



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on May 28, 2013

NRA Leads Recall Efforts Against Anti-Gun Lawmakers in Colorado

Anti-gun Democratic lawmakers in Colorado are facing recall bids from angry voters in what is believed to be the first phase in a number of fallouts over efforts to restrict gun rights expected to be seen across the country. New revelations indicate that the National Rifle Association has assumed a major role in the recall initiatives, focusing on Colorado State Senate President John Morse.



CNN reports of Morse,

He is facing a petition drive to initiate an election to recall him because of legislation passed this year in Colorado requiring universal background checks on sales of all firearms in the state, as well as a ban on the sale of ammunition magazines greater than 15 rounds.

An NRA mailer [obtained](#) by CNN asks members to sign a petition for a recall election to vote Senator Morse out of office, with a deadline of June 3 for 7,178 signatures to be obtained.

The NRA wrote that Morse “led the charge to pass extreme and onerous anti-gun state legislation in Denver,” adding that “responsible gun owners and sportsmen will be forever burdened by his misguided leadership in the Colorado Senate.”

Earlier this year, Colorado state legislators passed historic and sweeping gun control legislation. It is the only state outside the East Coast to have adopted significant gun control regulations in the past year.

The strict regulations came even as the state of Colorado has witnessed significant [increases](#) in gun sales over the last year. Following the tragic Aurora, Colorado, movie theater shooting last year, the state saw a major spike in gun sales. The abduction and murder of Westminster, Colorado, pre-teen Jessica Ridgeway caused another surge in sales, reported the Colorado Bureau of Investigation. Last year, on Black Friday, a new state record was set with over 4,000 background checks on people purchasing firearms, nearly 1,000 more than the previous year. In fact, the flood of purchases caused the system to crash twice.

Another spike in gun sales in Colorado was seen after the Sandy Hook massacre, with Fox31 reporting that the AR-15 used in that shooting was sold out in Colorado shops immediately following the news of the elementary school deaths.

From January through November of 2012, there were nearly 35,000 more background checks submitted than in the previous year.

The *Huffington Post* observed that Colorado is a microcosm of what is seen nationwide, with fears of increased gun restrictions often resulting in spikes of gun sales:

Nationally, a gun sales bump was observed close to President Barack Obama’s election in 2008 due to a fear that he would take people’s guns away, as Newser reported. And gun sales spiked again



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following Obama's reelection in November 2012.

Similarly, *The Associated Press* reported that [there were nearly twice as many background checks](#) performed for gun purchases between November and December 2012 than during the same two months in 2011. Increases in the checks have continued into 2013, with the FBI noting a historically high number at the start of this year.

"I should put Obama's picture on the wall up there," [an anonymous New Jersey gun salesman told CNBC](#). "I'd name him salesman of the month!"

Despite these figures, however, Colorado lawmakers such as state Senate President John Morse have pointed to the tragedies in Sandy Hook and Aurora as a reason to restrict gun rights. As a result, gun rights supporters in the state are seeking to recall Senator Morse along with three other state lawmakers.

Fox News [reports](#), "The Colorado efforts will serve as the first test of gun rights groups' ability to punish elected officials who expanded gun control laws after last year's Aurora, Colo., and Newtown, Conn., shooting massacres."

The organizers of the recall efforts are well aware of the impact such efforts could have nationwide.

"Colorado seems to be the testing ground for some of the gun measures, so this has national implications," said Victor Head, a plumber from Pueblo who is organizing a recall attempt against a Democratic senator.

While two of the four recall efforts have suffered from lack of support, the opposition to Morse continues to grow in Colorado Springs. The *Huffington Post* [reports](#), "Morse opponents are piling up signatures in gun shops and outside libraries and grocery stores." Thus far, the recall campaign has received \$14,000 in contributions from a nonprofit group run by local conservative consultant Laura Carno, who indicates that she has received generous donations from out of state donors as well.

"People in other states that are further down this road, like New York and Massachusetts, are calling up and saying 'What can we do to help?'" Carno said. "This isn't what Colorado stands for."

Christy Le Lait, the campaign manager for Morse, told CNN that the "NRA is investing in these recall races to send a message to every other local official to not pass any other gun safety measures or else the NRA will come after you as well."

Senator Morse has initiated a \$20,000 campaign funded by the national progressive group America Votes to urge voters against signing the petitions. He seems fully prepared to face a recall vote, believing that the gun rights advocates will garner the necessary signatures. He contends that the gun rights groups are hoping to make a political statement by targeting him.

"That's what's going on here. They want to take out the Senate president," Morse said.

Anthony Garcia, another recall organizer, declared, "It's as much about saying Colorado is angry as it is about getting one guy out. Legislators need to know when citizens are outraged that they can't ignore the people."

Other members of the recall campaign recognize the move as an effective tool to show lawmakers that they remain accountable to their constituents.

"I believe in gun rights. And he didn't listen. He's supposed to represent the people, and when he doesn't do that, what are we supposed to do? Nothing?" asked Bianca McCarl, a 40-year-old



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merchandise who is supporting Morse's recall.

According to Joshua Spivak of the Hugh L. Carey Institute for Government Reform at Wagner College in New York, recall efforts have been on the rise across the country. Last year, 169 officials faced recalls, an increase from 151 the previous year, and Spivak believes that the number could rise again this year.

Typically, though recall efforts have low success rates, that does not diminish their power as a political tool. Spivak points out that 108 recalled officials lost or left office after a recall last year.

If Colorado's recall of any of the four Democratic Colorado lawmakers do make it to the ballot, an election will be held later this summer.



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