Democrats Blame ‘Gun Owners of America’ For Gun Control Setback

A little known pro-gun lobby, Gun Owners of America, is flexing its muscle in [the] first major gun control effort in nearly two decades. The group, with its small membership and lobbying strength dwarfed by the National Rifle Association, has complicated efforts to reach a solution on gun control legislation, top Democrats have said in recent days.

Gun Owners of America (GOA) from discussions with Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), for a deal on background checks, was pounded by calls and emails from constituents after the Gun Owners of America got involved.

The Gun Owners of America is steadily gaining influence and pressuring Republicans to oppose gun control. GOA is proud of its role of the group last week, its executive director Larry Pratt took credit for scaring away Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK) from discussions with Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) about a bipartisan compromise on expanding background checks for gun control.

When word surfaced in February that Senator Tom Coburn, Republican of Oklahoma, was plotting with Democrats on a bill to expand background checks, GOA was apparently caught off guard. GOA's Erich Pratt shocked his opponent from the Brady Campaign –– and Fox's Lou Dobbs –– by arguing against background checks, mounted a lobbying blitz that helps explain why a bipartisan Senate deal on background checks remains elusive.

“‘They [GOA] are strong defenders of the Second Amendment,’” said Senator Ted Cruz, Republican of Texas. “We were told, ‘He’s getting tired of this.’ But when we hear complaints like that, we know we are close to success. We are happy he changed his mind.”

The group has already been successful in both freezing senators, particularly Republicans, who have appeared to be on the fence about supporting bills to expand background checks and increase penalties for illegal gun purchases, and empowering those who have a strong gun rights background.

Prominently featured on the front page of the New York Times profile and saying the group “is making a deal on even background checks extremely hard.”

Meanwhile, the Gun Owners of America is flexing its muscle in [the] first major gun control effort in nearly two decades. GOA, with its small membership and lobbying strength dwarfed by the National Rifle Association, has complicated efforts to reach a solution on gun control legislation, top Democrats have said in recent days.

New York Times

April 3, 2013

Upstart Group Pushes Harder Than the N.R.A.

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“I can't express enough how incredible the lobbying blitz was,” said Senator Ted Cruz, Republican of Texas. “We were told, ‘He's getting tired of this.’ But when we hear complaints like that, we know we are close to success. We are happy he changed his mind.”

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Gun Owners of America out-hardlines the NRA

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The NRA's smaller but more hardline gun lobby cousin, Gun Owners of America, is steadily gaining power and effectively targeting Republicans in an effort to halt gun control legislation. The New York Times

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For example, Tom Coburn, R-Okla., who began working with Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., for a deal on background checks, was pounded by calls and emails from constituents after the Gun Owners of America got involved.

Gun Owners of America’s role in [the] first major gun control effort in nearly two decades has complicated efforts to reach a solution on gun control legislation, top Democrats have said in recent days.

The group has been gaining power and effectively targeting Republicans in an effort to halt gun control legislation. Democrats blame the Gun Owners of America for a deal on background checks, which has complicated efforts to reach a solution on gun control legislation, top Democrats have said in recent days.

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In March, GOA’s Erich Pratt shocked his opponent from the Brady Campaign — and Fox’s Lou Dobbs — by arguing against background checks, saying that law-abiding citizens should not have to prove their innocence to the government before exercising their God-given rights.
Gun Owners of America, a lobbying group that has taken a hard line against any new gun controls, is telling its members to ask senators during their home-state visits if they will join the effort to block the legislation. The threat to block any gun bill was initiated last week by GOP Sens. Rand Paul of Kentucky, Mike Lee of Utah and Ted Cruz of Texas. “We have been encouraging our members in all the states to ask that question while their senators are in home, in this recess,” said Erich Pratt, director of government affairs for the group. He said the group would take note of each senator’s vote on allowing a gun bill to reach the Senate floor when it ranks lawmakers’ voting records at the end of the year.

“Whenever the NRA tries to be reasonable, the Gun Owners of America becomes more unreasonable and that pushes the NRA. At one time they were the only organization that dealt with this. Now you’ve got Gun Owners of America which is to the — I guess you would say the ‘right’ — of what the NRA is. It makes it hard for the NRA to be reasonable.” — Senator Harry Reid, April 6, 2013 on Nevada Public Radio