



# Arizona Citizens Defense League

**Protecting Your Freedom**

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AzCDL's Membership Newsletter

November 2014

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John Wentling—Vice President  
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Fred Dahnke—Treasurer  
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### Inside this issue:

AZ Gun Owners Targeted	1 & 2
Background Checks	3
AzCDL Director Election	4
Support AzCDL	4

## Arizona Gun Owners Targeted

With little likelihood of anti-rights firearms legislation passing at the federal level anytime soon, the attack on our rights and freedoms has shifted to the state level, and is led by former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg through his various AstroTurf subsidiaries. Their primary focus is on states, like Arizona, that have a mechanism that allows petition gathering to get initiatives on the ballot, bypassing the legislative process.

### Background Check—Bait and Switch

Their strategy is simple but effective. Spend millions on a ballot measure that requires all firearm transfers, retail and private, to undergo a “background check”, with that information saved in state databases. The stated purpose of these measures is to prevent criminals from acquiring firearms. In reality, these laws have minimal, if any, impact on criminals. The real, but unspoken, reason for these initiatives is to *identify law-abiding gun owners*. As we are seeing in states like New York and California that have gun owner registration requirements, the next steps are criminalizing ownership of an ever-expanding list of firearms, then confiscation.

### Defeat in Washington

On November 4, Bloomberg’s anti-rights cartel scored a victory in the State of Washington, where a Draconian gun owner registration ballot measure, [I-594](#), passed easily. All private firearms transfers in the state must now undergo a “background check,” with that information stored in state databases. “Transfer” under the new law is so broadly defined that letting a friend examine your gun can be a criminal act. Bloomberg and other like-minded billionaires poured over \$10 Million into the passage of I-594.

In Washington, gun owner groups attempted to counter I-594 with a “background check lite” ballot initiative, [I-591](#). Their hope was that both initiatives would pass and require the courts to sort it out. I-591 was defeated by the voters, leaving only I-594 as the new law. AzCDL has no intention of proposing or supporting anything similar in Arizona.

### Pending in Nevada

Bloomberg’s anti-rights cartel is now targeting Nevada, Oregon and Arizona. The effort in Nevada started in 2013 with gun owner registration buried in a [“mental health” bill](#) that passed out of the state legislature but was vetoed by the governor. This legislation would have required all private firearms transfers to go through a “background check” with the transaction information recorded into a state controlled “Central Repository.”

With the failure of the legislation, Bloomberg’s minions in Nevada are now busy gathering signatures to put this [gun owner registration scheme](#) on the 2016 ballot. Leading the fight against gun owner registration in Nevada is [Nevadans for State Gun Rights](#).

*(Continued on page 2)*

# The War on Liberty

(Continued from page 1)

## A Challenge in Oregon

In 1999 a gun owner registration bill almost made it through the Oregon legislature. It was defeated in large part by the efforts of the then newly minted [Oregon Firearms Federation](#), an independent group similar to AzCDL.

On November 4, Oregon elected an anti-rights governor and strengthened their anti-rights majority in the legislature. Most likely, a gun owner registration effort in Oregon will be via their legislature.

## Gun Owner Registration is the Goal

Gun owner registration is being packaged as “universal background checks” ostensibly to keep guns out of the hands of criminals, who are always able to acquire firearms illegally.

The true goal of this movement is to capture data on firearms ownership in state databases for future use. As past history has shown, and California, New York and other eastern states are demonstrating, registration inevitably leads to confiscation.



## Words Have Meaning

We must not let the enemy define the [language](#) we use. Military looking rifles are not “assault weapons,” affordable handguns are not “Saturday Night Specials,” and registration of gun owners is not “universal background checks.”

We are talking about the fundamental, constitutionally guaranteed right to keep and bear arms. This isn’t the same as a credit check to buy a new car.

## Preemptive Surrendering

Fundamentally, once you accept the illegitimate and dangerous concept that there are just “some people” out there that should not be able to own a gun, and everyone needs a “background check,” you have preemptively surrendered your right to own a firearm.

In the 19th century it was believed that racial minorities should not be allowed to arm themselves. [Virtually every gun law in America is based on that concept](#). In the 20th century those same laws were reinterpreted to restrict all gun ownership. The shall-issue CCW permit was a reaction to those restrictions. CCW permit requirements are also an acceptance that “some people” should not be allowed to carry a gun and government officials are needed to make those determinations.

We’re seeing the next step in the “some people” argument cloaked as a mental health issue. It is much broader than those with a history of violence. Even people who have trouble handling their personal finances may now find themselves in danger of losing their firearms rights.

How long before owning a firearm is considered a sign of mental illness and YOU become “some people?”

The vehicle for pulling all this together is “universal background checks.” We’re calling it what it really is—Gun Owner Registration.

## The Crown Jewel is Arizona

Arizona has Constitutional Carry and has twice been declared, by Guns and

Ammo magazine, as the best state for gun owners.

Crushing the firearms freedoms we enjoy in Arizona is at the top of the anti-rights zealots’ list.

We must carefully craft our strategy to defeat the coming gun owner registration scheme in Arizona.

As we’ve seen in Washington, Bloomberg and his billionaire buddies are willing to spend tens of millions of dollars to strip law-abiding citizens of their fundamental rights.

That is not a battle we intend to fight. In the words of Sun Tzu, “The skillful strategist defeats the enemy without doing battle.” We have already begun strategizing and forming alliances. We will soon be working with a newly elected legislature and governor, along with other allies in the war on our rights.

## Freedom isn't Free

This battle for our fundamental freedoms has a very large price tag. Getting a pro-rights referendum on the ballot, which may become necessary, can carry a cost of over a million dollars.

We need the support of gun owners statewide. If you are not an AzCDL member, [now is the time to join](#). If you are a member, your continued support and activism is deeply appreciated. Your membership donations fund the battles ahead. Just as important is your activism in [contacting your legislators](#) when we ask.

*Get angry, get involved and donate! This time the Alamo stays in the hands of the good guys.*

# The False Promise of Background Checks

The idea of background checks for firearm purchases seems to sound sensible, but the reality is much different from the appearance. In truth, expecting firearm background checks to stop criminals is like trying to catch a few particular salmon during spawning season by placing a rock in the middle of the stream and watching for the specific fish to jump over the rock.

**specious:** adjective: superficially plausible, but actually wrong. "a specious argument" misleading in appearance, especially misleadingly attractive.

(Merriam Webster)

There are more than 15 million NICS background checks processed every year, totaling over 180 million checks since the program's inception in 1998. Between 98% and 99% of those checks were on regular, unrestricted people – most of whom already own at least one firearm. Of the few prohibited persons stopped from purchasing a firearm, the vast majority either weren't aware of their prohibited status or thought their rights had been restored; they had no criminal intent.

In 2010, which is typical of recent years, only about 60 individuals – out of 15 million – were considered worthy of prosecution, and only 13 people – out of 15 million – were actually convicted of illegally trying to purchase a firearm. Not a very impressive return from a program that infringes on an enumerated constitutional right – that "shall not be infringed" – and has cost taxpayers an estimated \$2 billion dollars so far.

Now the same people who brought us this incredibly inefficient and wasteful system want to expand it to include private transfers between individuals. Again, the idea seems, on the surface, logical and reasonable. But again, it is specious, just another rock in the stream. The arguments in favor of so-called "universal background checks" are, in part, an acknowledgement that the present system can't work; there are just too many easy alternatives for a determined criminal. One more obstacle will make no difference. Criminals get guns by stealing them, buying them on the black market, or by convincing a girlfriend, family member, or paid associate to purchase them.

While the idea of "universal background checks" seems reasonable, it is a fantasy that cannot work. The only real effect of the proposals would be to increase the cost of firearms, some by as much as 30% to 40%, encumber the law-abiding with additional regulations, and generate a paper trail that could be – and historically has been in places like California, New York, and New Jersey – later used for registration and confiscation. It would also provide a mechanism for making all firearm transfers illegal. Even a recent special commission set up by the President concluded that expanding background checks would be ineffective unless there was also universal registration of all guns and gun owners.



So why are advocates like billionaire, Mike Bloomberg, pushing so hard for something that they know will not produce the results they say they are after?

The answer is that anti-rights advocates have a proven, incremental approach to achieving their true goals. They push for whatever legislation they can get, then when it proves ineffective, they point to the law's failure as proof that their next solution is desperately needed.

Up until 1968, anyone could buy a gun just about anywhere. Hardware stores, gas stations, and general stores all sold guns, and guns could be purchased through the mail from catalogs or ads in the backs of magazines. That changed with passage of the Gun Control Act of 1968, but for the next 30 years crime continued to rise. The law failed to do what its backers promised, but that failure was touted as proof that stricter measures were needed and we got the Brady Background Check Law, the Lautenberg Amendment expanding the "prohibited person" list to include certain types of misdemeanors, and the Clinton "Assault Weapons" Ban. None of those "desperately needed" measures accomplished their stated goals, and each time, that failure was pointed to as proof that more laws were needed.

Gun control laws simply don't work. That's a historical fact. They impact the law-abiding, and often harm the innocent – like [Shaneen Allen](#). Criminalizing private transfers – which is what "universal background checks" really do – will not reduce crime or save lives. It is just a reasonable-sounding proposal to increase the cost and inconvenience of exercising a constitutional right. Ask any proponent of these laws what they will do if the law is passed. If they are honest they will go into a litany of other laws and regulations they want to see enacted culminating in the total prohibition of firearms in private hands.

Anti-rights zealots are never satisfied. Each reasonable-sounding proposal is just another incremental step toward the next, more restrictive proposal, and each failure of their laws to accomplish their stated goals is their excuse for the next restrictive, unworkable scheme.

Gun laws are not about public safety or crime reduction or even gun control. They're about government control over citizens.

Jeff Knox

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## AzCDL 2014 Director Election Results

To promote continuity in leadership, the terms of office for AzCDL's directors are staggered. This year, the director positions held by Fred Dahnke and Duke Schechter expired. Additionally, since Tom Woodrow was appointed as a director to replace the position vacated by AzCDL's Media Coordinator Charles Heller, his temporary term also expired.

Following the election announcement in May, we were fortunate enough to have the following 5 Life members nominated for the 3 open director positions: Fred Dahnke, Duke Schechter, Tom Woodrow, Drake Mitchell and Cap Lund.

Per AzCDL's bylaws candidate statements and ballots were mailed to all

current members with a deadline of August 31 to cast votes.

We thank every member who took the time to return their completed ballots.

Official ballot counting occurred on September 20. Fred Dahnke, Tom Woodrow and Drake Mitchell were elected as AzCDL Directors.

In keeping with our bylaw provisions to stagger director terms, Fred Dahnke and Tom Woodrow were elected to 3 year terms and Drake Mitchell was elected to a 2 year term.

The expiration dates for all AzCDL directors' terms of office are as follows:

2015—Dave Kopp  
2016—John Wentling & Drake Mitchell  
2017—Fred Dahnke & Tom Woodrow

Pursuant to AzCDL's bylaws, following the election of directors, the Board appointed the following officers:

Dave Kopp—Chairman of the Board  
Dave Kopp—AzCDL President  
John Wentling—Vice President  
Tom Woodrow—Secretary  
Fred Dahnke—Treasurer  
Cap Lund—Assistant Treasurer  
Charles Heller—Media Coordinator



## Join / Renew / Donate / Volunteer

Billionaires like Michael Bloomberg and Bill Gates are willing to spend millions to take away your rights. In Washington over \$10 Million was donated by 5 very rich people to pass the I-594 gun owner registration ballot measure.

Next on the Billionaires' hit list are Nevada, Oregon and Arizona. While a head-to-head money battle is out of the question, there are things we can do to make it more difficult for them to pull a stunt like I-594 in Arizona.

One option we are looking at is a pro-rights ballot measure. However, that could carry a price-tag well in excess of \$1 Million.

AzCDL is self-funded, unaffiliated, and fiercely independent. We are not beholden to any political party, outsiders, sugar daddies, corporate string pullers, or New York billionaires.

We do not flood your mailbox or email in-box with "the sky is falling, send money" messages like many other organizations. Your voluntary memberships and donations are what keep us fighting for your rights at the legislature.

**How much are you willing to donate to fight the coming battle for your rights? Which is more important to you, that new rifle or pistol, or the right to buy it?**

Every little bit helps. If you are not an AzCDL member, please [join—today](#). A Basic Annual membership costs less than a box of ammo.

Lapsed member? We're holding your membership number for you. Now is the time to rejoin the fight for your rights.

Is your Basic Annual membership expiring soon? Consider upgrading to a [Sustaining Annual](#) membership.

***Better yet, become a Life member!***

**ARIZONA CITIZENS DEFENSE LEAGUE**  
*PROTECTING YOUR FREEDOM*



Your Name Here

Life Member

100

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Your AzCDL membership dues accumulate towards a Life Membership. Know any other pro-rights groups that will do that?

If you are a long time AzCDL member (Thank You!) you may find that for just a few extra dollars, you can upgrade to a Life Membership. In addition to receiving two free t-shirts, a life member lapel pin and certificate, life members are added to an exclusive "Leadership" email discussion group. Interested? Email Fred, AzCDL's Treasurer, at [treasurer@azcdl.org](mailto:treasurer@azcdl.org) or leave a voice-mail message at (623) 242-9086, to learn how to upgrade to a life membership.

Are you an AzCDL member but can't afford an extra donation right now? We are always looking for volunteers to help us recruit new members at gun shows. And, we'll get you into the gun show for FREE! You can find more about volunteering at AzCDL's "Volunteer" page at our website: [www.azcdl.org](http://www.azcdl.org).

The biggest gun show of the year is coming up on December 5-7 in Phoenix where AzCDL will be working at 2 locations. To volunteer, email Ed at [ed.martinez@azcdl.org](mailto:ed.martinez@azcdl.org).