

If Gun Restrictions Were Applied to Technology, They Would Not Compute by Allan Cors, President NRA

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What if computer owners were the object of Bloomberg's lies? What would be the public reaction if the government, claiming to prevent cybercrime or digital terrorism, required all citizens to undergo an FBI background check before acquiring or disposing of computers? What if the transfer of any computer without government approval were a felony? And what if not passing the background check, for reasons the government was under no obligation to divulge, made computer possession a criminal act?

The outrage would be overwhelming. After all, virtually all owners of digital devices and computers are neither terrorists nor criminals—they are just Americans exercising their First Amendment rights to free speech.

Most Americans own and use computers or cell phones at home, at work or on the go. We buy them, trade them, sell them and give them as gifts. Smartphones, tablets and similar portable devices are now ubiquitous. And we periodically upgrade these devices to keep pace with improvements in technology. What if the media and politicians were demanding that all computer owners pay the price for the acts of hackers?

Computers have become essential parts of our daily lives. They have brought us the greatest revolution in the history of free speech and as such are protected by the First Amendment.

As with firearms, in peaceable hands, they are a force for good.

But, as with firearms, computers can be used for criminal and evil ends. Fraud. Dissemination of child pornography. Cyberbullying. Identity theft. And for life-and-death evil in our computer age, look no further than the sophisticated use of technology by ISIS to spread its horrific barbarism and recruit jihadists to fulfill their apocalyptic vision of destroying Western civilization through mass murder. These ISIS seventh-century monsters are very adept at using 21st-century technology to achieve their evil ends.

For all of us who use our computers for commonplace purposes, there is the specter of hackers—cowardly operators who find joy and excitement in their malice of inflicting pain and damage on millions of innocent computer users worldwide.

If you've had your hard drive destroyed, lost emails or family photos, or had priceless work wiped out, corrupted or stolen, you know how damaging these attacks are.

Hackers, using computers as weapons, have stolen or compromised millions of private files: health records, Social Security numbers, bank records and credit records.

Protecting against these malicious intrusions is a multibillion-dollar business, involving tens of thousands of super-smart people working around the clock. No law can "prevent" cybercrime. And no law will "keep computers out of the hands of cybercriminals."

Add to this, massive worldwide law-enforcement efforts to catch and punish cybercriminals. Virtually every aspect of hacking and terrorism has its consequences in criminal law. That's why it's called cybercrime.

Again, what if the media and politicians were demanding that all computer owners pay the price for the acts of hackers?

Given that threat, anybody who owns a digital device would know that their liberty, their right to pursue happiness, is at stake. They wouldn't stand for it.

But that is exactly the senseless threat gun owners face in states that billionaire Michael Bloomberg has targeted for ballot initiatives to criminalize all now-legal firearm transactions between law-abiding citizens with his deceit about "universal" background checks.

We know, and Bloomberg knows, that any aspect of commerce involving criminals is already covered by very tough federal laws. It's a truth he hides from the public.

Making the innocent pay the price for the guilty when the guilty pay no price — that philosophy is at the very core of all gun-control schemes.

For a peaceable person who owns a firearm, that concept is abundantly obvious. It is not obvious to non-gun owners, and that is the essence of Bloomberg's game plan.

With his multimillion-dollar, state-by-state ballot initiatives to force gun owners to submit to "universal" background checks for every now-legal firearm transaction, Bloomberg is counting on deceiving non-gun-owning voters into believing his snake-oil pitch.

He thinks those voters are stupid. They are not.

It is our obligation to reach those voters to explain the threat to our freedom in terms of what would be identical threats to their liberty.

Put in terms of computers, knives, cars, boats, stamps, anything used by ordinary people and abused by criminals, voters will understand the danger of Bloomberg's game. What criminals do with those objects has nothing to do with what good people do with them.

As NRA members, the most well-informed voters in the nation, we can counter Bloomberg's deceit person to person. He's counting on low-information or no-information voters. It's up to us to turn those friends, neighbors and acquaintances into high-information voters who understand the truth.