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EDITORIAL

Gun Owners, Unfiltered

The National Rifle Association has long fulminated in the gun control debate in Washington like the Great Oz in the Emerald City. Now along comes Frank Luntz, a conservative Republican pollster who, Toto-like, has snatched back Oz's curtain to reveal that gun owners favor much more reasonable gun controls than the gun lobby would ever allow the public to imagine.

Mr. Luntz queried 832 gun owners, including 401 card-carrying N.R.A. members, in a survey commissioned by [Mayors Against Illegal Guns](#), the alliance of hundreds of executives seeking stronger gun laws. In flat rebuttal of N.R.A. propaganda, the findings showed that 69 percent of N.R.A. members supported closing the notorious gun-show loophole that invites laissez-faire arms dealing outside registration requirements.

Even more members, 82 percent, favored banning gun purchases to suspects on terrorist watch lists who are now free to arm. And 69 percent disagreed with Congressionally imposed rules against sharing federal gun-trace information with state and local police agencies.

These findings strike at some of the N.R.A.'s most sacred shibboleths. The survey questionnaire, devoid of boilerplate alarms about threatened gun rights, found some plain reason at work. It is clear that most members still oppose policies like a national gun registry. But 86 percent of gun owners also agreed that more could be done to "stop criminals from getting guns while also protecting the rights of citizens to freely own them." And 78 percent of N.R.A. members said they should be required to report stolen guns to the police — to combat another source of underground arms dealing.

Imagine, the dreaded M-word — moderates — surfacing in a political constituency that the N.R.A. portrays as fully locked and loaded for marching orders. If only poll-addicted members of Congress dared to heed gun owners unfiltered by the gun lobby.

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