

TO: Interested Parties
FR: Pia Carusone, Americans for Responsible Solutions PAC
DT: November 5, 2013

How Responsible Gun Solutions Won in Virginia

Virginia has among the weakest gun laws in the country and is literally home to the most powerful elements of the gun lobby. Yet Americans for Responsible Solutions PAC – founded by former Congresswoman Gabby Giffords and retired combat veteran and astronaut Capt. Mark Kelly – demonstrated through its deliberate and targeted program that highlighting gun violence prevention can and does improve a candidate’s electoral position. The bottom-line: Winning candidates, as shown by Governor-Elect Terry McAuliffe and Lt. Governor-Elect Ralph Northam, can support and run on responsible gun ownership.

Key Takeaways:

- Governor-Elect McAuliffe and Lt. Governor-Elect Northam showed you can run and win on a message of responsible gun ownership, even in a purple state with a history of supporting gun rights;
- Candidates can run effective campaigns and *should* adopt gun violence prevention positions and messages to reach and sway "the deciders," eg: independent women and other key voting demographics;
- Messaging on responsible gun ownership is a critical turn-out tool for a targeted set of drop-off voters;
- Opposition to popular and effective policies like expanded background checks allows ARS and other groups to brand candidates as extreme;

ARS PAC’s \$600,000 Virginia Electoral Program Highlights:

- Targeted mail program to 144,479 registered voters and 66,370 households;
- Launched the website KenOnGuns.com to give Virginia voters the facts;
- Telephone Town Hall with Capt. Mark Kelly and 7,000 likely voters;
- Recorded call from Capt. Mark Kelly to 66,370 households inviting them to learn more about the gubernatorial candidates;
- Targeted online advertising to 189,000 registered voters urging them to “Get Out The Vote” on Election Day;
- Targeted online persuasion media to 144,479 registered voters and 66,370 households;

With the National Rifle Association committing a \$500,000 ad-buy attacking pro-gun responsibility gubernatorial candidate Terry McAuliffe and aiding gun extremist candidate Ken Cuccinelli, ARS PAC implemented a robust program to send a strong message:

Virginians are with us, our candidates can win, and we'll help make sure they do. With a sharp contrast on gun responsibility between the two slates of candidates, ARS PAC effectively used gun violence messages to help produce losses for each of the anti-gun safety candidates running statewide – the first time in decades Republicans have failed to hold a single statewide elected office.

As ARS PAC publicly confirmed to Politico, we spent “at least what it takes to counter the half-million-dollar campaign [of] the National Rifle Association.” ARS PAC’s multifaceted program of robust and targeted direct mail, targeted online advertising, and a tele-townhall constituted a strong investment opposing Ken Cucinelli, anti-responsibility candidate for Governor and E.W. Jackson, anti-responsibility candidate for Lieutenant Governor.

A survey released this week by Public Policy Polling of 870 likely Virginia voters from November 2-3 found that messaging on gun violence prevention issues was helpful in the race for McAuliffe.

“Asked how Cuccinelli’s opposition to expanded background checks factors into their vote, 47 percent said that position makes them less likely to vote for him, as opposed to 18 percent who said it made them more likely to do so,” reported Politico. [<http://politi.co/1ff5s8S>] “When asked whether they had seen or received any advertising on the gun issue, just under half of all those surveyed — 47 percent — said they had, compared with 40 percent who hadn’t.”

A Nation Watching

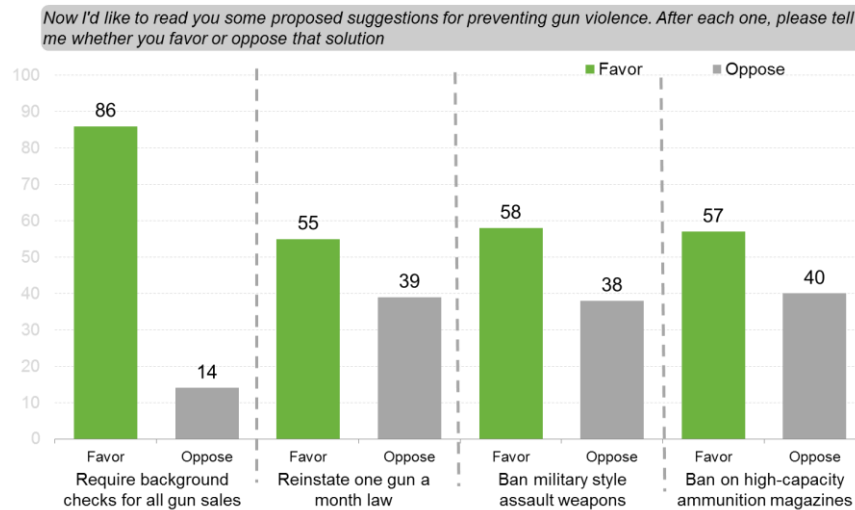
From pundits to the mainstream media, the nation is watching the outcomes in the Virginia off-year elections for key signals from the electorate leading into 2014 and even 2016. For ARS PAC, our success in Virginia establishes momentum for the federal level midterms and makes the case that candidates supporting gun violence prevention can use the issue to win. Case in point: Politico reported that McAuliffe saw gun issues “as a winning issue in the home stretch of the Virginia governor’s race.” [<http://politi.co/1g0Y6IU>] McAuliffe supports expanded background checks and limits on high-capacity magazines.

From the beginning, ARS PAC made clear it would challenge the conventional wisdom on gun issues, take on the gun lobby, and engage with millions of people to reduce gun violence and support lawmakers willing to take a stand for responsible policies. “Legislators will no longer have reason to fear the gun lobby and their dangerously deep pockets,” ARS PAC wrote at its inception on January 8, 2013.

When asked about his “F” from the NRA at the final debate held at Virginia Tech, McAuliffe was straight forward: “I don’t care what grade I got from the NRA. I never want to see another Newtown or Aurora or Virginia Tech ever again.” The candidate later Tweeted: @TerryMcAuliffe "I'm going to answer this as a parent. I support the 2nd Amendment. I'm a gun owner. I support universal background checks"

Deep Dive Into the Virginia Electorate

ARS PAC’s internal research by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research (GQRR) showed the roster of Virginia voters who believe gun laws should be made stronger included key groups such as Democrats (86 percent), women (65 percent) and African Americans (72 percent). In what has been a very competitive campaign, opinion research on guns showed Virginia and its voters reflect voters in the rest of the country [See figure below].



ARS PAC knew that the national trends on gun violence prevention issues worked in its favor, but now it had the data to bring a gun message to the Virginia electorate and win. In one exercise, the data showed a 57 percent majority believe laws covering gun sales should be stronger. This compares to 56 percent of voters nationally who believe laws should be made stronger. Additionally, a Washington Post poll in May asked a random sample of 663 likely gubernatorial voters in Virginia if voters would support or oppose a law requiring background checks on people buying guns at gun shows. The results showed 86 percent support and 10 percent oppose.

Precision Targeting to “The Deciders”

Our internal polling by GQRR showed messaging on gun prevention offered "a significant lift" to the effort to elect Terry McAuliffe as Governor of Virginia. McAuliffe improved on every exercise where GQRR provided a balanced description of McAuliffe and candidate Ken Cuccinelli's views on guns. Using data and modeling by Catalist, **ARS PAC was able to predict**

and validate a voter's support on gun issues and the voters' movement toward McAuliffe. ARS PAC then constructed a program using top-tier tested messaging and precision mail targeting a persuasion universe of 66,370 likely independent-women voters.

The data by GQRR showed independent-women voters were key in providing that “significant lift” to McAuliffe. Breaking it down, it found that sixty-five percent of women believed gun laws should be stronger, 71 percent among older women (over age 50), 69 percent among non-college women, and 64 percent among moms.

Hitting hard with a 15-piece mail program to a group of voters selected using the gun targeting model and three other micro-targeting scores, **ARS PAC was able to oppose candidates directly on their positions on guns rather than broader campaign themes in the race.** The mail program focused on delivering impactful information and arguments about gun violence to the 144,479 registered voters in 66,370 households whom we believe were "the deciders" in the 2013 electorate. The pieces communicated the reckless policy proposals and unpopular votes of Ken Cuccinelli and E. W. Jackson. Included in mailers about all candidates was information on their opposition to expanding background checks to gun shows and internet sales. Other communications on Cuccinelli focused on his support for allowing guns in schools, his support for allowing patrons to carry concealed guns while drinking in bars, and opposition to the Violence Against Women Act.

The image displays three mailer graphics. The top graphic is titled "Ken Cuccinelli Opposes Background Checks At Gun Shows" and features a photo of Cuccinelli. The middle graphic is titled "E.W. Jackson Opposes Gun Background Checks, Was Accused Of Threatening A Young Woman's Life" and features a photo of Jackson. The bottom graphic is titled "E.W. Jackson Opposes Criminal Background Checks For Guns" and also features a photo of Jackson. Each graphic includes text detailing the candidate's stance on gun safety and provides a "Check the Facts" section with source citations.

Ken Cuccinelli Opposes Background Checks At Gun Shows
A Loophole That Lets Criminals And The Dangerously Mentally Ill Get Their Hands On Guns

Ken Cuccinelli's **EXTREME VIEWS** helped put guns in the hands of violent criminals, and put Virginia families at risk.

Cuccinelli Opposed Closing The Gun-Show Loophole
In the Virginia legislature, Ken Cuccinelli voted against requiring a criminal background check for people who just have a license at gun shows.¹

Cuccinelli's Extreme Views Mean Criminals And The Dangerously Mentally Ill Could Buy Guns
Cuccinelli's vote helped preserve the gun-show loophole, which means that in Virginia convicted criminals and those with dangerous mental illness can evade laws on the books and buy guns at gun shows or on the Internet.²

More Than 400 Guns Sold At Gun Shows Wound Up In Criminals' Hands
According to official records, between 2002 and 2005, more than 400 guns sold at gun shows led in the Richmond, VA area alone were involved in criminal activity.³

Check the Facts:
1) Richmond Times Dispatch, 1/24/08
2) Richmond Times Dispatch, 1/18/13
3) Richmond Times Dispatch, 1/26/07

VOTE NO ON KEN CUCCINELLI
EXTREME VIEWS

RECORD ON RESPONSIBLE GUN SAFETY AT WWW.KENONGUNS.COM

E.W. Jackson Opposes Gun Background Checks, Was Accused Of Threatening A Young Woman's Life

E.W. Jackson's extreme view opposing background checks for firearms purchased at gun shows means criminals and those who are dangerously mentally ill can get them more easily and put Virginians at risk. And Jackson himself had a temporary restraining order filed against him for threatening a young woman.

Opposes Background Checks For Firearms Purchased At Gun Shows
In the same candidate debate in late September, Jackson said he opposes closing the gun show loophole and requiring background checks on firearm sales at gun shows.¹ According to official records, between 2002 and 2005, more than 400 guns sold at gun shows just in the Richmond, VA area alone were involved in criminal activity.²

Jackson Accused Of Threatening A Young Woman's Life
In 2006, E.W. Jackson was accused of threatening the life of his daughter's roommate, according to a police report in Belmont, Massachusetts. A temporary restraining order was filed against Jackson in the Middlesex County Court.³

Check the Facts:
1 AP 0/25/12 accessed 10/5/13

E.W. Jackson Opposes Criminal Background Checks For Guns

E.W. Jackson's extreme views mean more guns in the hands of criminals, putting Virginia families in extreme danger.

Keep The Gun Show Loophole
E.W. Jackson's extreme views on guns include keeping in place the gun show loophole that helps criminals avoid background checks on sales at gun shows.¹

Eliminate Other Gun Safety Laws
More dangerous than preserving the gun show loophole, Jackson even promised to "aggressively pursue eliminating" other common-sense gun safety laws on the books in Virginia.²

Check the Facts:
1. PilotOnline.com, 4/16/13; 2. PilotOnline.com, 4/16/13; 3. AP, 8/25/13, accessed 10/5/13; 4. E.W. Jackson official campaign website, http://www.jackson08.com/Issues/, accessed 10/5/13

E.W. JACKSON
EXTREME VIEWS TOO DANGEROUS TO BE LT. GOVERNOR

Driving Voters to the Facts Online

ARS PAC launched an online website, www.KenOnGuns.com, and a targeted online persuasion advertising program to the 144,479 registered voters and 66,370 households also receiving the mail.

Additionally, using ARS PAC’ gun responsibility messaging, our persuasion digital program achieved click-through rates roughly four times higher than comparable efforts. This means that roughly four times more people who were targeted with our persuasion ads actively clicked to learn more about the campaign than would have had they been targeted with other messages.

ARS PAC also launched an online “Get Out The Vote” effort targeted ads to 189,000 Democratic voters who have inconsistently voted in past elections. The GOTV digital campaign – using ARS PAC’ gun responsibility messaging and direct messaging from ARS PAC founders, Gabby Giffords and Mark Kelly – achieved click-through rates almost nine times higher than comparable efforts in the state. Taken together, our digital persuasion and GOTV programs showed the unique power of the gun violence prevention message in elections.

Capt. Mark Kelly Talking Directly to Voters

ARS PAC also hosted a one-hour telephone town hall following the final Virginia gubernatorial debate to convince undecided women voters to support the gubernatorial candidate who will work to prevent gun violence. More than 7,000 likely voters participated in the town hall forum joined by retired astronaut and combat veteran, Captain Mark Kelly, and by Kristina Anderson, a survivor of the 2007 Virginia Tech shooting and co-founder of The Koshka Foundation, a nonprofit that seeks to positively impact school safety and student education initiatives. Andy Goddard also participated in the town hall. His son, Colin, was shot four times at the Virginia Tech tragedy.



We're Just Beginning

ARS PAC has proven that candidates can stand strong on gun violence prevention issues and win--by carefully crafting the messages, the matrix of micro-targeting indices and a data-driven approach that allowed us to share relevant information with the voters who decide elections. It has been nearly one year since the terrible tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School. It was that tragedy that spurred former Congresswoman Gabby Giffords and her husband, retired Navy Captain and astronaut Mark Kelly, to launch Americans for Responsible Solutions and to encourage elected officials to stand up for solutions to prevent gun violence and protect responsible gun ownership. This is just the beginning.