

COLORADO GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES AND GUN STANCES

June 4th update

We are only 22 days away from the primary election and ballots are being mailed today.

Ceasefire Endorsements for Governor

Mike Johnston – D

Cary Kennedy – D

(order is alphabetical)

Endorsement choices were made by an analysis of how the candidates responded to our questionnaire, their voting records and public statements. None of the Republican candidates answered our questionnaire, despite repeated reminders sent to their campaign.

Why didn't we endorse Donna Lynne? Lynne never responded to our questionnaire despite repeated email and phone requests. Additionally, she has no voting record.

Why didn't we endorse Jared Polis? Polis, likewise, did not respond to our questionnaire. Additionally, as you'll see below, despite the rhetoric in campaign ads, Polis has a checkered record on the issue.

It's essential that our next governor (to be elected in November, 2018) supports retention of Colorado's universal background checks, ban on high capacity magazines, and relinquishment of firearms by domestic violence offenders. Additionally, we look to these candidates to approve more proactive gun violence prevention laws, such as the Extreme Risk Protection Orders bill (red-flag) defeated by Senate Republican leadership last month.

Comments about Advertisements and some Candidate Forum Responses.

By now, you're in overload mode on advertisements arriving in your mailbox enticing you to vote for one candidates over another. Additionally, there have been some statements made at candidate debates that are enlightening (or unnerving). Here's our take on some of what we've seen or heard (and we haven't heard it all).

Democratic candidates, which is a refreshing change, aren't running away from the issue, but rather are embracing common sense gun reforms, and endeavoring to posit themselves as the leader on the issue. This is largely due to the horrific gun violence events in the last 8 months: Las Vegas, Sutherland Springs, and Parkland, and the activism generated by the students following the Parkland shooting.

Mike Johnston's PAC is running ads claiming "He stood up to the NRA twice and won." Joey Bunch, a reporter for Colorado Politics, actually asked Johnston about that noting that in 2013 Johnston didn't sponsor the gun reform bills, and only jumped on the bandwagon after they passed. Johnston did co-sponsor Universal Background Checks the Domestic Violence Relinquishment bills after the senate approved them. He did not co-sponsor the other bills, such as the High Capacity Magazine ban. His reply to Bunch was that he was first to speak for the bills from the floor of the senate.

Mike Johnston's comments about an assault weapons ban at an early forum confused people working on this issue. At that debate, he indicated that it was the high capacity magazine that gave the power to the assault weapon, and that we had already taken care of it in Colorado. Actually, there are a number of features of assault weapons beyond the magazine that increase their lethality. Johnston ads now proclaim his support for an assault weapons ban.

Jared Polis ads contend he has stood up to the NRA since becoming a congressman. Not a true statement as you'll note by examining his record (see below). Nevertheless, his positions have evolved. Unfortunately, Polis was doing a two-step dance in his response to a question posed by a student at the Manual High School debate. Asked about his co-sponsorship of a bill to allow the interstate sale of handguns, Polis deflected it saying that the bill he co-sponsored was a Brady background check bill which included that provision. True and Not True. Polis co-sponsored two bills, one in 2014 was a stand-alone Interstate Sale of Handguns (HR3335), the other was the 2013 King background check bill (HR1565).

Democratic Candidates

Michael Johnston - Denver

As a state senator in 2013, Johnston cosponsored the Universal Background Check bill and voted to support all five of the gun reform laws. Additionally, he spoke eloquently from the senate floor in support and defense of these. He has voted against permitless concealed carry and training teachers to be armed and has indicated an interest in banning bump stocks and assault weapons. Additionally, he opposes easing restrictions on silencers. In March, he held a forum on gun violence prevention, clips of which he now incorporates into his campaign ads. His first campaign ad focused on firearms and he vowed to ban assault weapons, get guns out of the hands of the dangerously ill and stop the gun lobby. Has raised \$2.2 million, but it has been noted that much of the money (some very large donations) is from out-of-state people who support his education reform efforts. Frontier Fairness PAC, supporting Johnston, has raised \$4.35 million.

Assault Weapons Ban: supports (see commentary above)

ERPO (red flag- remove firearms from dangerous individuals): supports

Cary Kennedy--Denver

Served as Colorado State Treasurer and as Denver's Chief Financial Officer. She wants to raise awareness of keeping guns out of the hands of children. Kennedy grew up in with foster siblings who had been victims of violent crimes and had been incarcerated themselves. She believes we need to have a conversation about what services are available for people when they are concerned that someone they love might be a risk of harming themselves or others. Her website indicates she wants to ban assault rifles, keep guns out of the hands of people who are a danger to themselves or others and to fight the NRA and gun lobby.

Assault Weapons Ban: Supports

ERPO (red Flag- disarmament of danger individuals): Supports

Has raised \$1.87 million. Teachers for Kennedy PAC has raised \$1.95 million.

Won 61.7% of the vote at the state assembly and therefore earns top line status on the ballot.

Donna Lynne -- Denver

A former health care executive, Lynne is currently Lieutenant Governor and oversees a state program to

connect primary care doctors with practitioners in mental health so that persons experiencing behavioral health problems don't slip through the cracks.

Assault Weapons Ban: Supports

ERPO (red flag- disarmament of danger individuals): Supports

Has raised \$1 million.

Jared Polis - Boulder

As a Congressman, Polis has a checkered record on the issue. To enumerate:

2018: Signed on as cosponsor to H.R. 5087, Assault Weapons Ban

2017: Voted against 2 bills to allow mentally ill veterans and social security recipients to buy guns.

Co-Sponsor of Thompson Background Checks Bill (HR4240)

Co-sponsored a bipartisan bill to ban bump stocks and a bill to reinstate gun violence research, but

he has not joined with his Democratic colleagues DeGette and Perlmutter on co-sponsoring a high capacity magazine ban (which has 106 co-sponsors).

2016: Did not join with Democratic colleagues in co-sponsoring an Assault Weapons Ban, but did co-sponsor a ban on guns to terrorists.

Co-sponsored King-Thompson background check bill, which he co-sponsored in 2013 also.

2014: **Most egregious to us was his vote to interfere with D.C. gun laws (H. amdt. 1098 to HR5016).** In

a note to Ceasefire regarding that vote, Polis stated "I have always run on being against gun registries and there is no chance that I will change my mind for the foreseeable future." On that same note, he indicated his support for universal background checks.

Polis co-sponsored the Interstate Commerce Reform Act (HR3335), which would have allowed gun dealers to sell any firearm to residents of any state.

Through a personal communication with a colleague, Polis indicated that the Denver Post did not include his answers to their survey in which he indicated he would not seek to overturn any of the 2013 gun laws, but stated there is always room for bipartisan improvement. Additional responses to the Denver Post survey: against guns in schools, against easing silencer regulations, and against permitless concealed carry. Polis's views have evolved from his 2013 statement regarding assault weapons that "banning weapons possessed by law-abiding people violates the Second Amendment." His staff indicate Polis is no longer averse to an assault weapons ban, but tempers his stance with concerns for the druthers of hunters and sportsmen.

Assault Weapons Ban: Supports

ERPO (red flag- disarmament of danger individuals): Supports

Although Polis has raised over \$10.7 million, the money is almost all from Polis himself.

Republican Candidates

Victor Mitchell - Castle Rock

A millionaire businessman and former state lawmaker. **Although he supports Universal Background Checks and would support a bump stock ban, he does not support the high capacity magazine ban, and he supports arming teachers, permitless concealed carry and making silencers more easily available.** Mitchell opposes an assault weapons ban. He indicated that we need more people carrying firearms in more places and need to get rid of gun free zones in Colorado's schools. Has raised \$57,000 but has loaned \$3.9 million to his campaign.

Doug Robinson - Englewood

A former investment banker and nephew of Mitt Romney, Robinson did not complete the Denver Post's

survey, but indicates **that we should keep universal background checks. He has indicated that Colorado should reconsider the high capacity magazine ban and is unsure on the bump stocks.** He indicated that another way to address gun violence is in focusing on drug use and on family life. Robinson has indicated he opposed the ERPO (red flag) bill, because it lacked sufficient due process protections (George Brauchler, staunch conservative, Arapahoe DA and Republican candidate for Attorney General, supported and spoke for the bill). Has raised \$493,000 in addition to a \$300,000 loan. Build Colorado's Future, supporting Robinson, has raised \$303,000.

Walker Stapleton - Greenwood Village

Currently Colorado State Treasurer, he cleverly stayed out of the race while holding fundraisers for a separate independent expenditure committee. His web site states he supports **"repealing the misguided 2013 gun control laws that limit our Second Amendment freedoms."** Those laws included Universal Background Checks (supported by over 90% of Americans), Domestic Violence Relinquishment, and the High Capacity magazine Ban. Stapleton also supports giving local communities the ability to allow teachers to be armed.

ERPO: To the Durango Herald, Stapleton stated he would support red flag legislation, but that it would need to not violate due process (ah....that caveat). ERPO was supported by 81% of Colorado voters. Has raised \$1.6 million, with \$250,000 from himself. His PAC (Better Colorado Now) has raised \$991,000.

Greg Lopez - former mayor of Parker.

Web site states "Laws restricting law-abiding gun owners do not serve Colorado, nor do they serve America. Gun control laws do not work. The 2nd Amendment is clear, and we must preserve this essential right."

In an interview with Westword, Lopez was described as a big "Second Amendment advocate" and noted that he supports national concealed carry reciprocity. He was asked if he could support any weapons restrictions, to which he responded "No." **He stated he believes that we need the 2nd amendment to protect ourselves from our government.**

ERPO: At Manual debate, indicated **he is opposed to ERPO (red flag)** stating he read it 16 times and found it a poorly written bill.

Has raised \$29,000.

Third Party and Unaffiliated Candidates

There are 13 others running who are unaffiliated or from smaller parties. We could only find gun stances information on one:

Bill Hammons (Unity party): "I support the 2nd amendment. ...Gun Violence has its roots in societal problems...."

This is perhaps old, but the Denver Post interviewed candidates back in October 2017.

<http://www.denverpost.com/2017/10/22/colorado-gun-control-laws-governor-race-2018/>