

# THE Gun Owners

34 YEARS OF NO COMPROMISE – 1975-2009

## GOA Presses On Amidst the Ups and Down of 2009

by John Velleco

2009 was a rollercoaster year for gun owners.

With both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue controlled by radical anti-gun leadership, Second Amendment supporters braced for a wild ride.

Immediately after winning the election, President Barack Obama began populating the highest reaches of government with extremists who are committed to dismantling the Second Amendment piece by piece.

In January, Hillary Clinton was sworn in as the new Secretary of State. On her first trip to Mexico, Clinton set the stage for what would become a common theme of the Obama administration — blaming America's firearms

for the gun violence in Mexico.

Hillary was joined in the President's Cabinet by Attorney General Eric Holder. Holder was point man for gun control initiatives such as the 1994 ban on semi-automatic firearms when he was Deputy Attorney General under President Clinton.

Gun Owners of America fought a hard but often lonely battle against Holder. Many groups in Washington did not want to engage in what was clearly an uphill struggle. But it was important to oppose the Holder confirmation because gun owners need to know which Senators they could count on when the chips are down.

Holder was confirmed by a disap-

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***“GOA has led the national gun rights organizations...”***  
— Sen. David Vitter (R-LA)

## As the grassroots rebellion picks up steam GOA helps fan the flames

by Erich Pratt

There's nothing like a concentrated dose of liberalism to work like smelling salts on the American public.

Here we are almost one year into the Obama presidency and gun sales are still running hot in the midst of a recession.

Political novices are getting involved and taking off work to rally at Tea Parties — even to the point where nearly a million people traveled to Washington, DC in September to tell our elected officials that they'd better start taking seriously their oath to uphold the Constitution.

GOA spokesmen have been part of the Tea Party movement, bringing the message that freedom and gun owner-

ship go hand in hand.

Next April, GOA's Larry Pratt will be speaking at the Second Amendment March in Washington to celebrate the 235-year anniversary of the “shot heard around the world.”

No, there won't be any shots fired at that rally, but GOA's Executive Director will be trying to mobilize the grassroots to shake up the political establishment — a shake up that is already well underway.

Consider that the Presidential Approval Index (as reported by Rasmussen) has dropped more than 40 points since Barack Obama took office in January. More Americans now “strongly disapprove” of the President than “strongly approve” of him.

Even more encouraging is the change in thinking that seems to be sweeping the nation. People who formerly swallowed the pabulum from the political left are now rethinking their positions.

For example, support for gun control is at its lowest level in recent memory. Only three in ten Americans now support stricter gun control according to a Rasmussen poll released in October.

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- **Did your Representative vote for anti-gun ObamaCare? (page 2)**
- **What gun policies may have contributed to the Ft. Hood shooting? (page 3)**

## GOA Presses On

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pointing vote of 75-21, but he did not disappoint his anti-gun allies. Picking up where he left off with the Clinton administration, Holder called for a re-statement of the semi-auto ban and also began blaming U.S. gun laws for Mexican drug cartel violence.

Other Obama selections were equally as bad. Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano warned U.S. police about the rise of “right wing extremism.”

Harold Hongui Koh, who advocates bringing U.S. gun laws into conformity with international norms, became Hillary’s top legal advisor at the State Department.

The newest Supreme Court Justice, Sonia Sotomayor, is uncertain if Americans have a fundamental right to self-defense and ruled that a state ban on all firearms would be Constitutional.

Obama’s regulatory czar, Cass Sunstein, would ban hunting and believes that animals have some of the same rights as humans, such as the right to bring suit in court and be represented by an attorney.

These and other nominees were confirmed with significant majorities. GOA will score such recorded votes and remind gun owners during the all important 2010 elections of who supported Obama’s gun banning agenda.

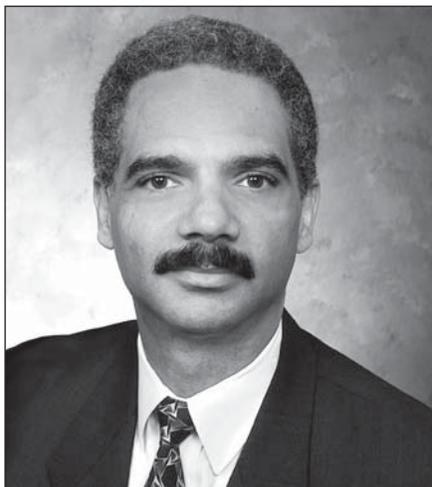
### DC Gun Ban Stalemate

Though gun owners suffered severe setbacks in the confirmation battles, there have been some victories on the legislative front.

In February, the Congress was poised to pass the so-called DC Voting Rights Act. This bill would give the District of Columbia full voting privileges in the U.S. House, even though DC is not a state.

However, GOA worked with Sen. John Ensign (R-NV) in pushing an amendment that ended up tying the Voting Rights Act, and the entire Congress, in knots.

When the DC bill reached the floor of the Senate, Sen. Ensign offered an amendment to repeal the District’s draconian gun laws. The amendment passed 62-37.



**Gun Owners of America fought a hard but often lonely battle against Attorney General Eric Holder. Many groups in Washington did not want to engage in what was clearly an uphill struggle.**

In the House, where it was expected to pass easily, Speaker Nancy Pelosi attempted to bring the Voting Rights bill to the floor *without* the Ensign amendment. GOA alerted its members, who flooded the House with emails saying that GOA would “score” the vote on any procedural maneuver that stripped the Ensign amendment.

Anti-gun House leaders were left with a choice — pass the unconstitu-

tional Voting Rights bill with the gun ban repeal or keep the entire package off the floor. Thus far, Nancy Pelosi has chosen the latter.

### NPS Gun Ban Repealed in 2009

Gun Owners of America for several years has pushed for the repeal of the Reagan-era gun ban on National Park Service (NPS) lands. This was finally accomplished in 2009 thanks to the efforts of Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK).

GOA worked closely with Senator Coburn, who added an amendment to repeal the NPS gun ban to another piece of legislation. The repeal, which passed 67-29, made it to the President’s desk and was signed into law.

### CCW Recognition

Emboldened by their legislative victories, pro-gun Senators continued to offer amendments in 2009. One would allow for concealed carry permits from one state to be recognized in other states.

Because other legislation on this issue would have established national standards for concealed carry and would not recognize states that do not require a permit (Vermont-style carry),

*Continued on page 3*

## Anti-gun ObamaCare Narrowly Squeaks Through the House

### How did your Representative vote?



On November 7, Representatives narrowly passed HR 3962, the House version of the ObamaCare legislation. While a search of the bill will not reveal the word “gun” or “firearm,” that doesn’t mean the bill is neutral in regard to your Second Amendment rights:

1) For starters, this bill will most likely — as a result of the mandates in the legislation — result in all of your gun-related health data being dumped into a government database that was created in section 13001 of the stimulus bill. This includes any firearms-related information your doctor has gleaned . . . or any determination of PTSD, or something similar, that can preclude you from owning firearms.

2) The bill will also create special “wellness” programs in section 112 which would allow the government to offer lower premiums to employers who bribe their employees to live healthier lifestyles — and nothing within the bill would prohibit rabidly anti-gun HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius from decreeing that “no guns” is somehow healthier.

To see how your Representative voted, please go to <http://tinyurl.com/ykq6ufa> on the GOA website. ■

**The Washington Times** November 10, 2009

## Arming the Army

After five days of mourning the victims of the Fort Hood massacre, the hard, harsh questions are surfacing: How could a guy with two handguns kill 13 professional soldiers and wound 29 more on a U.S. military base, asks Larry Pratt, executive director of the Gun Owners of America.

"Would you believe that the Army isn't actually armed?" says Mr. Pratt. "When they get back from deployment, the first thing all troops must do is enter what could be called the 'politically correct room, where they surrender their weapons.'"

Army Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan, the suspect in the case, knew his chances of mass murder were "pretty good," Mr. Pratt says.

"After Fort Hood, I think the point is made," he adds. "Almost all of America's massacres have taken place in gun-free zones, primarily schools, government buildings and now an Army base. If we are going to protect life, we must permit the disarmed to be armed. We must arm the Army! Otherwise, jihadists will continue to single out soft targets where they will be able to kill the greatest number possible."



GOA Executive Director Larry Pratt appeared on CNN's Lou Dobbs show shortly after the Ft. Hood shooting.

# GOA in the News



## GOA Presses On

*Continued from page 2*

GOA worked with Senators John Thune (R-SD) and David Vitter (R-LA) to craft legislation that protect states' rights, protects Vermont carry, and is constitutionally sound.

The Thune/Vitter legislation received a strong majority of votes, but because of a procedural roadblock set up by Sen. Reid, the amendment fell two votes short of passage.

### Amtrak Gun Ban Repeal Passes Senate

Senator Roger Wicker (R-MS) offered an amendment, to an appropriations bill, that will repeal the gun ban on Amtrak trains.

Unlike commercial airlines, which allow firearms to be transported if they are declared at check in, Amtrak completely prohibits firearms. The Wicker amendment, which passed 68-30, would allow firearms to be transported in checked bags provided they are stored

in a prescribed manner.

GOA is working to keep the Wicker amendment from being taken out in a House-Senate conference committee.

### What Lies Ahead?

GOA members should be proud of what we accomplished legislatively in a hostile environment. And 2010 promises to be as busy as ever for gun owners.

There are Obama nominees who have not yet been confirmed and who will come before the Senate. It is very possible that another seat on the Supreme Court will open, leading to another fierce confirmation battle.

Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader



The newest Supreme Court Justice, Sonia Sotomayor, is uncertain if Americans have a fundamental right to self-defense and ruled that a state ban on all firearms would be constitutional.

Reid now preside over large majorities, but those majorities are expected to diminish (if not disappear completely in the House) after the 2010 elections. It is likely that they will attempt to cram gun control down gun owners' throats as the prospect of a more evenly divided Congress looms ahead. ■



## **GOA on Capitol Hill**

### **GOA leading the fight against anti-gun ObamaCare.**

***“Gun Owners of America (GOA) has been alone on the national stage in warning of the dangers of centralized health care to the rights of gun owners.”***

— Examiner.com, September 3, 2009

When GOA began its fight against the anti-gun ObamaCare legislation this past spring, many pundits claimed that passage was inevitable ... they said that it wasn't even worth the fight. But GOA ignored the naysayers, started mobilizing the grassroots and began prepping congressional offices with talking points against the bill. Now, several months later, the forces of freedom could very well end up killing socialized health care as the President faces an uphill battle in finding enough senators to support his anti-gun plan.

### **GOA's grassroots successfully pushed for a repeal of gun control.**

***“Gun Owners of America was the most consistent and loudest voice on Capitol Hill in support of the effort to repeal the National Park Service gun ban.”***

— Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK), May 20, 2009

GOA won several significant battles this year, including the repeal of the gun ban in National Parks. While GOA was the leading, and often only, national gun group involved in this fight, pro-gun Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) was the chief sponsor of the repeal provision on Capitol Hill. The gun ban repeal passed into law this past May. ■



**Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) and GOA Executive Director Larry Pratt.**



**Pro-gun Rep. Paul Broun (R-GA) — a medical doctor who is a very vocal opponent of the anti-gun health care legislation — meets with GOA's Larry Pratt (right).**



**Senator David Vitter (R-LA) with GOA's John Velleco (right). GOA worked with Senators Vitter and John Thune (R-SD) to craft legislation that would permit concealed carry outside of one's home state. The Thune/Vitter legislation received a strong majority of votes, but because of a procedural roadblock set up by Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-VA), the amendment fell two votes short of passage.**



## GOA in the Courts

ban. And GOA brought the David Olofson case before the Supreme Court in early October. Olofson was convicted at the District Court level of transferring an unregistered machine gun, when in reality, his semi-automatic firearm had simply malfunctioned. Amazingly, the Supreme Court refused to consider Olofson's case, letting stand a lower court decision which had completely ignored Supreme Court precedent — a precedent that should have totally acquitted Olofson. ■

**GOA combating gun control in the courts.** Gun Owners of America waged a lonely battle at the national level to rally gunnies against the President's anti-gun Supreme Court pick, Sonia Sotomayor. Even though she was ultimately confirmed, GOA's grassroots activists were able to help accomplish a tremendous feat. To wit, there were 31 Senators who opposed Sotomayor. To put that number in context, consider that Republicans just don't like voting against Supreme Court nominees, no matter how bad they are. The last two Supreme Court justices to be confirmed during a Democrat administration were Ruth Bader Ginsburg (1993) and Stephen Breyer (1994). Ginsburg had three opposition votes; Breyer had nine. But Sotomayor had 31! In other Supreme Court news, GOA submitted an amicus brief in the case challenging the Chicago gun



**Fox News videotaped GOA's War Room discussions prior to a key congressional vote this past summer. GOA targeted several borderline Senators, informing them that a vote for Justice Sonia Sotomayor would be double-weighted as an anti-gun vote.**



## GOA in the States

**John Velleco, the Director of Federal Affairs for GOA, spoke at a couple of Tea Parties in 2009.**

**Rallying the troops.** GOA spokesmen appeared at Tea Party rallies and on hundreds of media outlets (radio, TV, newspaper and Internet). The organization also helped make a big splash around the country in helping two states to nullify anti-gun federal laws. GOA worked in Montana and Tennessee to enact Firearms Freedom Act legislation, mandating that guns which are made (and stay) in their respective states are exempt from federal gun restrictions. GOA will also be working with pro-gun members of Congress to stop the BATFE from interfering with states which pass a Firearms Freedom Act. ■



**Erich Pratt**  
Director of Communications  
Gun Owners of America

**GOA's Erich Pratt appeared on a brand new TV station (hosted on the Internet) to recruit even more gun owners into the fight for Second Amendment rights.**

## Grassroots Rebellion with GOA help

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This is a substantial drop from recent years.

Sixty-nine percent oppose the ability of city governments to prevent citizens from owning handguns — an interesting statistic considering that the Supreme Court will be looking at Chicago's handgun ban.

Gun Owners of America has already submitted an amicus brief in the Chicago case, where we argue the Second Amendment *does prevent* states and localities from denying citizens their right to keep and bear arms.

This is an important issue to Americans. Seventy-one percent believe the Second Amendment protects the right of individuals to own guns. And an equal percentage believes that President Obama is at least somewhat likely to seek tougher gun control laws.

People are scared of what the ObamaCrats are planning to do to them and now they're rising up to say "ENOUGH!" But the people in the states are not alone, as their legislators are also stepping into the fray:

- Thirty-six states have introduced 10th Amendment resolutions, and seven states have already passed them. These resolutions reassert the sovereignty of each state and rebuke Washington for its profligate ways.
- GOA worked in Montana and Tennessee this year to help each state enact Firearms Freedom Acts, declaring that guns which are made (and stay) in their states are exempt from federal gun restrictions. Eight other states have also introduced such legislation — Alaska, Florida, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina and Texas — and another twenty states are considering similar bills.
- Over a dozen states have refused to implement parts of the REAL ID Act (2005), a law which forces states to standardize driver's licenses. Such standards could require RFID chips to be placed in the licenses, allowing the tracking of individuals and the inclusion of all kinds of private information (including gun ownership). The

states' rejection of this law has forced the Obama administration and the Congress to move towards repealing and replacing the federal law.

- More than a dozen states are considering ballot initiatives to prevent their citizens from being forced to buy health insurance — a crucial element of all the federal ObamaCare proposals. Arizona has already placed its anti-socialized health care initiative on the ballot for 2010.

All Americans should be concerned about socialized health care, but gun owners should especially be wary. The ObamaCare legislation in Congress could dump into a government database Americans' most confidential gun-related health data — including any

firearms-related information doctors have gleaned, or any determination of PTSD, or something similar, that can preclude a person from owning firearms.

The federal government has already used medical diagnoses (such as PTSD) to deny more than 150,000 military veterans the right to own guns — without their being convicted of a crime or receiving any due process of law.

The ObamaCrats do want to restrict our gun rights, but they're not necessarily going to do it with a frontal assault.

That's why it's a good thing that the silent majority is now waking up, because a grassroots rebellion is the only thing that is going to be able to prevent all the back-door assaults on our liberties. ■

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you know, that is more often than the competition.**

## Flashback Ten Years Ago

After two hate-filled teenagers killed 13 people at Columbine High School in 1999, the media began the drumbeat for more gun control. The echo chamber inside the DC Beltway was so loud that almost everyone felt some kind of firearms restrictions would pass.

GOA, however, did not buckle under the pressure and rallied the grassroots to lobby their congressmen. GOA also worked with legislators on Capitol Hill to use parliamentary maneuvers to derail the bill.

In the end, gun control lost — thanks to the tremendous pressure inflicted by GOA's grassroots. Many media outlets reported that GOA was the ONLY major gun lobby opposing the new gun control restrictions.

For example, *The New Haven Register* reported on June 19, 1999 that, "Although the Republican House leadership and the NRA urged support for the final version [of the post-Columbine gun control], they were hampered by opposition from [GOA] who were unhappy it required gun safety locks and raised to 21 the legal age for owning a handgun.

"Please vote no on passage of HR 2122," urged a letter from Gun Owners of America. And many conservative Republicans did just that." ■

## GOA Kills Post-Columbine Gun Control



**"Gun Owners of America is considered the most aggressive pro-gun lobbying organization."**

**— Roll Call (1999)**

## HIT THE RIGHT TARGET! Give to Gun Owners Foundation

In many federal offices there are subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) pressures to give to the Combined Federal Campaign. Your boss may think his prestige depends upon getting everyone to kick in. The same thing happens in all too many corporations during the United Way fundraising drive.

You may have wanted to give but couldn't find a group that wasn't attacking your rights, let alone defending them, on the list of participating organizations. But that has all changed!

Federal employees now are able to designate **Gun Owners Foundation (GOF)** as the recipient of their gifts to the Combined Federal Campaign. Use **Agency Number 10042** for **Gun Owners Foundation** when you make your Combined Federal Campaign pledge or donation. Your gifts will go toward helping our legal assistance program to protect the Second Amendment rights of Americans across the nation.

Also, if you work for a company that participates in the United Way, you too, may be able to designate that your gift be to **Gun Owners Foundation**. Many local United Way Campaigns allow **Gun Owners Foundation** to participate through their Donor Choice Programs. Some, however, do not. Check with your local United Way Agency. You will not only be helping people and protecting your rights, but you will also get a tax deduction.

Of course, anyone can always make a tax-deductible donation at any time to **Gun Owners Foundation** by sending the contribution directly to 8001 Forbes Place, Suite 102, Springfield, VA 22151.

One additional note. If you are employed by a corporation or organization which has a Matching Gift Program, please keep **GOF** in mind when making your donation. Thank you very much.





# Republican Establishment: Will There Be Accountability

by *Larry Pratt*

The November 3 elections showed that President Obama and his statist allies in Congress have set off a political tsunami.

It seems to be obvious to all who were watching (supposedly the President was not, if you believe

anything the White House says) that the huge reversal of Democrat and Republican margins from 2008 to 2009 in Virginia and New Jersey was an amazing event. Virginia in 2008 went 53 percent for Obama, but a year later only 41 percent went for Democrat gubernatorial candidate Creigh Deeds. In New Jersey, Obama's 57 percent became incumbent Democrat Governor Jon Corzine's 45 percent.

Much of the GOP sweeps in Virginia and in New Jersey resulted from independents returning to the GOP fold — an identification they had surrendered when they could not stomach the big-government records of President Bush and the Republican Congress.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi declared the night a victory because the Democrat won in the special congressional election to fill a vacancy in NY-23, and similarly in CA-10. Of course, she did not discuss the fact that the CA-10 seat had already been held by a Democrat.

More disappointing is the unwillingness by some of the Washington, DC Republican establishment to admit what happened in NY-23. The Republican loss there was in fact a Conservative and pro-gun victory.

Republican bosses in NY-23 chose an amazingly leftwing Republican, Dede Scozzafava (to call her a Republican in Name Only — RINO — is an insult to RINOs). Scozzafava was rated the third most liberal of all the members of the NY Assembly. She has been endorsed by the Working Families Party, an Acorn-spawned entity. When people in the district began to learn how much of a leftist the GOP candidate was, her support began to head into the tank.

Gun Owners of America Political Victory Fund, along with a number of other conservative political committees, endorsed Conservative Party candidate Doug Hoffman. Other endorsements came from prominent talk show hosts and leading Republicans such as Sarah Palin.

The race in the last month became a two-man contest between Hoffman and Democrat nominee Bill Owens. On Thursday before the election, Scozzafava withdrew, and on Sunday she endorsed the Democrat — after having received

nearly one million dollars from the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC), the political committee of the House Republicans in Congress.

This was the conservative victory. A total unknown forced out a completely unacceptable Republican nominee and almost won the seat. Hoffman — and conservatives and pro-gunners — made it clear that without them, Republicans better get used to being in the minority.

This was embarrassing not only to the NRCC staff, but to its chairman, Rep. Pete Sessions of Texas (a conservative pro-gun congressman) as well as former House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Republican National Committee chairman, Michael Steele. Gingrich and Steele claimed — and continue to do so even after the election! — that choosing Scozzafava was a decision that had to be respected because Republicans should respect local party decisions.

That argument does not fly. Erick Erickson has written on RedState.com that numerous sources have told him that the outrageous decision made by the 23rd district's eleven county chairmen (the ones who selected Scozzafava) was pushed by the "professionals" on the NRCC staff. They were convinced that the failure to win the special election in another NY congressional vacancy was because a man rather than a woman was the candidate. They are not concerned that the man, Assemblyman Jim Tedisco, was a RINO. So, naturally, they were not concerned that Scozzafava was beyond RINO.

When Ford introduced the Edsal automobile, it was met by car buyers with a yawn — and it was quickly discontinued. When VHS beat out Beta for the video player market, Beta was also discontinued.

Now that Michael Steele and Rep. Pete Sessions (and their staffs) have been shown to be catastrophically wrong, will they step down? If they really believe that individual responsibility is a key to the success of capitalism and a free society, they should be making public their resignations.

The National Republican Senatorial Committee (the NRCC counterpart in the Senate) seems to have gotten — and acted upon — the election memo. Senator John Cornyn of Texas had been pursuing the same parallel strategy for defeat as his House counterpart. For example, Cornyn had bestowed the NRSC's endorsement (and a fundraising advantage) on Florida Governor Charlie Christ who is running for the US Senate. Christ is the Arlen Specter of the South — a purebred RINO.

So if you want to advance the pro-Second Amendment agenda, stand with GOA and its Political Victory Fund in 2010. ■

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