

Dubious Mayors Against Legal Guns

The not so pretty story behind Michael Bloomberg's Mayors Against Illegal Guns

By Barbara Joanna Lucas

Summary: *Former New York City mayor and donor extraordinaire Michael Bloomberg has hit a number of speed bumps in his efforts to restrict the Second Amendment. Scandals and political reversals have recently plagued his group Mayors Against Illegal Guns.*

James Schiliro, the one-time Mayor of Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania, has been a proud proponent of gun control, a member of Michael Bloomberg's group Mayors Against Illegal Guns, and one of 600 mayors to sign a letter to Congress demanding more gun control laws at the federal level. And so it was embarrassing when in January the mayor was sentenced to as much as 20 months in jail following what a news report described as "an alcohol-fueled episode ... in which he had a police car bring a former neighbor—a 20-year-old to whom he said he was attracted—to his home, made him drink wine, and refused to let him leave for 3 1/2 hours."

After the young man rejected the mayor's sexual advances and tried to leave, the mayor threatened to shoot himself with one of three guns. He discharged one weapon into a stack of papers. The victim, though anxious to leave, still managed to talk the mayor out of killing himself by reminding him of his daughter asleep upstairs. The young man got out of the home and called police.



Former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg holds toy guns at a press conference in this undated photograph.

Schiliro was convicted of recklessly endangering another person, unlawful restraint, false imprisonment, official oppression (i.e., abusing his mayoral powers), and furnishing liquor to a minor. On top of the jail time, Schiliro received five years of probation, 50 hours of community service, and was ordered to pay a \$1,300 fine. He is reportedly eligible for work release and time off for good behavior. (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, Jan. 15, 2014)

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Marcus Hook, with fewer than 3,000 residents, was rocked by the sordid political scandal in February 2013. Before handing down the sentence, state Judge James F. Nilon said, “I don’t think you appreciate the seriousness of the nature of the behavior that you engaged in.”

It’s unlikely Nilon was making any type of statement beyond the case, but the reprimand about the mayor’s personal responsibility for his own actions is notable because of Schiliro’s membership in a group that blames, not criminals, but *the tools they use* in committing the crimes.

After the incident, Mayors Against Illegal Guns (MAIG) removed Schiliro’s name from its list of signatories demanding action from Congress (Breitbart News, March 23, 2013). That’s an interesting call, because as we’ll see, he’s hardly the only member of the more than 1,000-mayors group to engage in felonious behavior.

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Origins

MAIG was founded in 2006 by then-New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg and then-Boston Mayor Thomas Menino on the theory that mayors have a closer, more direct understanding of the problems of violence. But Bloomberg, with his willingness to use his vast personal fortune to attack the Second Amendment, quickly became the face of the organization.

New York-based MAIG is a relatively small outfit. According to its tax filing from the most recent publicly available tax year (2011), the Mayors Against Illegal Guns Action Fund group took in \$3,476,643 that year and spent \$2,834,151. It has received little support from the philanthropic establishment. Its two foundation donors are the David Bohnett Foundation of Beverly Hills, Calif. (\$185,000 since 2007) and the Public Welfare Foundation (\$25,000 in 2008). (Bohnett founded GeoCities, an Internet-based media and e-commerce company that was bought by Yahoo! Inc. in 1999.)

MAIG Action also spreads its wealth around. In 2011 it gave grants to other anti-gun and leftist groups such as Coalition to Stop Gun Violence (\$210,000), America Votes (\$275,000), Progress Ohio (\$17,400), and Progress Now Nevada Action (\$10,000).

Although no longer a mayor, Bloomberg is still expected to throw money into the group to make it a powerful lobbying force in 2014, as Democrats seek to resurrect the gun control issue—a perpetual loser at the

national level—as a means of mobilizing their base. (Bloomberg’s philanthropy was examined in the September 2012 *Foundation Watch*.)

It began with 15 mayors meeting at a summit on April 25, 2006, at Gracie Mansion in New York, and agreeing on an innocuous-sounding Statement of Principles that many National Rifle Association members might feel comfortable signing. MAIG has grown to more than 1,000 mayors in 45 states and has aggressively pushed for stronger gun restrictions on law-abiding citizens. The 1,000 mayors, by the way, represent about 5 percent of America’s 19,000 municipalities (Fox News, July 29, 2013).

When both Bloomberg and Menino exited their respective city halls earlier this year, the group lacked a single authoritative figure to be its spokesman. MAIG merged with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America—a group that started in response to the horrendous December 2012 massacre of 20 children and six adults at Sandy Hook elementary school in Newtown, Conn. The mom’s group claimed to have 130,000 members in 50 states.

“Combining the legal and policy expertise of mayors with the passion and determination of moms will create a force for change that political leaders will not be able to ignore,” said Bloomberg and Moms Demand Action founder Shannon Watts in a *Politico* op-ed in December 2013 announcing the merger.

“And by uniting a broad coalition of millions of Americans, we intend to take the fight for common-sense gun safety measures to a new level,” Bloomberg and Watts added. “It’s a fight that can be won, and—unless we are willing accept that 33 Americans will be murdered with guns every day—it’s a fight we must win.”

The statement is typical of the absurdity of most gun control groups, which assert they support “common sense” laws, while demonizing their opponents as being perfectly content with dozens of murders taking place every day. This ignores the fact that most anti-gun laws proposed would not have prevented the mass shootings or the bulk of gun crimes that occur on the streets each day.

Neither group managed to push federal legislation through Congress in 2013, despite the help of President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden in exploiting the Newtown shooting. Still, Bloomberg and Watts declared 2013 a banner year for gun control.

“We helped pass new laws in Connecticut, Colorado, New York, Delaware and Maryland that close state-level loopholes in our background check system,” Bloomberg and Watts wrote. “Colorado’s new gun law mandates that private gun sellers conduct the same background checks that already take place at federally licensed dealers, and the early results are encouraging: More than 70 criminals have been blocked from buying a gun.”

They also proclaimed victory over the National Rifle Association with pro-gun control Democrat Terry McAuliffe’s razor-thin victory over pro-gun rights Republican Ken Cuccinelli in the 2013 Virginia governor’s race, as well as the Old Dominion’s races for lieutenant governor and attorney general. “In 2013 we also helped elect candidates in Virginia—the NRA’s home base—who campaigned on gun safety solutions, while the NRA went 0-for-3 in Virginia’s statewide races,” they crowed.

The truth, however, is a bit different. The year 2013 was a mixed bag for the mayors’

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The disgraced former mayor of Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania, James Schiliro in an undated photograph.

group that was supposed to be a financial counterweight to the NRA, thanks to its backing by billionaire Bloomberg whose net worth is about \$31 billion (*Forbes*, September 2013).

MAIG lost credibility after it suffered humiliating defeats in Colorado recall elections. Senior Democrats are becoming aghast at the group’s aggressive tactics, and it has suffered a series of defections from mayors who feel misled by the benevolent-sounding name of the group and its official Statement of Principles. It has even clashed with another prominent anti-gun group.

Faux Moderation

Most of the group’s principles sound ever so reasonable: “Punish—to the maximum extent of the law—criminals who possess, use, and traffic in illegal guns”; “target and hold accountable irresponsible gun dealers who break the law by knowingly selling guns to straw purchasers”; “oppose all federal efforts to restrict cities’ right to access,

use, and share trace data that is so essential to effective enforcement, or to interfere with the ability of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms to combat illegal gun trafficking”; “keep lethal, military-style weapons and high capacity ammunition magazines off our streets”; “work to develop and use technologies that aid in the detection and tracing of illegal guns”; “support all local state and federal legislation that targets illegal guns; coordinate legislative, enforcement, and litigation strategies; and share information and best practices”; “invite other cities to join us in this new national effort.”

Meanwhile, the message from the founding co-chairmen, Bloomberg and Menino, also touts faux moderation. “The issue of illegal guns is not conservative or liberal; it is an issue of law and order—and life or death,” they say in the statement. “We support the Second Amendment and the rights of citizens to own guns. ... But what binds us together is a determination to fight crime, and a belief

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that we can do more to stop criminals from getting guns while also protecting the rights of citizens to freely own them.”

It is clear that MAIG’s strategy was developed in response to past failures by anti-gun groups, wrote Charles C.W. Cooke of *National Review* last August: “Mayors Against Illegal Guns boasts what may well be the Platonic ideal of a neutral-sounding, focus-grouped name; and, for most of its eight-year run, it has been assiduously careful to appear modest. (Who, after all, isn’t against ‘illegal guns’?) Consequently, it should have come as no surprise that when the likes of Eleanor Clift mistakenly predicted that ‘the culture of guns is beginning to go through a transformation in this country,’ it was on Bloomberg’s group that she and other progressives pinned their hopes.”

Cooke explained that the only transformation is the level of honesty that the nation’s anti-gun crowd is using. “During the past couple of decades, as their wretched little cause slowly lost ground, it dawned on the more adroit of America’s gun-control outfits that they might profit from the invention of a new language to market their appeals,” Cooke wrote. “Thus it was that we moved away from a debate in which the Left was content to be represented by outfits named ‘Handgun Control Inc.’ and in which restrictionists advocated brazenly for ‘gun control’ and even ‘gun bans,’ and moved toward a debate in which ‘Handgun Control Inc.’ became the ‘Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence,’ the term ‘gun control’ was replaced in the political literature by the fraudulent ‘gun safety,’ and skeptics were assured that the reformers’ goal was merely the institution of ‘sensible laws’ based on the malleable notion of ‘common sense.’”

Squandering Public Resources

Regardless of how anyone feels about gun control, the mayors’ organization is hardly beyond reproach. Despite Bloomberg’s billions, the mayor used New York City tax dollars and city staff to advance MAIG’s national ambitions. The MAIG domain name was registered in 2006 by the New York City Department of Information and Technology and has remained on city web servers ever since (*Politico*, June 21, 2013). Bloomberg’s city hall aides were quick to defend the arrangement, asserting a distinction between the actual MAIG coalition which falls within the mayor’s priorities for legislation in the city, and the MAIG Action Fund, a nonprofit advocacy group recognized under section 501(c)(4) of the tax code, which spends money on advertising and lobbying.

“Mayor Bloomberg is the co-chair of the coalition of Mayors Against Illegal Guns,” Bloomberg’s then-city hall spokesman John McCarthy told *Politico*. “Its activities are in the interest of keeping New York City safe. He is acting in his capacity as mayor of New York City. ... Just as when he advocates for a bill in Albany that we want passed he is acting in his capacity as mayor, because he believes the bill is in the city’s interests. That is the prerogative of any mayor.”

Such an argument might carry weight if McCarthy were only talking about advocacy for federal legislation or laws considered by the state legislature in Albany, which would obviously affect New York City. But MAIG spent most of 2013 and previous years advocating for anti-gun legislation in state houses across the country and running negative ads against various politicians who support the Second Amendment.

Nevertheless, when a similar question arose—this time over whether to send a New York City employee to Nevada to advocate for gun control—McCarthy gave a similar rationale:

“With 85 percent of guns used in crimes here coming from out of state, gun policy everywhere has an impact on the safety of New Yorkers. The mayor’s top priority is keeping New Yorkers safe, and that includes seeking sane gun laws in other states ... to help reduce the flow of illegal guns to New York,” McCarthy said (*New York Post*, June 25, 2013).

Christopher Kocher, special counsel to the mayor’s office, was sent to Nevada as a representative of MAIG to lobby for state legislation that enforces background checks on all firearm sales there. The *Post* reported Kocher had his New York city hall e-mail address scrubbed from the Nevada lobbying registration website.

Even a left-wing watchdog had issues with this, according to the newspaper. “It doesn’t seem kosher to me,” said Gene Russianoff of the New York Public Interest Research Group. “It’s hard to see how gun control in Nevada makes the city safer in New York.”

Documents obtained by the government watchdog group Judicial Watch through a lawsuit under the state’s freedom of information law showed even more evidence there was virtually no daylight between Mayor Bloomberg’s city hall staff, supported by the city’s taxpayers, and billionaire Bloomberg’s pet political project. E-mails showed intense communications between John Feinblatt, the chief adviser to Mayor Bloomberg and also the city’s criminal justice coordinator, and MAIG executive director Mark Glaze.

On Dec. 14, 2012, hours after the Newtown shooting, Glaze forwarded Feinblatt an e-mail message pointing out White House spokesman Jay Carney said it wasn't yet time to talk about gun policy. About 12 hours later, at 1:32 a.m., Glaze told Feinblatt about "a couple thoughts for keeping the mayor ahead of Congress, the white house, the press" (TheBlaze, Jan. 8, 2014).

Glaze said Bloomberg should meet with Obama and Vice President Joe Biden before the 2013 inauguration. "He could ask to meet next week, possibly bringing survivors with him," Glaze wrote. Glaze also wanted to win "converts" to their side on Capitol Hill and suggested meetings with several specific members of Congress, including Reps. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Peter King (R-N.Y.), along with Sens. Mark Udall (D-Colo.), John McCain (R-Ariz.), Tim Kaine (D-Va.) Mark Warner (D-Va.), Mark Kirk (R-Ill.), and John Tester (D-Mt.).

In one message that seemed to be a nice way of asking what's happening with Bloomberg's money, Feinblatt asked Glaze and other MAIG staffers for some metrics. "I must have some metrics," Feinblatt wrote on Dec. 22, 2012, days after the organization tried to maximize the political impact of the Connecticut shooting. "We are pouring money into this effort and I can't answer the most basic questions – money raised, petitions sent, names acquired etc. There is no surer recipe for the money drying up than to be caught empty handed when asked how are we performing. Please do everything you can to fix this now." (TheBlaze, Jan. 8, 2014)

Those metrics came back five days later in a MAIG memo that detailed how well the tragedy had been exploited: "Since Newtown: We have 283,781 new supporters. We have 890,931 total active supporters. ... 2,154 people have donated \$188,238.50

through our websites. The average donation is about \$87.00."

Seven days after the Newtown shooting, Bloomberg's mayoral staff and MAIG staffers were shown to be hard at work for a publicity blitz on the airwaves. Katherine Oliver, commissioner of the Mayor's office of media and entertainment, e-mailed Feinblatt:

"The mayor will tweet about this and we want to send traffic to DemandAPlan.org we also would like celebrities who participated in the campaign to – retweet Mike Bloomberg's tweets – can we reach out to all the celebrity participants and coordinate that effort?"

Some angst arose over the matter of celebrity endorsements. Another e-mail exchange showed that MAIG director Glaze was upset with a fellow gun control group, the Brady Campaign, which was apparently also pouncing on the opportunity to recruit Hollywood stars for anti-gun commercials in the aftermath of the Connecticut carnage. MAIG was enjoying the attention it was receiving as the new voice of gun control and clearly didn't want to cede that ground back to the old voice.

Referring to a celebrity agent, Glaze wrote Feinblatt in an e-mail, "Brady is trying to persuade both her and other celebs to do [public service announcement] with [B]rady instead. That's all I know, but he'd done this kind of thing before, and we need to cut it off."

This prompted a verbal shootout between the anti-gun advocates. Glaze sent a terse e-mail to Brady Campaign President Daniel Gross: "Dan – if true that you are attempting to intervene in the work we are doing with celebrities on DemandAPlan and drive them toward Brady: don't."

Gross replied, "Making our schools and communities safer is the only thing on our mind versus our misplaced focus on strange e-mails and threats."

Gross continued, "Bottom line is, some people are coming to Brady to engage, some people are coming to MAIG and some are coming to both. What's most important is that they're engaging at this most critical moment, to create the change we all seek. We wish you only the best in all your important efforts and look forward [to] the day we find smart ways to work together."

Judicial Watch President Tom Fitton believed the e-mails showed the true nature of the organization. "This was a lobbying effort funded by taxpayers," Fitton told TheBlaze. "There is a legal question here. There is certainly enough smoke and fire here. It certainly warrants an investigation. Someone entrusted to public office is only supposed to do the public's work there." Fitton added.

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“It says something when political aides were trying to figure out how their boss could benefit politically from the mass murder of children.”

Facing Embarrassment

The mayors group has had other embarrassing moments in its zealotry to push gun legislation in 2013. In June of that year, the group had to apologize after reading off the name of Boston Marathon bombing suspect Tamerlan Tsarnaev among the names of victims of gun violence at a MAIG event in New Hampshire (Fox News, July 29, 2013).

The group has also alienated Democrats, and not just pro-Second Amendment ones like Arkansas Sen. Mark Pryor, whom the group launched vicious attack ads against, but also far left Senators such as Patrick Leahy of Vermont and Charles Schumer of New York, who found Bloomberg’s group to be a bit too snippy (*National Review*, Aug. 13, 2013).

Sen. Pryor was among red state Democrats who voted against the Tooney-Manchin background check legislation. After MAIG sponsored attack ads against Pryor, the senator responded in his own ad, “The mayor of New York City is running ads against me because I opposed President Obama’s gun-control legislation. I approve this message because no one from New York or Washington tells me what to do.”

Schumer piled on: “Frankly, I don’t think Bloomberg’s ads are effective. The mayor of New York City putting ads against people in red states is not going to be effective.” Meanwhile, Leahy said on C-SPAN, “Unfortunately, you have some on the left, like the mayor of New York City, who actually didn’t help a bit with his ads. He actually turned off some people that we might have gotten for supporters.”



Poughkeepsie, N.Y. Mayor John Tkazyik quit the group after he realized it was anti-gun.

Still, the organization believed it had a successful year, with Bloomberg spending well over \$15 million of his own money to push gun restrictions in states.

The Connecticut legislature passed a gun control package that included a gun registry and a ban on high-capacity ammunition magazines. Delaware passed strengthened background checks for all private gun sales. Maryland passed a new requirement for fingerprinting anyone getting a gun license, strengthened an existing ban on automatic weapons, and restricted high-capacity magazines. New York state passed laws increasing background checks, banning magazines with more than seven rounds, and strengthening a ban on so-called assault weapons.

These blue state anti-gun bills were indeed good investments for the billionaire. But a key purple battleground state proved embarrassing for Bloomberg. With a lobbying assist from MAIG, Colorado passed a gun control package that included enhanced background checks and a ban on high-capacity ammunition magazines. Angry local citizens then started a recall movement against Colorado State Senate President John Morse and fellow state Sen. Angela Giron, both Democrats

and leaders in the fight to restrict gun rights. Bloomberg threw \$350,000 out of his own pocket into the campaign, while MAIG had a field operation on the ground in the two state Senate districts, hoping to save the lawmakers.

Giron even said before the September election that if she lost, MAIG “might as well fold up.” Voters turned both Democrats out of office, and the NRA gleefully tweeted that Bloomberg “wasted his money” (*New York Daily News*, Sept. 11, 2013).

The group’s embarrassment was increased by the fact that anti-recall groups—Bloomberg and MAIG, as well as other big money groups that back Democrats like the American Federation of Teachers—outspent the recall effort by at least 2 to 1. This was evident as anti-recall commercials reportedly ran during NFL football games, while pro-recall ads frequently ran after midnight. Nevertheless, Morse was booted out by a 51 percent majority, and Giron was ousted by a more decisive 56 percent (*American Spectator*, Sept. 11, 2013).

Gun control is still not a mainstream idea no matter how the Bloomberg-funded group

wants to spin it. Last year more than 50 mayors saw through the spin and began bolting from membership. The group has claimed to have gained more members than it lost, but the defections are significant. What's more, the defectors have questioned the integrity of the organization's mission.

Poughkeepsie, N.Y. Mayor John Tkazyik, a Republican, announced in February he quit MAIG because it was anti-gun. "I'm no longer a member of MAIG," he wrote in the *Poughkeepsie Journal*. "Why? Just as Ronald Reagan said of the Democratic Party, it left me," Tkazyik wrote. "MAIG became a vehicle for Bloomberg to promote his personal gun-control agenda—violating the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding citizens and taking resources away from initiatives that could actually work to protect our neighborhoods and save precious lives. Gun control will actually make a bad situation worse."

Rockford, Ill. Mayor Lawrence Morrisey expressed similar concerns. "The reason why I joined the group in the first place is because I took the name for what it said—against 'illegal' guns," said Morrisey. "I thought it was about enforcement of (the) existing gun laws. As the original mission swayed, that's when I decided that it was no longer in line with my beliefs" (Fox News, July 29, 2013).

Sioux City, Iowa Mayor Bob Scott also left the group, citing similar reasons: "They're not just against illegal guns, they're against all guns" (*Sioux City Journal*, July 25, 2013).

Another example was Nashua, N.H. Mayor Donnalee Lozeau, who quit the group after it began running attack ads against New Hampshire Republican Sen. Kelly Ayotte for opposing the background check bill. "I

said, 'Wait a minute. I don't want to be part of something like that,'" Lozeau said. "I told them, 'You're Mayors Against Illegal Guns; you're not mayors for gun control'" (*Manchester Union Leader*, July 22, 2013).

New Hampshire's largest newspaper, the *Union Leader*, in an editorial titled, "Mayors misled: Gun group needs a new name," said that "Mayors Against Illegal Guns says its membership is growing. Either way, it should be honest about its mission and change its name to Liberal Mayors Against The Second Amendment."

Unsavory Mayors

The mayors remaining in the organization aren't the most appealing group. Though Marcus Hook Mayor Schiliro was the only member to be convicted of a gun-related crime, other members engaged in various illegalities. The *New York Post* even ran a piece on Nov. 29, 2013, about the group titled, "Illegal mayors against guns." Among those cited were:

* Monticello, N.Y. Mayor Gordon Jenkins, who was arrested in November 2013 for driving under the influence and punching a police department clock, forcing officers to handcuff him to a chair.

* Spring Valley, N.Y. Mayor Noramie Jasmin, charged with accepting bribes from an FBI informant in April 2013.

* Gainesville, Fla. Mayor Craig Lowe, charged with driving under the influence after he was found asleep at the scene of a car accident.

The Second Amendment Foundation even started a spoof website, Gun Owners Against Illegal Mayors at www.StopIllegalMayors.com.

The 11 former mayors and MAIG members listed on the site that were charged or convicted include:

* Former Baltimore, Md. Mayor Sheila Dixon, charged with fraud, perjury, and embezzling gift cards meant for the poor.

* Former Hartford, Conn. Mayor Eddie Perez, charged with bribery and conspiracy.

* Former New Haven, Conn. Mayor April Almon, charged with interfering with police officers on duty.

* Former Detroit, Mich. Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, convicted of perjury.

That doesn't mean you judge MAIG itself by a few bad mayors. But it does speak to the character of an organization that feels compelled to infringe on the civil liberties of Americans across the country.

Barbara Joanna Lucas is a writer from Virginia.

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Briefly Noted

Conservative grassroots groups **FreedomWorks**, **Club for Growth Action Fund**, **Senate Conservatives Fund**, and the **Tea Party Patriots**, raised \$20 million last year, according to news reports. “This is by far the biggest nonelection year we’ve ever had,” said **Matt Hoskins**, executive director of the Senate Conservatives Fund. “It shows how committed people are to electing true conservatives and to advancing conservative principles.” The three groups run by GOP consultant **Karl Rove -- American Crossroads** (super PAC), **Crossroads GPS**, **Conservative Victory Project** (super PAC) -- took in a combined \$6.1 million in 2013. In the 2012 election cycle, American Crossroads and Crossroads GPS together raised \$325 million.

Republicans are fighting back against proposed new **IRS** rules that they say would make formal the tax agency’s infamous crackdown on Tea Party groups that oppose the Obama agenda, stripping them of their free speech rights during election cycles. The new rules, first unveiled around Thanksgiving when no one was paying attention, would prevent so-called 501(c)(4) social welfare/advocacy groups from participating in certain kinds of political activity. Such nonprofit organizations would be prevented from communicating with voters about candidates or political parties within 60 days of a general election. “Every American needs to know about this abuse of power,” Senate Minority Leader **Mitch McConnell** (R-Ky) said in a recent speech on the Senate floor. Although new IRS Commissioner **John Koskinen** said he did not participate in drafting the rules, he has refused demands to block their implementation. Senate Democrats such as **Mark Begich** (Alaska) and **Jeanne Shaheen** (N.H.) are demanding that the IRS crack down further on right-leaning nonprofits like **Americans for Prosperity**.

Some groups on the left don’t support the proposed IRS regulations. The **American Civil Liberties Union** said that “[s]ocial welfare organizations praise or criticize candidates for public office on the issues and they should be able to do so freely, without fear of losing or being denied tax-exempt status, even if doing so could influence a citizen’s vote.” Such advocacy is “the heart of our representative democracy” and if social welfare groups influence voting, they do so only by “promoting an informed citizenry.”

During a speech at **John Podesta’s Center for American Progress**, Sen. **Chuck Schumer** (D-N.Y.) revealed the Left’s plan to attack the Tea Party movement in advance of the November congressional elections. Democrats “must stop playing defense and go on offense when it comes to the need for government,” Schumer said. “We must state loudly and repeatedly we believe government is often a necessary force for good.” The senator’s allies plan to focus on highlighting examples of popular government programs and show how “government can help the average family.” Invoking all the usual liberal clichés about conservatives, Schumer said the Tea Party is a successor to “the Know-Nothings, Prohibitionists, Father Coughlin, and Huey Long.” (Actually, Coughlin and Long were registered Democrats, the latter as a U.S. Senator.)

The radical agitators at **MoveOn** wheeled out left-wing gadfly **Robert Reich** in a new campaign to raise the minimum wage and warn Americans about the supposed dangers of economic “inequality.” Although polls show that “inequality” doesn’t register on American voters’ radar screens, Reich, who was U.S. labor secretary under President Clinton, thinks opposition to big government is part of a larger conspiracy. “Opposing a minimum wage hike, blocking unemployment insurance, cutting food stamps, keeping millions from accessing Medicaid,” Reich says in a MoveOn video. “I believe these positions are part of a concerted effort to keep struggling folks down that represents nothing less than a war on the poor and working class.”

Paul Teller left his position as executive director of the **Republican Study Committee** (RSC) to become deputy chief of staff for Sen. **Ted Cruz** (R-Texas). “It is an honor and privilege to work for Sen. Cruz,” Teller said. “His leadership is truly motivating, and I can’t wait to get started on our collaboration for liberty.” Teller has served in various positions on Capitol Hill for 14 years. Before RSC was a staff member for the Committee on House Administration under Rep. **Bill Thomas** (R-Calif.). He holds a Ph.D. in political science from American University.