

Soros Spends Nearly \$9 Million Lobbying, Now Targets Guns

Billionaire financier wants to make gun companies liable for criminal acts by third parties

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George Soros / Getty Images

Liberal billionaire George Soros's advocacy organizations are lobbying lawmakers on Capitol Hill to repeal an act protecting firearms manufacturers from liability for gun crimes including murder, disclosure forms show.

The Open Society Policy Center is Soros's D.C.-based 501(c)4 nonprofit that works on domestic and international advocacy and is affiliated with the much larger Open Society Foundations. The center has poured nearly \$9 million into lobbying a range of issues so far this year.

Soros's group reported spending [\\$2.6 million](#) on lobbying throughout the first quarter, covering international, military, and appropriations issues. In addition, the center moved into gun control advocacy and reported lobbying on "issues related to a bill to repeal the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act."

The Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA) was passed as a bulwark against frivolous lawsuits attempting to hold gun companies responsible for criminal

acts committed by third parties—sometimes decades after the first legal sale of the firearm.

The National Shooting Sports Foundation, the gun industry's trade group, pushed to pass the bill in 2005. The group said the legal protections are necessary to keep gun control activists from bankrupting the industry through suits they believe have no legal standing.

"The National Shooting Sports Foundation worked with Congress to get the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act passed with broad bipartisan support and signed into law by President George W. Bush," Mark Oliva, a spokesman for the group, told the *Washington Free Beacon*. "This law correctly protects the firearms industry against frivolous lawsuits that seek claims against manufacturers for the criminal misuse of a firearm. Those who commit crimes with a firearm are the ones who bear the responsibility for the horrific effects of their actions. The PLCAA ensures this is the case."

The PLCAA does not shield the firearms industry from traditional liability. Firearms companies can be sued for making or selling defective products. Remington [recently settled](#) a class-action suit related to defective triggers in their 700 bolt-action rifle.

Instead, [the PLCAA](#) protects gun companies from being held liable "for the harm solely caused by the criminal or unlawful misuse of firearm products or ammunition products by others when the product functioned as designed and intended."

Oliva compared holding gun companies liable for crimes committed with guns to holding car companies liable for drunk drivers.

"Seeking redress against a firearms manufacturer instead of the criminal is no different than a drunk-driving victim holding Ford responsible for that crime," he told the *Free Beacon*.

Soros's center reported [\\$5.92 million](#) in expenditures throughout the second quarter, which included lobbying the House of Representatives and Senate for the Equal Access to Justice for Victims of Gun Violence Act.

The Equal Access to Justice for Victims of Gun Violence Act was [introduced](#) in the House by Rep. Adam Schiff (D., Calif.) and seeks to "repeal the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act, and provide for the discoverability and admissibility of gun trace information in civil proceedings."

Schiff previously appeared at a secretive gathering of Democracy Alliance, the left's largest donor club cofounded by Soros, in D.C. last November. He gave the group a closed-door briefing, the *Free Beacon* [reported](#). The president of Democracy Alliance, Gara LaMarche, was previously the director of Soros's lobbying outfit and now [sits](#) on its board of directors.

The Senate version of Schiff's bill was [introduced](#) by Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D., Conn.), also to "repeal the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act."

Soros has drastically ramped up his lobbying efforts since Donald Trump took office. The financier [broke his yearly lobbying record](#) within the first three quarters of 2018 and pushed a total of \$31,520,000 into advocacy efforts that year. Gun control has become a higher priority for Soros-funded groups in recent months.

"The Open Society Foundations supported several groups working to reform gun laws in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, but this issue has not been a major area of emphasis for the foundations in the past because other organizations have been and are focused on this effort," said Jonathan Kaplan, the communications officer for the Open Society Policy Center. "In the past few months, we have held discussions with Congressional staff about the Equal Access to Justice for Victims of Gun Violence Act."

The policy center, which this year has utilized two lobbyists, does not have any direct employees. Instead individuals from the Open Society Institute, the legal name for the Open Society Foundations, perform services for the center, according to its most recent [tax forms](#).

Update: This post has been updated to reflect that Soros's nonprofit has spent \$9 million lobbying on a range of issues this year.