

August 21, 2003

Wayne La Pierre
NRA Executive Vice President

Dear Sir:

The Grey Davis recall effort in California demonstrates a fact that everyone in the United States knows; California is rapidly submerging into a vast ocean of political, legal and fiscal uncertainty. And the enemies of liberty have taken advantage of this chaos in an effort to strip Californians of their gun rights. This is the main concern of this letter.

For years, Californians have seen the implementation of incrementally more restrictive gun control laws. In each of those years, our valiant lobbyists in Sacramento, have engaged in superhuman efforts to confront this tide of legislation. People such as Ed Worley were hired by NRA-ILA with the dues of members from all 50 states. They have worked near miracles in delaying, diluting and in many cases stopping gun control laws. They have worked tirelessly. They are rightly considered heroes. But the focus of their actions has been to stay the tide of legislation, not reverse it. And if we do not reverse this momentum, the Second Amendment will be rendered a legal nullity in California. It is simply a matter of time.

The key reason that the enemies of liberty can do this in California is because our state constitution does not protect an individual's right to keep and bear arms; and the federal right is – at best – uncertain in the Ninth Circuit.

Our worry is this; Given the legislative climate and the lack of State Constitutional protections, we can logically expect that no modern military rifles will be in hands of California's civilians; except for those willing to risk becoming felons. And given the pace of legislation, we can expect this to occur within the next generation. If the purpose of the Second Amendment is to guarantee that the civilian population will have the equipment to assist our military forces to repel invasion, put down insurrections and deter domestic tyranny, then the rest of the country can count California out if and when a crisis of that magnitude develops.

It is this state of affairs that caused our group of local Second Amendment activists to band together and form the NRA Members' Council of Silicon Valley here in Santa Clara County almost a decade ago.

We have had many successes over these years. In 1995 and 1996, it was this Members' Council that rallied hundreds of citizens and packed San Jose City Council meetings. In doing so we ended an attempt to register bullets and restrict firearm ownership within city limits. More importantly, we ended the budding political career of two anti-gun activist/politicians (Trixie Johnson and Margie Fernandez).

In 1997, it was this Members' Council that was credited with the election of Don Gage to the County Board of Supervisors.

In 1998, it was this Members' Council that rallied hundreds of citizens, packed a series of Santa Clara County Board of Supervisor meetings, and ended an attempt by LCAV activists to put gun stores out of business and close down gun shows in the County. As a result of this victory, many other local government entities dropped their attempts to pursue similar legislative restrictions under the guise of "violence prevention" .

In 2001 and 2002, it was this Members' Council that undermined two separate attempts by the Million Mom March to establish chapters in the Bay Area. We accomplished this by simply showing up at their first meetings with 10 times as many pro gun people. We simply overwhelmed them on their own turf.

In 2002, it was this Members' Council that created the only phone bank in Santa Clara County to support the campaign of Bill Simon for Governor. And in the space of 6 weeks, members of this council dialed almost 10,000 phone numbers encouraging voters to support this NRA endorsed candidate.

These kinds of victories are still possible in California. The personnel , the energy and the interest still remain to do them, if only we were allowed. But we are not. Almost every tool used to achieve these previous victories is considered a violation of the terms and conditions of the Affiliation Agreement and the Handbook. The impetus to rely on defensive legislative tactics controlled by staff supercedes efforts at positive local action.

One might remark that Californians deserve what they get. After all, California keeps electing anti-gun legislators at the local, state and federal levels. The last U.S. Senator from this state that was even a luke-warm supporter of gun rights was Pete Wilson in the mid-80s.

But this mind-set ignores the fact that when gun rights are segregated from other political issues, Californians consistently believe in the principles of the Second Amendment and the National Rifle Association's interpretation of this "palladium" of rights.

Unfortunately, it is the compromising atmosphere of candidate and partisan politics that permits Second Amendment issues to be ignored [and/or neglected] in the trade-offs that necessarily accompany the "deals" and compromises that have to be made in order for democracy to work. Perhaps that is why the "right to keep and bear arms" was intended by the founders to be shielded from the political process, in the same manner as the freedoms of speech, press and assembly.

All of these thoughts have led us to the conclusion that a long range strategy, that includes a plan for taking back our rights, is necessary if Californians are to remain citizens of our great republic, entitled to all the rights, privileges and immunities afforded the citizens of the other 49 states.

Since we have been told by your representatives that the National Rifle Association does not take policy suggestions from its members or its Members' Council officers, this necessarily means that we must begin to chart our own course. After much debate and consideration, we have reluctantly concluded that the members of this Council must find another avenue to pursue our work, outside the confines of the Members' Council program..

We have the deepest respect for the National Rifle Association. We have the highest regard for its board and officers. The NRA is without question, the finest issue advocacy organization in the world. The NRA's ability to achieve legislative victories is unmatched. But if the core of our efforts continue under the limitation of a defensive mentality, everything we do is ultimately doomed to fail.

Those of us who are NRA members will continue to support the National Rifle Association, both financially and politically. But the nature of the goal we wish to achieve, and your own internal policies, require that we officially sever our involvement in the Members' Council program. It is our intention that this dissolution be treated as a purely internal business matter, and on the friendliest of terms. It should in no way be considered as an affront to the NRA, its governing board, its officers or its members. It is our hope that nothing occurs to alter this spirit.

In conclusion, we the volunteers of the NRA Members' Council of Silicon Valley, have voted to dissolve our chapter in accordance with the Affiliation Agreement § 8 (c). This dissolution becomes effective with the vote taken during our last scheduled meeting, Thursday August 21, 2003.

Respectfully,

Daryl Davis - President



Mark Towber - Vice President



Chris Smith - Secretary



Treasurer - Emma Turlo

