Gabby Giffords Wants Credit Card Companies to Flag Gun and Ammo Purchases - A Very Slippery Slope

August 29, 2022 - Gabby Giffords gun control group is asking credit card companies to flag purchases of guns and ammunition. She wants the companies to stop classifying these purchases as sporting goods sales and enter them into a new category for weapons. From her group's tweet on the matter over the weekend, she's really proposing that credit card companies monitor these sales and then cut them off if, in their determination, the person making the purchases is buying too much of these products. That's a very slippery slope that has some serious implications for both personal and financial privacy.

Tweet

(function() {
var s = document.createElement('SCRIPT'), s1 = document.getElementsByTagName('SCRIPT')[0];

s.type = 'text/javascript';
s.src = 'http://widgets.digg.com/buttons.js';
s1.parentNode.insertBefore(s, s1);
})();

(function() {
var po = document.createElement('script'); po.type = 'text/javascript'; po.async = true;
po.src = 'https://apis.google.com/js/plusone.js';
var s = document.getElementsByTagName('script')[0]; s.parentNode.insertBefore(po, s);
})();

The tweet, which was published yesterday, is sensationalistic in nature. It claims that at least five mass shooters have used credit cards to finance their efforts and that this justifies tampering with the financial privacy of every law abiding gun owner in the country. To be clear, those five shooting took place over a 13 year period running from 2007 to 2020. And it completely ignores the fact that there were millions of legal gun purchases and billions of rounds of ammunition sold over the same period; none of which were used in mass shootings.

There is also a question which needs to be answered by Giffords and anyone else making a proposal like this. Once the credit card companies start collecting data like this and throwing it into a new category, who will have access to it? If it is just the credit card companies, that really doesn't accomplish anything. So you have to think that a proposal like this is only half of what they are actually hoping for. If the credit card companies were to agree, then you have to believe that someone would propose legilstion pretty quickly that would have those companies sharing this information with the government.

Her proposal is akin to using a sledge hammer to swat a fly. And it is also very short sighted.

If credit card companies start down the path of regulating purchases of items that have fallen out of favor with the so called "enlightened" people in this country, what comes after guns? Could it be that they will no longer allow you to purchase gas because you are contributing to green house gases? Or perhaps you won't be able to shop at certain stores because those establishments hold political views that aren't in favor at the time. Once you start down a path like this, it's hard to stop it. And again, who would have access to such data and what would it be used for?

This isn't the first time that gun control groups have attempted this. In 2018 there was an attempt to get credit card companies to ban their use for the purchase of certain semi-automatic weapons. Visa, came out and refused to participate in such a ban, saying that it wasn't their job to regulate the purchase of items that were perfectly legal. We agree. And we hope they don't cave into this now.
by Jim Malmberg
Note: When posting a comment, please sign-in first if you want a response. If you are not registered, click here. Registration is easy and free.

Follow ACCESS