



To: Mayors Against Illegal Guns

From: Margie Omero, Momentum Analysis & Bob Carpenter, Chesapeake Beach Consulting

Date: November 30, 2012

Re: The Role of Firearms Issues In Colorado, North Carolina And Virginia In The 2012 Election

Our firms set out to survey voters in battleground states in the 48 hours after Election Day to determine whether, and how strongly, gun policy issues influenced their vote. We chose North Carolina (a battleground state voting for Romney), Virginia (where the NRA was active in the Senate race), and Colorado (the location of a recent mass shooting). Despite significant demographic and political differences among these states, the results were remarkably consistent. Key findings:

- **More voters trust President Obama on guns.** Despite nearly \$12 million in reported election spending by the NRA in the Presidential race Obama emerged with an advantage on the issue. Voters in Virginia trusted Obama over Romney on gun laws by a nine-point margin. More also preferred Obama over Romney on guns in North Carolina and Colorado, though Obama's advantage is within each poll's margin of error.
- **Voters strongly support gun law reforms.** Wide majorities of voters in all three states, including in gun-owning households, favor a range of gun law reforms now being considered by Congress and state legislatures.
- **Voters want President Obama to prioritize gun law reforms.** While gun policy was not a vote driver, it was a factor for a majority of voters in all three states. And large majorities feel it should be at least a "somewhat important" priority for President Obama in his second term.

Despite Vast Election Spending, NRA Didn't Move The Needle & More Favor Obama Over Romney On Guns

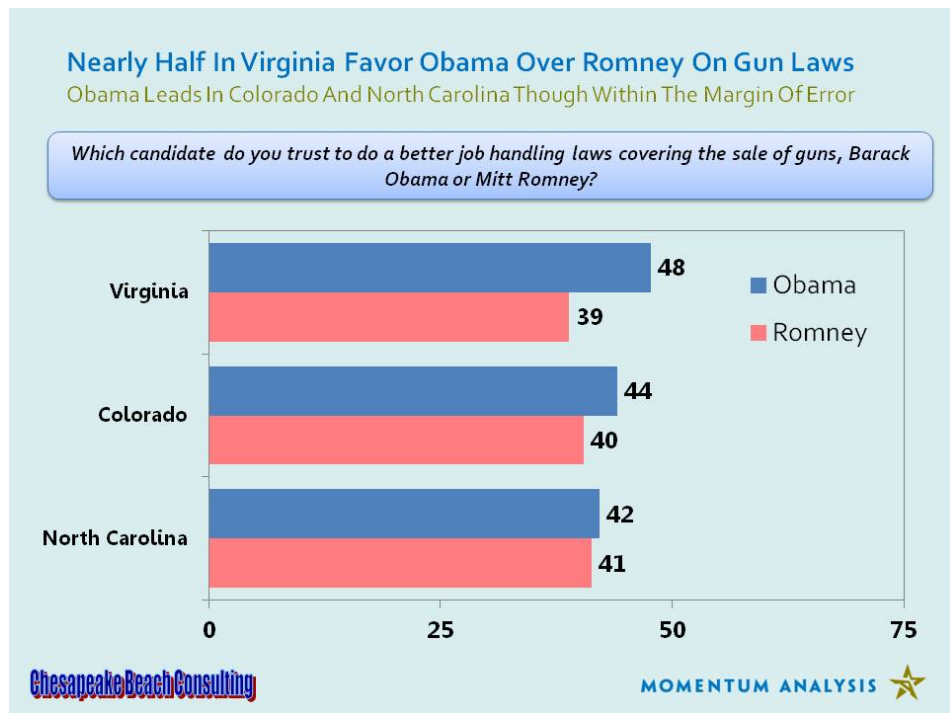
Despite the NRA's enormous – and asymmetrical – spending to elect Governor Romney and its other endorsed candidates, the gun lobby failed to sway voters.

Election results themselves suggest NRA spending was ineffective – or at least insufficient. In six of seven U.S. Senate races where the NRA spent more than \$100,000, their favored candidate lost.¹ According to [The Sunlight Foundation](http://www.sunlightfoundation.com), a campaign finance watchdog organization, the NRA's return on investment on their 2012 general election campaign spending was less than 1%, giving it the worst track record of all major political committees and organizations.

¹ "What the NRA's 'All In' Failure Means for Media" Matt Gertz. Media Matters.

<http://mediamatters.org/print/blog/2012/11/07/what-the-nras-all-in-failure-means-for-the-medi/191205>

Survey results confirm that the NRA leadership has little to show for its investment, in terms of either voter recall or persuasion.² Only about a quarter of voters in each state recalled seeing, reading or hearing something about a race from the NRA (27% in Colorado, 22% in North Carolina, 26% in Virginia) with recall in non-gun-owning households even lower (13% in CO, 15% in NC, 17% in VA). And in no state did Romney best Obama on the issue. About half of Virginians trusted Obama over Romney on gun laws, while Obama led Romney among Coloradans and North Carolinians within the margin of error.



The gun lobby’s efforts in the U.S. Senate contest in Virginia – where the NRA spent at least \$700,000 to elect Republican George Allen – produced mixed results at best. Among voters who remembered hearing from the NRA, slightly more said it made them more favorable about Senator-Elect Tim Kaine (34%) than felt less favorable (30%). The effect of NRA messaging on Republican George Allen’s standing was similarly mixed (31% more favorable as a result, 29% less favorable). Note also those who recalled hearing the NRA’s election messaging were more likely to be in the NRA’s base: they were disproportionately Republican, male and live in gun-owning households.

Voters Favor Stronger Gun Laws

Previous polling consistently shows [here, here, here and here] voters favor stronger gun laws, both as a general proposition, and when asked about specific reforms. Our results reinforced those findings.

Voters in the three targeted states overwhelmingly believe all gun buyers should be required to first pass a background check, and would bar sex offenders and individuals with domestic violence arrests from carrying concealed guns across state lines. Majorities also oppose national reciprocity for concealed carry permits – the NRA’s top federal legislative priority. The NRA’s reciprocity proposal (the

² Note actual NRA spending likely exceeds the estimates in this memo. October spending reports have not yet been filed with the FEC, and the NRA is not required to disclose spending on communications deemed educational, rather than political, in nature.

National Right-to-Carry Reciprocity Act) would allow people to enter any state with a concealed, loaded gun even if they fail to meet local permitting requirements.

Notably, voters in gun-owning households support these reforms just as strongly as those in homes with no guns – and, in some cases, favor them slightly more.

	CO total	CO gun HH	NC total	NC gun HH	VA total	VA gun HH
% FAVOR EACH PROPOSAL						
require gun owners pass background check	90	90	91	93	88	91
prohibit people w/domestic violence arrests from carrying concealed guns across state lines	62	66	63	62	56	56
prohibit convicted sex offenders from carrying concealed guns across state lines	65	70	68	70	60	61
% OPPOSE PROPOSAL						
allow people from other states carry concealed gun into your state w/o meeting local requirements	58	58	55	58	56	51

Guns Not a Vote Driver, But Majorities Call For Reform in President’s Second Term

As the nation recovers from the worst recession since the Great Depression, the economy and jobs topped voters’ concerns, and few said gun policy drove their vote. Even so, a majority of voters in each of these battleground states said the candidates’ position on guns was a factor in their decision.

HOW IMP WERE CANDIDATES' POSITION ON GUNS TO YOUR VOTE?	CO	NC	VA
Most important factor	7	10	9
One of several important factors	16	21	18
A minor factor	31	25	29
NET: most important/one of several/minor factor	54	56	56
Not a factor at all	42	41	42

Regardless of whether gun policy played a role in Election 2012, large majorities of voters in each state want laws covering the sale of guns to be at the very least a “somewhat important” priority for President Obama in his second term. Democrats in Virginia and Colorado were more likely than others in their state to call for reform. In North Carolina, Independents are most supportive of making gun law reform a priority.

HOW MUCH OF A PRIORITY SHOULD GUN LAWS BE TO PRES?	CO	NC	VA
One of the most important	2	2	3
Very important	17	24	20
Somewhat important	45	48	47
NET: One of most/very/somewhat important	64	74	71
Not very important	20	16	18
Not at all important	15	9	10

Methodology

This memo is based on findings from three surveys conducted in Colorado, North Carolina, and Virginia, November 7-8, 2012. Five hundred (500) telephone interviews were conducted in each state, using a voter file of registered voters, with voters screened for actually having voted in the 2012 Presidential general election. The margin of error for each survey is +/-4.4%, with the margin of error larger for subgroups. The surveys were conducted by the bipartisan polling team of Momentum Analysis with Chesapeake Beach Consulting.

About Momentum Analysis

Momentum Analysis is a Washington, DC-based polling firm serving Democratic candidates and progressive organizations. Its clients include the Democratic National Committee, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, EMILY's List, and candidates for office from City Council to US Senate. In 2012, the firm's bipartisan work on Walmart moms defined and described that swing voting bloc. President Margie Omero is also a Huffington Post/pollster.com blogger.

About Chesapeake Beach Consulting

Chesapeake Beach Consulting is a full service research, political consulting and strategy consulting firm. President Bob Carpenter has nearly 40 years of political experience having worked for state legislatures, political parties, campaigns and most recently for 18 years as Vice President of American Viewpoint, a Republican public opinion research firm that advised McCain-Palin in 2008 and Bush-Cheney in 2004.