



# THE NRA

## IS DOING PLENTY IN CALIFORNIA

by Rick Travis, CRPA Director  
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This past election year was brutal for California's gun owners. Using the San Bernardino and Orlando terrorist attacks as a pretext, anti-gun-owner politicians were actively competing with each other to pass their version of stricter gun bans — none of which would have prevented the terrorist attacks, nor made anyone any safer.

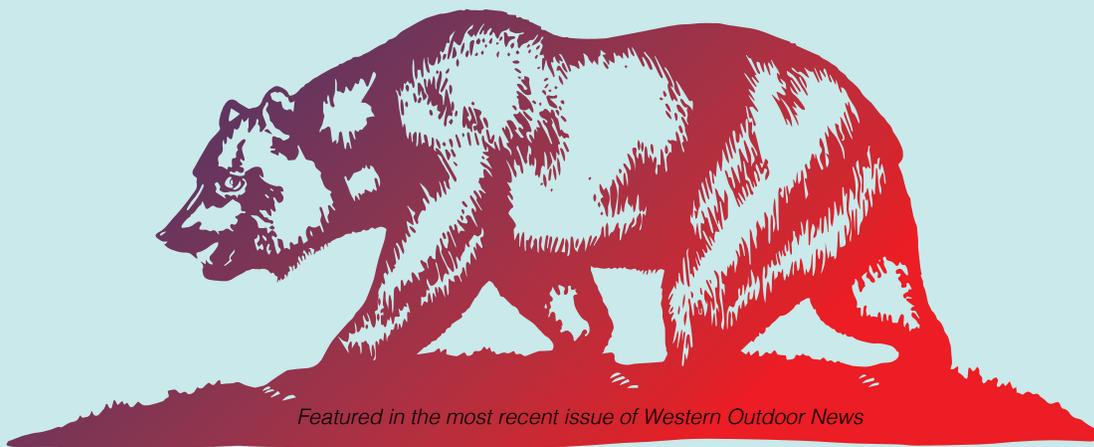
### **GUN OWNERS STUCK IN THE MIDDLE**

In one corner you had a professional politician with high aspirations; Lt. Gov-

ernor Gavin Newsom. He was pushing Proposition 63 as a way to build statewide name recognition for his run for Governor in 2018. In the other corner was gun-grabbing Democratic party-leader and state Senator, Kevin De Leon, who has his own ideas about who should be Governor. DeLeon was fighting to keep his crown as the King of gun control, and the media coverage that goes along with it, to help him advance his own political ambitions. Stuck in the middle was you, the law-abiding gun owner.

To steal Newsom's media thunder, DeLeon ram-rodged eleven bills

through the Legislature that were intended to make Proposition 63 redundant, and thereby limit Newsom's ability to use Prop 63 as a stepping-stone. NRA's Sacramento lobbyist worked with the legislative advocates for CRPA and other gun-owners' rights groups in the capital, and fought relentlessly for your rights. We spoke out at all the hearings against those bills, sent out emails to members urging people to contact their representatives to oppose the bad bills, and had our Second Amendment lawyers submit letters explaining each bill's legal deficiencies. But in this election year, the politicians were



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not interested in listening to reason. They broke the rules to get the bills through, and some politicians actually went out of their way to publicly insult our legislative advocates. It was outrageous!

In July, Governor Brown signed six of DeLeon's bills and, significantly, vetoed five bills at the request of the NRA, CRPA, and other groups. Then the largely duplicative Proposition 63 passed by a large majority of voters on November 8th. So even if Prop 63 had failed, the bills Brown signed in July resulted in essentially the same new restrictions on ammunition and magazines and on businesses selling firearms and ammunition anyway.

### **ARE YOU MAD ENOUGH YET?**

The success of this extreme attack on Second Amendment rights has left gun owners understandably angry. While their anger is justified, what is not justifiable is the allegation coming from some people that NRA has abandoned California. This is patently false, and only serves to divide gun owners -- which may very well be the intent of some of those who are feeding this false narrative.

Not surprisingly, much of the misinformation has been repeated and promoted by the anti-gun-owner mainstream media. Both the Los Angeles Times and Sacramento Bee published articles falsely claiming that the NRA chose not to fight Prop 63. This is the same biased media that has always lied about gun issues and that voters saw through this election. Believing them is like a Soviet dissident relying on Pravda. Nonetheless, many gun owners have been fooled, and some so-called gun owners' rights groups looking to benefit financially from the NRA-bashing were happy to let the misimpressions stand.

As the legislative advocate for the NRA in California, as the Director of the CRPA, and as people who were directly involved in the campaign against Prop 63, we won't.

### **CALIFORNIA CAMPAIGN FINANCE REALITIES**

For starters, the misleading newspaper articles about Prop 63 set up a false comparison between the NRA's expenditures opposing ballot measures in Cal-

ifornia versus the money spent opposing initiatives in other states. For example, the articles cherry-picked the states of Nevada and Maine as examples of where the NRA spent millions of dollars to oppose ballot measures, then claimed that the NRA only spent \$45,000 opposing Proposition 63. But this ignores the realities of California's campaign finance laws -- which are primarily designed to capture and publicly reveal the personal information about donors to political campaigns. Those laws require that any non-profit organization (like NRA or CRPA) directly donating more than \$50,000 a year in cash or in-kind contributions to political campaigns publish its donors' names. So if NRA or CRPA had directly donated more than that amount, we could have been required to divulge our member lists. That is something we will never do.

Despite California's limitations on direct financial contributions from non-profits, the members of non-profits can contribute to a political action committee, and a non-profit can ask its members to do just that. So NRA, CRPA, GOC, and a host of other groups formed the Coalition for Civil Liberties (CCL) Political Action Committee (PAC) in late 2015, made the maximum allowable direct contribution to it, and started working with other CCL partners to raise PAC money and to fight Prop 63 through the CCL state PAC. Check out [stoptheammograb.com](http://stoptheammograb.com) for more information on that effort. And, through its separate federal PAC, the NRA raised additional money from NRA members that was also used to fight Prop 63.

The CCL Coalition was able to convince most of the major law enforcement groups to stand with us in opposing Prop 63. That is an unprecedented achievement! And to fund the campaign against Prop 63, NRA, CRPA, and other coalition partners sent out multiple communications asking their members to support and donate to the CCL state PAC or to NRA's federal PAC. In doing so, the NRA and other CCL partners raised over a million dollars for the PACs, and spent all of it on the fight against Prop 63.

A lot more would have been raised, but most of the major donors who had pledged to support the effort dropped out once Governor Brown signed those six bills in July. The reason was that once

those bills were passed most of Prop 63 was duplicative. So it is no wonder the ammunition and firearms industry, which stands to lose millions of dollars annually as a result of Prop 63, in the end did not contribute significantly to fighting it. Once those bills passed in July, all of the CCL partners, and a lot of smaller donors also reached a similar conclusion: it was not worth spending multiple millions of dollars to oppose Prop 63 when all of Prop 63's most problematic provisions were already going to be law under DeLeon's bills. This was especially true considering how absolutely critical it was to defeat Hillary Clinton!

### **VETO GUNMAGEDDON**

After Governor Brown signed those "Gunmageddon" bills in July, a grassroots effort to overturn them was launched through the "Veto Gunmageddon" (VG) group. On its own initiative, VG launched a signature collection drive on seven "veto referendums" to have a citizen's veto of the bills Brown signed qualify for the ballot. NRA, CRPA, GOC, and others have tried to use the initiative process in California before. While these groups, and others, supported those historical initiative efforts, they weren't successful. We learned from experience that collecting enough signatures to qualify for the ballot is a herculean task. So we were all skeptical about Veto Gunmageddon effort at first. But, encouraged by a refreshing and unexpected level of gun owner engagement, within weeks NRA and CRPA had both committed to help the VG signature collection effort. NRA and CRPA each had already maxed out their political contributions allowed by law for the year on Prop 63, but we encouraged the hundreds of NRA and CRPA volunteers that work throughout California every weekend to collect VG signatures. Those NRA/CRPA volunteers collected many tens of thousands of signatures for the VG effort, and learned some valuable lessons. Future ballot initiatives are not off the table.

### **THE NRA SAVED AMERICA**

While California was suffering, the very future of the Second Amendment was at stake nationally. The NRA worked across the nation to win the White House,



U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. That effort was critical to defeating Hillary Clinton and the efforts of her anti-gun allies to eliminate our Second Amendment Rights. This trifecta is what was needed for the opportunity to overturn these diabolical attacks on our Second Amendment rights from federal and state officials. NRA emptied its federal PAC bank accounts more than any other single group to secure this victory. As a result, we now have an opportunity to pass pro-gun federal legislation to advance our rights that will Trump some anti-gun state laws (pun intended). And we will have a much more favorable judiciary when we file the lawsuits challenging Prop 63, Gunmageddon, and other restrictions on Second Amendment rights when they are heard by a pro-Second Amendment Supreme Court that will find many of California's laws as the constitutional violations that they are.

**THE NRA AND CRPA HAS ALWAYS FOUGHT FOR CALIFORNIANS**

NRA's Institute for Legislative Action Executive Director Chris Cox announced at the CRPA annual banquet in February 2016 that the NRA would keep every dollar raised in California here to fight for our rights. Here's a little secret: that's how it's been for over 20 years. The NRA has contributed millions of dollars to fight for Californian's rights via legislative advocacy, litigation, informative publications, and support of local Second Amendment efforts. All of this information is on CRPA's website [www.CRPA.org](http://www.CRPA.org).

The NRA and CRPA work hand-in-hand in California. Together, we have filed dozens of lawsuits in California challenging restrictions on "assault weapons," carrying firearms, obtaining ammunition, and so-called "large capac-

ity magazines," as well as on the state's misuse of firearm purchaser fees and its improper enforcement of regulations. We have also filed amicus briefs in support of several other important Second Amendment lawsuits, both in California and beyond.

In addition to litigation, we have been watchdog over the California Department of Justice's enforcement of gun laws and protecting California gun owners from its overreach. NRA and CRPA have also been involved in defending hunters' interests with the Fish & Game Commission, attending meetings and submitting petitions and comment letters. And we have launched the Coalition of Local Gun Owners, which monitors municipal governments and weighs in to defend the rights of gun owners from hostile local ordinances. Without the NRA and CRPA, there would be far more restrictions on firearms and hunting at the state and local level than there are now.

Without NRA's support, very little of this would have been possible. And these efforts will now increase as a result of the new gun control laws adopted this year. NRA and CRPA are hard at work preparing lawsuits to challenge provisions of Prop 63 and the other new legislation and looking at federal laws that could give California gun owners some relief.

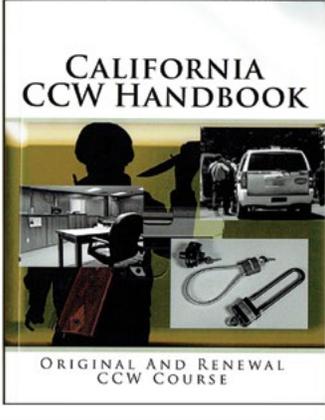
So, no, the NRA has not abandoned California. But, to make NRA and CRPA more powerful in California, we need gun owners to engage. There are 8-12 million gun owners in this state. With one million engaged gun-owners, we can change the political landscape. The fight in California won't be easy, but, thanks to the NRA, the fight just turned in our favor. CRPA looks forward to continued work with NRA to make the most of it.

**READY TO DEFEND YOURSELF?**  
**HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW!**

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