



To: Paul Helmke
President, Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence

From: Robert Green, Matt Bechak
Penn, Schoen Associates

Date: November 18, 2008

Re: Post-Election Analysis: Sensible gun laws builds bridges not burn them to moderates, McCain, and even gun owners in post-Heller world

2008 Presidential election voters of every type and description strongly support common sense gun laws and would like to see the Obama administration take action on these issues soon, according to the Penn, Schoen National Post-Election Omnibus Survey conducted November 5 to November 9, 2008. 2 in 3 (67%) would like to see the Obama administration take action in the first year.

Support for sensible changes in gun laws is strong not only among those who voted for Obama; certain common sense restrictions are also supported by the vast majority of McCain voters. For example, 3 in 4 (76%) voters favor reasonable gun regulations in general, with 4 in 5 (83%) who favor criminal background checks for all gun sales, including identical 84% majorities of McCain and gun owner voters.

These findings suggest that sensible gun legislation provides a unique opportunity for the new Administration to build a bridge to moderate voters in both parties. It is no longer plausible for opponents of gun legislation to assert that gun laws will somehow lead to a total gun ban. The right to own a gun is now recognized by the U.S. Supreme Court;¹ but so is the principle that reasonable restrictions are permissible. This is true not only nationally but in the states that switched to Democrats in 2008 as well. **Voters in the "new blue" states²** favor (78%) reasonable gun laws compared with 76% national support.

Finally, perhaps the most compelling purely political story in this data is that the National Rifle Association is losing their old power to turn elections. A 79% majority of voters say that America's most famous interest group was **not** an important factor in deciding the election; fully 74% of gun owners agree and say the NRA wasn't a factor. Even if the NRA is still making the calls, sending email, and social networking with millions the message itself is no longer *connecting* with their target audience; we suspect it is because it's a post-Heller world.

¹ *District of Columbia v. Heller*, 554 U.S. ____ (2008).

² "New Blue" = Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, and Virginia

1. *Would you say the views of the National Rifle Association, also known as the NRA, were one of the most important factors in deciding the Presidential election or were not very important?*

	All	OWN GUN		GENDER		STATE		IDEOLOGY			BALLOT	
		Yes	No	Male	Fem	New Blue	Other	Lib	Mod	Cons	Obm	McC
Important factor	21	26	17	20	21	22	20	15	16	31	15	27
Not important	79	74	83	80	79	78	80	85	84	69	85	73

2. *Recently the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Second Amendment supports an individual right to own gun, with reasonable restrictions. With this in mind, do you support or oppose the passage of laws placing reasonable restrictions on guns?*

	All	OWN GUN		GENDER		STATE		IDEOLOGY			BALLOT	
		Yes	No	Male	Fem	New Blue	Other	Lib	Mod	Cons	Obm	McC
Support reasonable restrictions on guns	76	66	83	68	83	78	75	87	80	63	85	66
Oppose reasonable restrictions on guns	24	34	17	32	17	22	25	13	20	37	15	34

3. Which of the following gun laws could you support? (Multiple responses permitted)

	All	OWN GUN		GENDER		STATE		IDEOLOGY			BALLOT	
		Yes	No	Male	Fem	New Blue	Other	Lib	Mod	Cons	Ob m	Mc C
Criminal background checks for all gun sales	83	84	82	79	86	87	81	82	83	83	81	84
Registration of gun sales and licensing of gun owners	68	60	73	63	73	70	68	76	69	61	71	66
Banning military- style assault weapons	65	60	69	60	70	68	64	72	67	58	69	62
Waiting period of five days for handgun sales	65	64	66	63	67	73	62	67	64	64	64	67
Limiting the number of guns that can be bought at one time	54	42	61	46	60	57	53	63	57	42	59	48
None of the above	4	5	4	5	4	2	5	1	6	4	4	5

4. Do you think the gun laws you supported above should be adopted in the first year of the next Administration or not?

	All	OWN GUN		GENDER		STATE		IDEOLOGY			BALLOT	
		Yes	No	Male	Fem	New Blue	Other	Lib	Mod	Cons	Ob m	McC
Yes	67	64	68	66	67	69	66	75	68	58	68	64
No	13	13	13	15	11	11	14	9	13	17	12	15
Don't know	20	23	19	18	22	19	21	16	19	25	20	21