



Obama's Anti-gun Agenda Shelved — for Now

Gun control is off the agenda for now, according to *Newsweek*. Although the Obama administration is packed with anti-gun stalwarts, from White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel and Attorney General Eric Holder to President Obama himself, the political will has dwindled to revisit the misnamed “assault weapons ban,” which expired in 2004, or close the so-called “gun show loophole,” whereby firearms can be bought and sold between private individuals without the transaction being registered, to name just two long-standing agenda items of the gun confiscation lobby.



This despite the political dominance of Democrats in both the White House and Capitol Hill, and a recent string of mass shootings that, under more conventional times, would be seized upon as the usual pretext for the federal government to take action.

First of all, President Obama has decided, according to *Newsweek*, that a major fight over new anti-gun legislation would hamstring his presidency in a time of economic peril. What's more, Democratic strategists haven't forgotten the lessons of the fairly recent past. “The Democratic Party understands this is a losing issue,” Democratic Oklahoma Representative Dan Boren told *Newsweek*. “It's one of the reasons [the Democrats] lost the Congress in 1994 and Al Gore was not elected president in 2000.”

Just as important, the complexion of the Democratic Party has changed since the Clinton years. Blue-dog, pro-gun Democrats, mostly from the South and the West, now make up a formidable bloc in the House, much to the horror of urban and east coast anti-gun Democrats like most of the members of the Obama administration. Sixty-five congressional Democrats who apparently value their House seats sent a letter to the administration promising to resist any gun-control legislation, in response to comments by Attorney General Holder in February suggesting the assault-weapons ban should be reinstated as a favor to crime-ridden Mexico.

None of which is to suggest that Americans' right to keep and bear arms is not in danger of infringement. Longtime anti-gun activists in Congress, like New York's Carolyn McCarthy, are still around and furious that the Obama administration has instructed Democrats to clam up about the issue. Still, according to McCarthy, officials from the Obama transition team, when pressed to make gun control a prominent part of the incoming administration's agenda, told the New York congresswoman, “That's not for now, that's for later.”

Gun control, in other words, has not been abandoned but merely shelved. Should the economy find sounder footing and other political priorities, like nationalized healthcare, be consummated, watch for gun control to return to prominence, since the Obamas, Clintons, Emanuels, and Holders of the world are unlikely to alter their ideology. After all, as Al Gore once pointed out, a leopard doesn't change his stripes.



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