bush administration, Luntz was responsible for reframing "global warming" to "climate change" because it sounded "less severe." And in a 2002 memo regarding global warming to President Bush, Luntz wrote: "The scientific debate is closing against us [but] there is still a window of opportunity to challenge the science."

His lack of objectivity has gotten him into trouble. In 1997, Luntz was reprimanded by the American Association for Public Opinion Research for refusing to release the poll data that he used to support his results. Diane Colasanto, who was president of the AAPOR at the time said, "It is simply wanting to know, What were the questions [he used in his poll]? Once a pollster makes results public, [that] information needs to be public. People need to be able to evaluate whether it was sound research [or not]."

In the year 2000 he was reprimanded again, this time by the National Council on Public Policy "for allegedly mischaracterizing on MSNBC the results of focus groups he conducted during the Republican convention."

In 2004, Media Matters questioned his polling methodology and, as a result, Luntz was dropped by MSNBC from its planned coverage of the presidential debate.

And he hasn't impressed his fellow pollsters, either. Following the 2008 election, pollster Bill McInturff criticized Luntz before journalists at a National Journal Breakfast, insisting that Luntz is "a moron" and lambasted him for mocking Senator McCain's inability to use a Blackberry, which McInturff attributed to the injuries that McCain sustained while a prisoner of war in Vietnam.



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What are the results of the poll Luntz did for the mayors? According to the editorial, the results (based upon interviews with 832 gun owners, half of whom were alleged to be members of the NRA but couldn't be confirmed since the NRA membership roster isn't publicly available) showed that 69 percent supported closing the so-called "gun show loophole," 82 favored banning gun purchases to anyone on a "terror suspect list," and 69 supported sharing gun ownership information between federal, state, and local governments. Some of the poll results, however, weren't mentioned in the *Times* editorial, such as

- The overwhelming majority thinking that Obama will try to ban guns
- Agreeing that the Heller decision by the Supreme Court was correct
- Agreeing that the Second Amendment should prevent all levels of government from infringing on the right to arms

Last July, a [poll](#) of 4,470 voters by Zogby International showed how the American people really feel about such issues. For the record, the concept of concealed carry for law-abiding citizens is supported by an overwhelming 83 percent. In fact, when analyzed by groups of voters, support for concealed carry is remarkable: Democrats, 80 in favor; young voters age 18 to 29, 83 percent in favor; Hispanic, 80 percent in favor, and Obama voters, 80 percent in favor.

The Zogby poll also showed 84 percent supporting the Second Amendment as an individual right, and 67 percent believing that that right protects against infringements by state and local governments.

Photo of Michael Bloomberg: AP Images



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