
Chris W. Cox

Executive Director, NRA Institute for Legislative Action

Chris W. Cox has served as the executive director of the Institute for Legislative Action, the political and lobbying arm of NRA, since 2002.

As NRA's chief lobbyist and principal political strategist, Cox oversees eight NRA-ILA divisions: Federal Affairs; State & Local Affairs; Public Affairs; Grassroots; Finance; Research & Information; Conservation, Wildlife & Natural Resources; and Office of Legislative Counsel. Cox also serves as chairman of NRA's Political Victory Fund (NRA-PVF), the Association's political action committee; president of the NRA Freedom Action Foundation (NRA-FAF), which focuses on non-partisan voter registration and citizen education; and chairman of NRA Country, an effort to bring country music artists together with NRA members in support of our Second Amendment freedoms and hunting heritage.

Directing NRA's nationwide legislative and political efforts, Cox develops and executes independent political campaign and legislative initiatives, coordinates national advertising and direct mail programs, and has administrative responsibility over NRA-ILA's \$25 million budget. He also serves as the Association's principal contact with the United States Senate and House of Representatives, the White House and federal agencies.

Under Cox's leadership, NRA has achieved some of its most significant political and legislative victories: legislation to protect American firearms manufacturers from reckless lawsuits brought by anti-gun mayors and gun-control groups; a federal law, as well as laws in many states, to prevent government authorities from confiscating firearms from lawful citizens in the wake of natural disasters, such as occurred after Hurricane Katrina; legislation to allow lawful concealed-carry permit holders to carry firearms in national parks; Castle Doctrine legislation; national Right-to-Carry reciprocity; and more.

When the U.S. Supreme Court ruled, in the 2008 Heller decision, that the Second Amendment guarantees an individual right to bear arms for personal protection, Cox directed swift action to file legal challenges against gun bans in San Francisco and Chicago. In 2010, the Court heard NRA's legal arguments that the Heller decision should not just apply to federal enclaves, but to every individual, law-abiding American, regardless of where they live. In June 2010, by a 5-4 decision, the Court held that the Second Amendment guarantees the fundamental, individual Right to Keep and Bear Arms for all Americans.

As chairman of NRA's Political Victory Fund, Cox has directed NRA's electoral campaigns at every level. From presidential campaigns to congressional, state and local races, NRA has achieved success at unprecedented levels. Today, NRA members benefit from tremendous political support in congressional, gubernatorial and state legislative offices across the country.

National television networks and cable news outlets, in addition to prominent daily and weekly publications, often seek Cox's insight on policy and political matters. He has been published in the New York Times, Washington Post and other publications defending gun rights and responding to media inaccuracies on a variety of firearm, hunting and NRA-related matters.

Prior to joining NRA, Cox served as a senior legislative aide in Congress, managing issues relating to the judiciary, criminal justice reform and firearms freedom. He is a graduate of Rhodes College in Memphis, Tenn., where he earned a bachelor's degree in history with a minor in business administration. He grew up hunting and fishing with his father and three brothers in west Tennessee. Cox resides in Virginia with his wife, son and daughter.

