

Profiting from Tragedy

*How the NRA Lines Big Tech's Pockets
After Mass Shootings*

INTRODUCTION

Facebook and Google have earned millions of dollars from advertising by the National Rifle Association over the past two years, according to an analysis by the Tech Transparency Project, which found that the gun lobby's spending on tech platforms spiked after mass shootings.

Even as their top executives publicly expressed horror at gun massacres, the tech companies have offered the NRA a crucial platform to spread its message. In particular, the study found, they gave the group a way to mobilize and recruit supporters as public pressure mounted for regulation following episodes of gruesome gun violence.

Facebook Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg, in a March 2018 post after the high school shooting in Parkland, Florida, called the U.S. the “only country in the world that allows our children to live in fear and die because of truly terrible public policy on guns.”¹ But the social network went on to collect more than \$2 million in advertising fees from the NRA starting in May of that year, the TTP analysis found.

It's a similar story with Google, whose former chief executive, Eric Schmidt, called for U.S. leaders to pass gun control measures after the Parkland massacre.² Meanwhile, Google collected more than \$690,000 in advertising fees from the NRA since May 2018, the starting point for the company's political ad database.

In fact, NRA ad spending reached its highest levels on Google and soared on Facebook following the worst week for mass shooting casualties in the period analyzed by TTP, amid a wave of calls for action to halt the killings. That was early August 2019, when shootings in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio, killed a total of 31 people and injured 53 more.³ Another deadly shooting at the end of the month, in Odessa, Texas, preceded a similar spike in advertising.

These NRA ads—some of which are still active—link to the group's website and Facebook page, which, as of this writing, are filled with messages asserting the right to self-defense during the coronavirus outbreak and condemning lawmakers who refuse to declare gun shops “essential businesses” during public health lockdowns.⁴ One recent NRA Facebook ad features a “disabled woman weak to coronavirus,” who argues that people are buying guns because “the government will not be able to protect them” when society breaks down.⁵ As the NRA has stoked panic over the mounting public health crisis, gun sales surged to historic levels.⁶

In recent years, retail chains like Walmart and Dick's Sporting Goods put tighter limits on gun sales, and other major U.S. companies cut ties with the NRA.⁷ Facebook and Google, however, have avoided antagonizing the gun lobby, a valuable customer and powerful advocacy group with close ties to President Donald Trump.

¹ <https://www.facebook.com/sheryl/posts/10160021834130177>

² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NT0Sj-PYdEM>

³ <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/12/mass-shootings-mother-jones-full-data/>

⁴ <https://home.nra.org/>, <https://www.facebook.com/NRA/>

⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=621973328644555>

⁶ <https://www.motherjones.com/coronavirus-updates/2020/03/the-nra-is-stoking-coronavirus-panic-to-boost-gun-sales/>, <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/peteraldhous/coronavirus-gun-sales>

⁷ <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/02/28/589436112/dicks-sporting-goods-ends-sale-of-assault-style-rifles-citing-florida-shooting>, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-fedex-nra-breakingviews/breakingviews-exclusive-fedex-drops-nra-deal-by-snail-mail-idUSKCN1N425N>

The NRA ads run by Google and Facebook during this period often included disturbing messages. One promised that perceived critics of President Trump in government, media, and academia would “perish in the political flames of their own fires.” Another NRA ad even showed footage of people fleeing the mass shootings in El Paso and Dayton. The ad described the shootings as “unspeakable tragedies” before quickly pivoting to attack Democratic politicians who favor “taking guns away from law-abiding citizens.”⁸

The ad spending identified in this report likely represents a fraction of the total revenue that Facebook and Google earn from gun-rights groups. The NRA alone appears to spend as much as \$6.7 million on digital advertising fees each year, according to calculations based on data from Pathmatics, a market research firm. YouTube users have often complained about ubiquitous NRA ads that run before videos.

The NRA also isn’t the only pro-gun advertiser to channel millions of dollars to big tech companies. Facebook has earned more than \$10 million in revenue from pages that advertise gun accessories on the platform over the last two years. Some of these ads promote gun sales by raising the specter of “mob rule” and feature images that invoke urban snipers.

A VALUABLE CUSTOMER

Under pressure from activist groups, Facebook and Google have taken steps over the years to curb illegal gun sales on their platforms. Both companies have banned the sale of guns in their marketplaces and placed limits on advertising guns for sale.⁹

Facebook and Google executives have also made public statements of concern over mass gun violence. In the wake of the 2017 mass shooting in Las Vegas, Nevada, which left 58 people dead and hundreds more wounded, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg posted, “It’s hard to imagine why we don’t make it much harder for anyone to do this.”¹⁰ The following year, Sheryl Sandberg participated in a student walkout in the wake of the school shooting in Parkland, Florida, and criticized the “truly terrible public policy on guns” in the U.S.¹¹

That same year, former Google CEO Eric Schmidt, then a board member with Google parent company Alphabet, called on policymakers to pass stricter gun control laws. Asked about the potential for artificial intelligence to reduce gun violence, he called instead for “increasing the intelligence of the leaders who should vote for some gun controls.” Schmidt also brought up the AR-15 rifle, which was used in the Parkland shooting, saying, “Maybe we should regulate that a little bit.”¹² Google made a \$2 million grant to gun violence prevention groups in 2017.¹³

Despite these statements, Facebook and Google have continued to accept advertising from the NRA, the largest pro-gun lobby, which has blocked numerous proposed gun restrictions

⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=371784950422130>, <https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=480161005895680>

⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/30/technology/facebook-gun-sales-ban.html>, <https://searchengineland.com/google-weapon-listings-shopping-search-126487>, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/facebook-sets-restrictions-on-posts-promoting-guns-1394065463>, <https://support.google.com/merchants/answer/6150004?hl=en>, <https://support.google.com/adspolicy/answer/6014299?hl=en>, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/22/business/youtube-gun-ban.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/10/02/mark-zuckerberg-responds-to-las-vegas-massacre.html>

¹¹ <https://www.facebook.com/sheryl/posts/10160021834130177>

¹² <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NT0Sj-PYdEM>, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/03/us/politics/ar-15-americas-rifle.html>

¹³ <https://www.thetrace.org/2017/06/google-gives-2-million-curb-gun-violence/>

following mass shootings.¹⁴ An analysis of ad spending on both platforms may provide insight as to why the tech giants have chosen this course.

All Ads | NRA - National Rifle Association of America

NRA
NRA - National Rifle Association of America
@NRA
4,796,834 likes • Nonprofit Organization

Page transparency See More

- Page created **Oct 8, 2013**
- Page name changed **2** times
- Primary country location for people who manage this Page includes: **United States (10)**

Total spent by Page on ads about social issues, elections or politics
May 2018 - Mar 30, 2020
United States
\$1,652,515
See spend details

Recently spent by Page on ads about social issues, elections or politics
7 days - Mar 24 - Mar 30, 2020
United States
\$34,914
See spend details

FIGHT BACK AGAINST GUN-BAN POLITICIANS

JOIN NRA TODAY

The official NRA Facebook page purchased at least \$1,652,515 worth of advertisements between May 2018 and March 30, 2020, according to Facebook’s Ad Library, a public database of ads that have run on Facebook and Instagram. Pages associated with various NRA entities—the NRA Institute for Legislative Action, NRATV, and NRA Women—purchased an additional \$531,702 in advertising over the same period, bringing the NRA’s total minimum spend on Facebook to nearly \$2.2 million in less than two years.

On Google and YouTube, which only release data on a narrowly defined slice of political ads, the NRA Political Victory Fund spent at least \$651,600 between late May 2018 and the end of March 2020. The NRA Institute for Legislative Action spent \$39,300 over the same period. These databases, however, only give a partial picture of NRA ad spending on the platforms—which is likely much higher.

Due to the way Facebook set up its ad library, some NRA ads may not have been included. The initial version of the archive relied on advertisers, Facebook users, and automation to identify political and issue ads—a process that likely resulted in a number of pertinent ads being left out. Facing criticism that the archive omitted many ads that should have been classified as political, the company expanded the library to include all types of advertisements in March 2019, nearly a year after its original launch.¹⁵

Google’s ad library likely undercounts NRA ads to an even more significant degree. The company only includes ads defined as political in its archive and doesn’t include ads about

¹⁴ <https://www.nraila.org/articles/20181221/nra-statement-on-bump-fire-stock-rule>

¹⁵ <https://www.propublica.org/article/what-facebooks-new-political-ad-system-misses>, <https://about.fb.com/news/2019/03/a-better-way-to-learn-about-ads/>

social issues—like guns—that make up much of NRA messaging. Google, too, relies on an honor system for advertisers to disclose political ads.¹⁶

Data from market research company Pathmatics provides some insight into the total amount that online platforms collect from the NRA. Pathmatics estimates that in the first quarter of 2018, the NRA spent an average of \$17,300 per day on online video ad placements and \$1,100 per day on digital display ads.¹⁷ If this period is representative of the NRA’s typical spending patterns, the digital platforms’ total haul from the NRA would top \$6.7 million annually.¹⁸

According to Pathmatics, the vast majority of the NRA’s digital advertising budget is devoted to ads that appear before online videos.¹⁹ This is consistent with complaints from YouTube viewers, who say they’re bombarded with NRA ads any time they watch videos on the platform. In February 2018, a commenter on the YouTube help forum wrote, “I can’t watch YouTube videos for now because of the disgusting ads for the NRA.”²⁰ On Reddit, a commenter asked, “Why all the NRA ads?”²¹ NRA ads have even appeared before videos targeted to children. In 2018, Pathmatics identified an NRA pre-roll ad that ran before a video about a remote-controlled Doc McStuffins doll.²²

One NRA video, which the group ran shortly after the El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio, shootings of August 2019, used incendiary language to describe the news media and progressives it accused of attacking President Trump:²³

These saboteurs, slashing away with their leaks and sneers, their phony accusations and gagging sanctimony, drive their daggers through the heart of our future, poisoning our belief that honest custody of our institutions will ever again be possible, so they can then build their utopia from the ashes of what they burn down. No, their fate will be failure, and they will perish in the political flames of their own fires.²⁴

Google and Facebook directly profit from each of these ads. YouTube keeps 45% of the advertising revenue for each ad that runs on its platform.²⁵ In 2019, Google’s revenue share from YouTube ads alone reached \$15 billion.²⁶ Facebook also has a revenue-sharing

¹⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/business/help/167836590566506?id=288762101909005>,

<https://support.google.com/adspolicy/answer/6014595#700>

¹⁷ <https://www.pathmatics.com/blog/nra-load-digital-ads-in-aftermath-of-parkland-shooting>

¹⁸ While the Q1 2018 average factors in a marked spending increase after the Parkland shooting, the tragic frequency of mass shootings in the U.S. ensures that the gun rights group routinely mounts public relations campaigns to deflect blame for gun violence. See “A Troubling Pattern” section for more detail on the NRA’s increased ad spending following mass shootings.

¹⁹ <https://www.pathmatics.com/blog/nra-load-digital-ads-in-aftermath-of-parkland-shooting>

²⁰ <https://support.google.com/youtube/forum/AAAAiuErobU3FD5BfzLMrg/?hl=en>

²¹ https://www.reddit.com/r/youtube/comments/6p17bc/why_all_the_nra_ads/

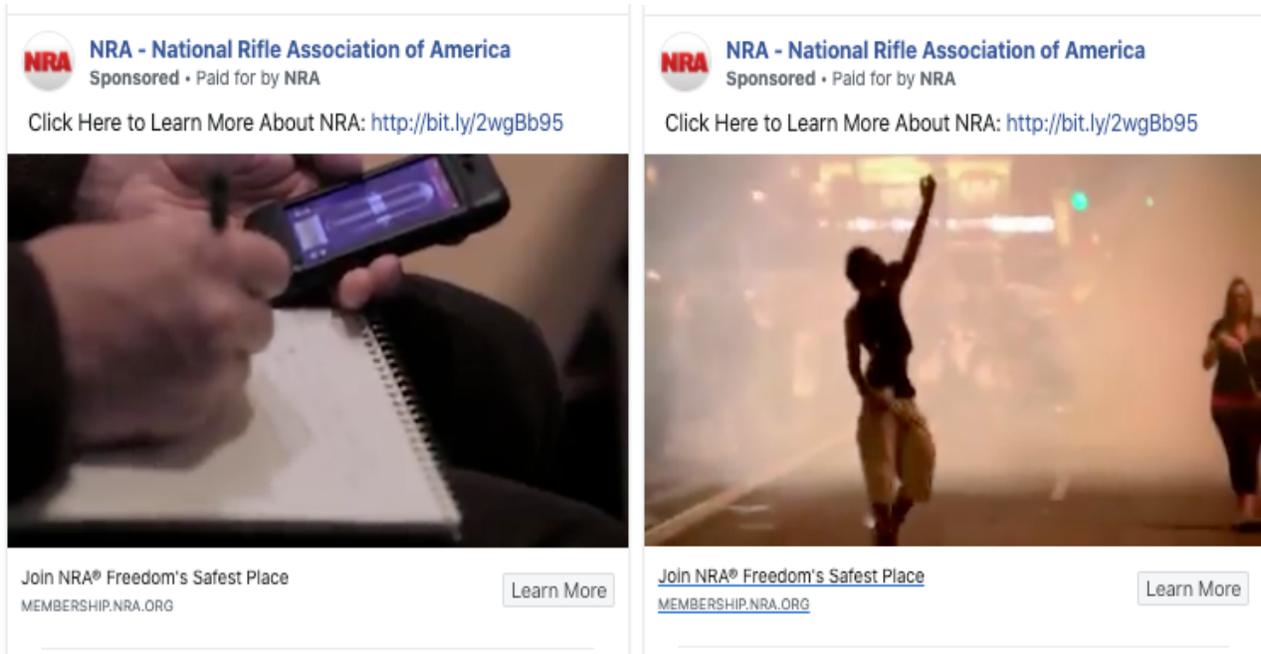
²² <https://www.pathmatics.com/blog/nra-load-digital-ads-in-aftermath-of-parkland-shooting>

²³ While this ad appears in Facebook’s advertising database, Google provides no information about the campaign on YouTube.

²⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=371784950422130>

²⁵ <https://www.vox.com/recode/2020/2/4/21122309/youtube-revenue-7-billion-paid-media-advertising>

²⁶ <https://www.theverge.com/2020/2/3/21121207/youtube-google-alphabet-earnings-revenue-first-time-reveal-q4-2019>



An NRA ad that ran shortly after a wave of mass shootings in August 2019 accused journalists and activists of “hateful defiance of [President Trump’s] legitimacy,” showing images of reporters and protestors and warning that “they think we’re so stupid that we’ll let them get away with it.”

agreement for third-party ads that appear in user videos and for its Watch feature, but most ads on Facebook appear in the News Feed, which Facebook owns and controls.²⁷ Facebook keeps all of the revenue from News Feed ads.²⁸

The NRA’s investment in digital advertising makes it a valuable customer for Facebook and Google, which have avoided antagonizing the group. In September 2019, the two tech giants declined to sign onto a letter from nearly 150 corporate leaders urging the Senate to enact stricter gun control measures.²⁹

By staying silent, Facebook and Google also avoid angering a powerful political lobby with direct access to the U.S. president, at a time when the digital platforms are coming under increasing pressure from federal regulators over their encryption policies, management of content, and impact on competition.

A TROUBLING PATTERN

Data from Facebook and Google’s ad transparency pages show that the NRA increases its spending in the wake of mass shootings. The group typically stops making statements in the media and on social media in the days immediately following a mass shooting. But data

²⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/creators/tools/in-stream-ads>, <https://adage.com/article/digital/facebook-show-pre-roll-video-ads-places/313230>, <https://www.vox.com/2015/7/1/11564024/youtube-beware-facebook-will-start-sharing-ad-revenue-with-video>, <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/facebook-earnings-how-will-news-feed-changes-impact-revenue-2018-01-26>

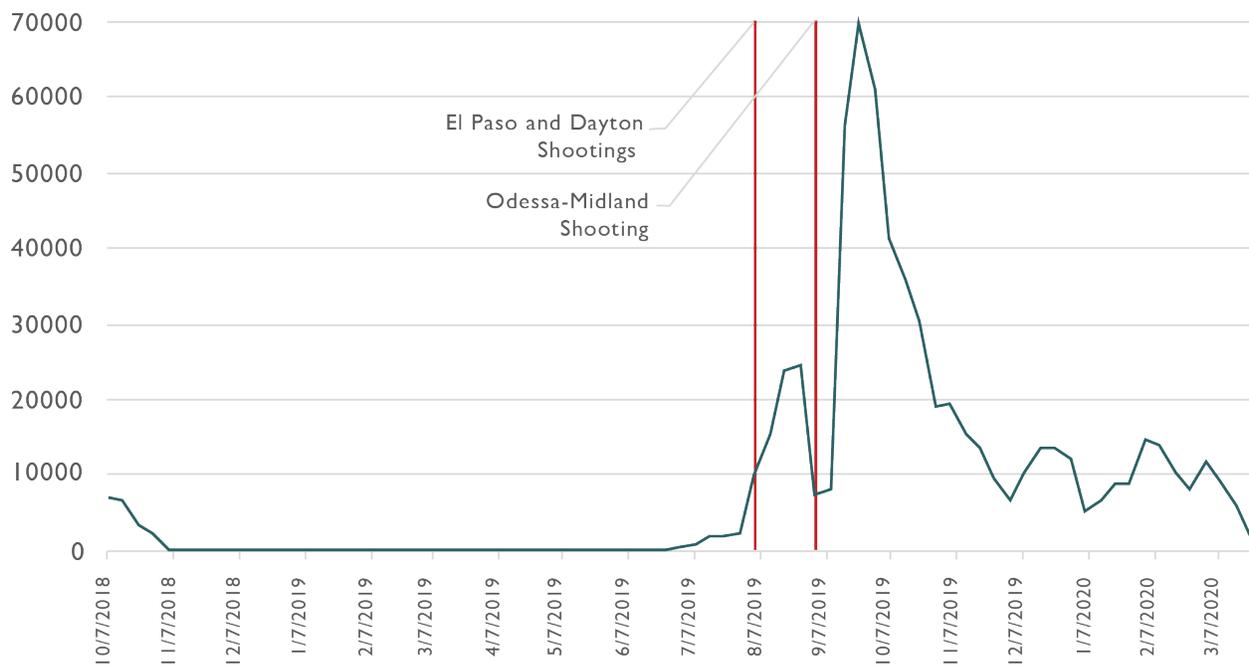
²⁸ <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/facebook-earnings-how-will-news-feed-changes-impact-revenue-2018-01-26>

²⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/12/business/dealbook/gun-background-checks-business.html?rref=collection/byline/andrew-ross-sorkin>

analyzed by TTP shows that the NRA often follows these post-shooting quiet periods with increased investment in online advertising.³⁰

Weekly spending data for the NRA Political Victory Fund on Google make this pattern extremely clear. Google reported no new political ad spending for the NRA Political Victory Fund between November 2018 and mid-June 2019. But in the aftermath of the August 2019 mass shooting tragedies in El Paso, Texas; Dayton, Ohio; and Odessa, Texas, the group's political ad spending skyrocketed to a high of more than \$69,000 in a week. Between September 15 and October 6, the group spent more than \$186,000 on ads classified as political by Google.

NRA POLITICAL VICTORY FUND SPENDING ON GOOGLE (USD)

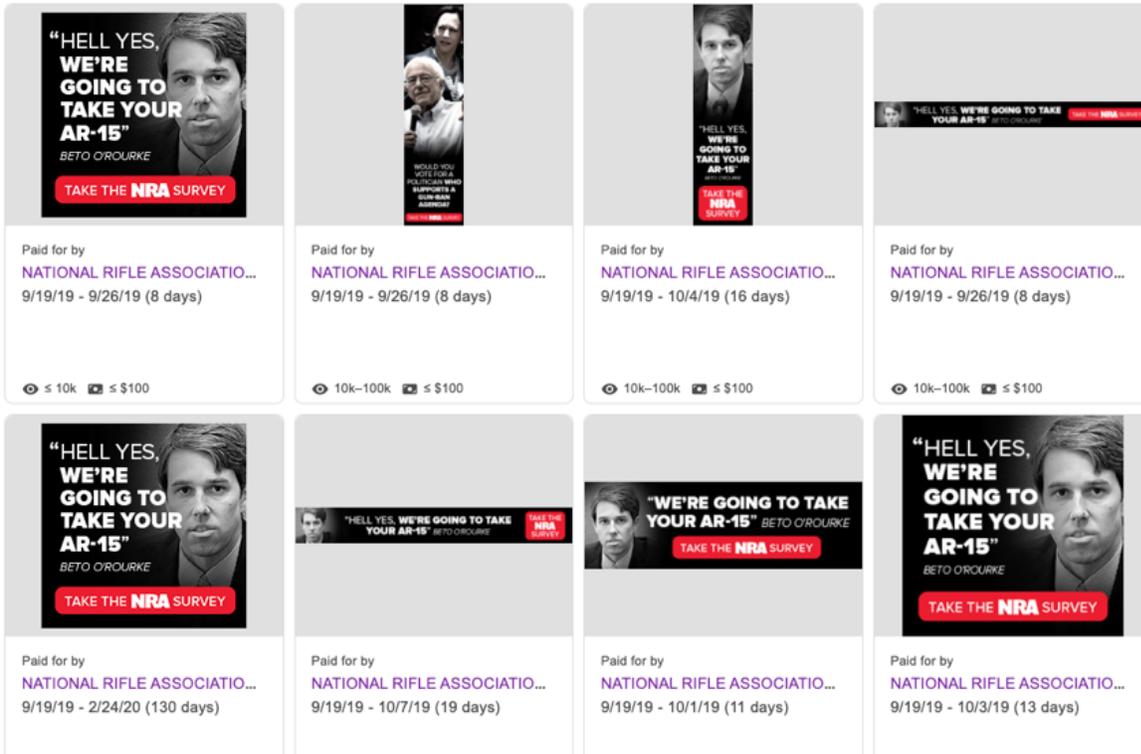


Most of these ads attacked Democratic candidates for supporting gun control reforms in the wake of the shooting tragedies. Former presidential candidate Beto O'Rourke, who advocated for a mandatory buyback of military-style assault weapons after the mass shooting in his hometown of El Paso, Texas, drew particular ire from the NRA.³¹

Facebook does not provide weekly ad spending in the same format. The platform provides data on total expenditures over the life of an ad, but because ads can run for months, it is difficult to see when the group made its biggest spending push. Nevertheless, these data can reveal when the NRA initiated its biggest ad campaigns.

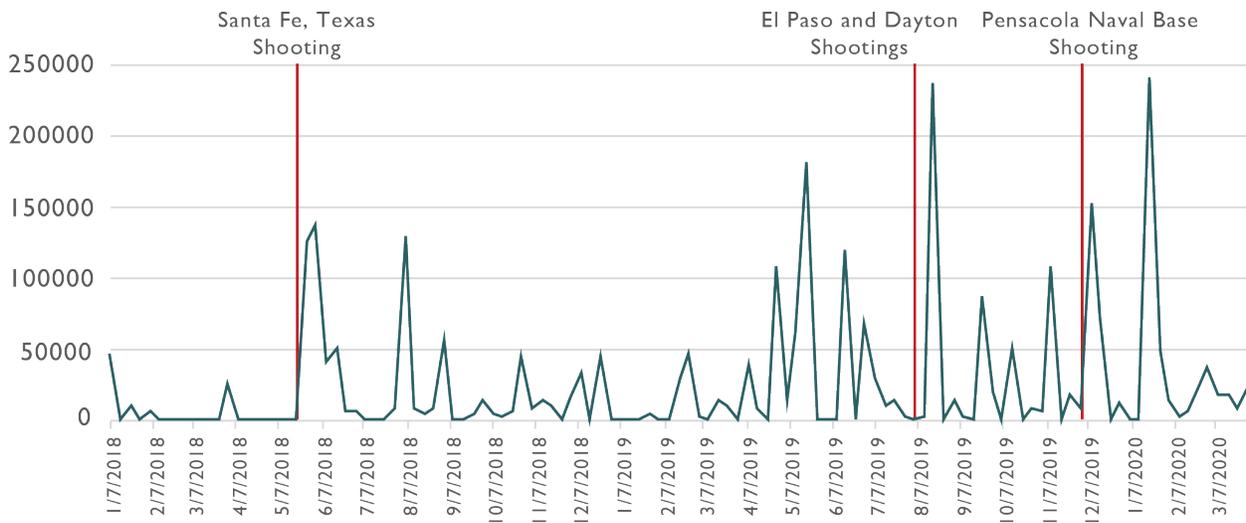
³⁰ <https://www.cnn.com/2012/12/17/tech/social-media/nra-social-media-silence/index.html>, <https://gizmodo.com/nra-goes-quiet-on-twitter-just-like-previous-mass-shoo-1823129163>

³¹ https://transparencyreport.google.com/political-ads/advertiser/AR313943555078881280?campaign_creatives=start:1567296000000;end:1569974399999;spend::impressions::type::sort:3&lu=campaign_creatives



Former presidential candidate Beto O'Rourke drew particular ire from the NRA for his comments after a mass shooting in his hometown of El Paso, Texas. Most of the NRA ads during that time featured O'Rourke's image and words.

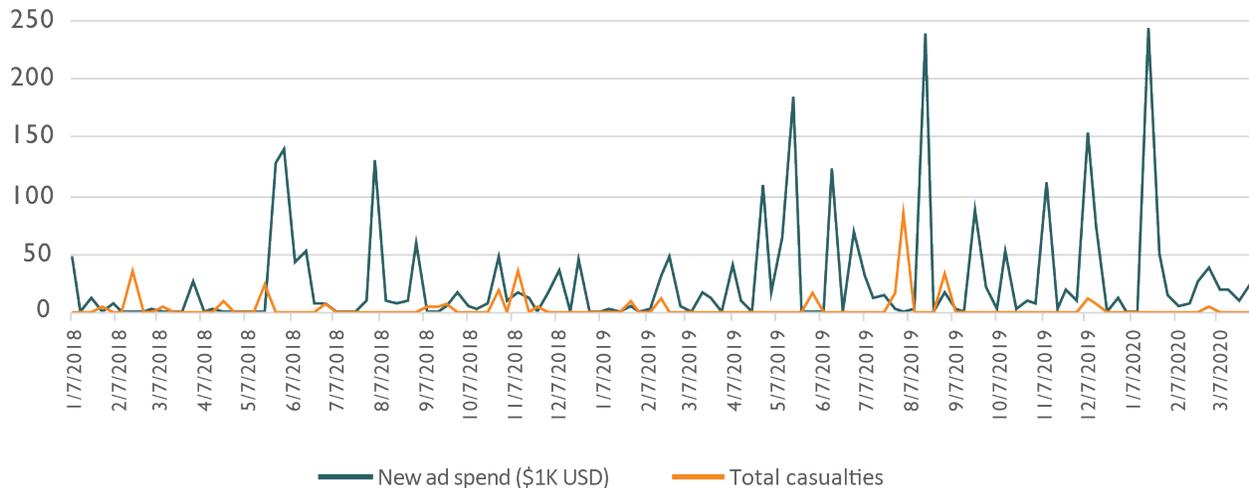
COST OF NEWLY-LAUNCHED FACEBOOK AD CAMPAIGNS (USD)



As on Google, the NRA's ad spending on Facebook soared following the mass shootings of August 2019. The page launched campaigns worth between \$54,500 and \$236,335 during the

third week of August, well over its median ad buy of less than \$6,300 per week. The NRA also appeared to launch large ad campaigns around the time of the Santa Fe, Texas, high school shooting in May 2018 and the Pensacola, Florida, shooting in December 2019.

VALUE OF NEWLY-LAUNCHED AD CAMPAIGNS (\$1K USD) VS NUMBER OF MASS-SHOOTING VICTIMS



Shooting data source: Mother Jones

The NRA’s advertising campaigns do not always appear to be perfectly correlated with mass shooting activity, and the trend could be driven by other factors. A large spending push that began in late January 2020, for example, may reflect the NRA’s increased spending during a general election year. But Pathmatics, the market research firm that has studied the NRA’s digital ad spending practices, has also observed marked changes in the group’s advertising practices in the wake of mass shootings.

After a brief hiatus in ad spending immediately following the 2018 shooting in Parkland, there was a surge in NRA advertising expenditure. Pathmatics reported that the digital ad spending increased from an average daily expenditure of \$11,300 pre-Parkland to \$47,300 in the weeks afterward.³² Following the August 2019 mass shootings in Texas and Ohio, Pathmatics observed a “quiet period” followed by an increase in the NRA’s digital ad spending from an average of about \$10,000 per day to more than \$21,000 per day.³³

³² <https://www.chicagotribune.com/business/blue-sky/sns-tns-bc-guns-kids-advertising-20180323-story.html>

³³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/18/business/sandy-hook-promise-gun-ad.html>

DISTURBING CONTENT

The NRA doesn't just increase the number of ads that it runs on Facebook and Google after mass shootings; it sometimes incorporates disturbing images from these tragedies into its ads. One ad attacking Democratic politicians for supporting gun control measures includes footage of people fleeing from shooters in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio.³⁴ These videos appear in users' News Feeds in apparent violation of Facebook's own advertising policies, which prohibit ads "that may shock or scare viewers," or that depict "violence or threats of violence."³⁵ Another active NRA ad bears the image of a young woman with the caption, "a gun is louder than a rape

Multiple versions of this ad ⓘ 1 of 3 ▶

NRA - National Rifle Association of America
Sponsored • Paid for by NATIONAL RIFLE ASSN OF AMERICA
ID: 599942490857502

Click Here To Join NRA®: <http://bit.ly/2KJZWlo>



0:06 / 3:14

Still Thinking About Joining NRA®?
Don't Miss Out On Our Best Membership Offer. Up to A \$40
Discount Plus Free NRA® Gift With Your Membership. [Learn More](#)
MEMBERSHIP.NRA.ORG

Multiple versions of this ad ⓘ 1 of 3 ▶

NRA - National Rifle Association of America
Sponsored • Paid for by NATIONAL RIFLE ASSN OF AMERICA
ID: 599942490857502

Click Here To Join NRA®: <http://bit.ly/2KJZWlo>



Still Thinking About Joining NRA®?
Don't Miss Out On Our Best Membership Offer. Up to A \$40
Discount Plus Free NRA® Gift With Your Membership. [Learn More](#)
MEMBERSHIP.NRA.ORG

Multiple versions of this ad ⓘ 1 of 3 ▶

NRA - National Rifle Association of America
Sponsored • Paid for by NATIONAL RIFLE ASSN OF AMERICA
ID: 599942490857502

Click Here To Join NRA®: <http://bit.ly/2KJZWlo>



EL PASO, TX

Still Thinking About Joining NRA®?
Don't Miss Out On Our Best Membership Offer. Up to A \$40
Discount Plus Free NRA® Gift With Your Membership. [Learn More](#)
MEMBERSHIP.NRA.ORG

Multiple versions of this ad ⓘ 1 of 3 ▶

NRA - National Rifle Association of America
Sponsored • Paid for by NATIONAL RIFLE ASSN OF AMERICA
ID: 599942490857502

Click Here To Join NRA®: <http://bit.ly/2KJZWlo>



Still Thinking About Joining NRA®?
Don't Miss Out On Our Best Membership Offer. Up to A \$40
Discount Plus Free NRA® Gift With Your Membership. [Learn More](#)
MEMBERSHIP.NRA.ORG

Stills from a recent NRA ad depict people fleeing from mass shootings.

³⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=2700836590031583>

³⁵ https://www.facebook.com/policies/ads/prohibited_content/sensational_content

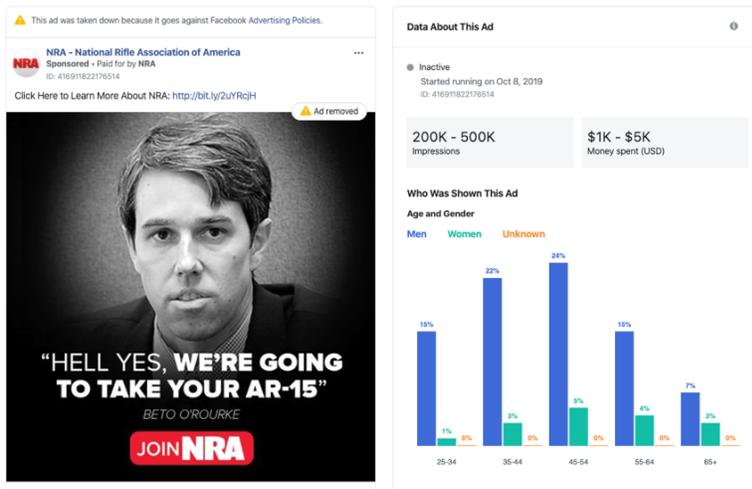


whistle.”³⁶ An ad from October 2019 implores viewers to “fight back” against “anti-gun elitist George Soros.”³⁷ Soros, a billionaire philanthropist, is the frequent target of threats and abuse, including a pipe bomb sent to his home in 2018.³⁸

Facebook has not removed these ads. It did, however, take down 18 NRA ads that quote Beto O’Rourke as saying, “Hell yes, we’re going to take your AR-15,” presumably for violating the company’s policy on profanity in ads.³⁹

When Facebook does determine that an ad violates its policies, it is often slow to act. As of this writing, the NRA Facebook page has run at least 197 ads that violated the site’s policies since May 2018.⁴⁰ The ads received between 8 and 11.9 million views before Facebook removed them. Many of the ads flagged for policy violations are identical to currently active NRA ads on Facebook, raising questions about the platform’s content moderation practices.⁴¹

On Google, an NRA Political Victory Fund ad that violated the platform’s advertising policies ran for 62 days and was viewed by as many as a million people.⁴²



An NRA ad that was removed from Facebook

Because the Facebook and Google ad libraries only date back to early 2018, they omit some of the NRA’s most controversial ad campaigns. The group sparked an uproar in 2017 over an online video ad that called on NRA members to fight back against liberal protestors with “the clenched fist of truth,” which many viewers interpreted as a call to partisan violence.⁴³

³⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=127841348502502>

³⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=2467515529996750>,

³⁸ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2018/10/24/conspiracy-theories-about-soros-arent-just-false-theyre-anti-semitic/>, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/aug/05/cesar-sayoc-sentencing-pipe-bombs-targets-trump-critics>

³⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=416911822176514>,

https://www.facebook.com/policies/ads/prohibited_content/grammar

⁴⁰ https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?active_status=all&ad_type=all&country=US&impression_search_field=has_impressions_lifetime&view_all_page_id=665345483483486

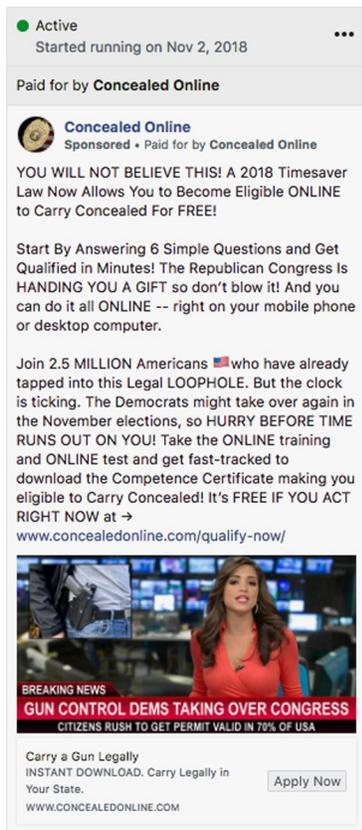
⁴¹ https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?active_status=all&ad_type=all&country=US&impression_search_field=has_impressions_lifetime&view_all_page_id=665345483483486

⁴² <https://transparencyreport.google.com/political-ads/advertiser/AR313943555078881280/creative/CR454353526408085504>

⁴³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/29/us/nra-ad-trump-protests.html>

THE BIG BUSINESS OF GUN ACCESSORIES

Facebook isn't just profiting off NRA advertising. It's also made money off ads for gun accessories like scopes and concealed holsters as well as online courses that promise a "loophole" for obtaining a concealed-carry permit.



In 2016, under pressure from Everytown for Gun Safety and other gun control groups, Facebook banned private gun sales on its platforms.⁴⁴ Three years later, the company updated its policy to prevent social media influencers from advertising guns on its sites.⁴⁵

But Facebook still allows ads for gun accessories and licensing services aimed at adults, a gambit that has proved lucrative as the company's competitors, like Amazon and eBay, have limited gun accessory sales.⁴⁶

A now-defunct page for gun enthusiasts called Concealed Online is the 14th biggest advertiser disclosed in Facebook's Ad Library Report, paying millions more than Walmart, Goldman Sachs, and the pharmaceutical industry's main lobbying group.⁴⁷ According to Facebook's Ad Library Report, Concealed Online paid Facebook nearly \$6.5 million to run more than 25,000 ads.⁴⁸

While Facebook has removed all of Concealed Online's ads from its searchable Ad Library, screenshots and media reporting from 2018 show that the group advertised an online course that the company called a "loophole" for obtaining a concealed weapons permit.⁴⁹ One Concealed Online ad implored viewers to act before the Democrats took control of Congress and implemented "mob rule."⁵⁰

A still-active page called "I'll go ahead and keep my guns, Thanks," owned by a Utah-based company called 2A4Life, LLC, has paid Facebook more than \$4.4 million in advertising revenue.⁵¹ The group advertises gun accessories like spotting scopes, holsters, and concealed carry leggings for women. Some 2A4Life ads depict a rifle scope overlooking a parking lot, aimed at a commercial area in the distance.⁵²

⁴⁴ <https://everytownresearch.org/reports/the-wild-wild-web/>, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/30/technology/facebook-gun-sales-ban.html>

⁴⁵ <https://www.cnn.com/2019/12/18/instagram-to-ban-influencers-from-promoting-vaping-and-guns.html>

⁴⁶ <https://sellercentral.amazon.com/gp/help/external/200164950>, <https://www.ebay.com/help/policies/prohibited-restricted-items/firearms-weapons-knives-policy?id=4277>

⁴⁷ All-time advertising data downloaded from <https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/report>

⁴⁸ All-time advertising data downloaded from <https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/report>

⁴⁹ <https://www.wired.com/story/facebook-ads-political-concealed-online/>

⁵⁰ <https://www.businessinsider.sg/trump-other-advertisers-spending-most-on-facebook-political-ads-2019-11>

⁵¹ https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?active_status=all&ad_type=all&country=US&impression_search_field=has_impressions_lifetime&view_all_page_id=791543660926838

⁵² <https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=516411028889340>, <https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=213430566454814>, <https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=2688155454595292>, <https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=2861248977255399>, <https://www.facebook.com/ads/library/?id=125001842149256>

Multiple versions of this ad ⓘ 1 of 3 ▶

I'll go ahead and keep my guns, Thanks
Sponsored · Paid for by 2A4LIFE LLC
ID: 213430566454814

- * Don't Let The Price Fool You. This Spotting Monocular is a GAME CHANGER
- * Great for all kinds of outdoor activities
- * Over 50% Off Right Now



Tactical Spotting Monocular
Over 50% Off Right Now
2A4LIFE.COM

Learn More

Ad · www.virginiaconcealed.com/ ▾
Virginia Concealed Carry Class | Protect yourself & your family
You can now get Certified online for Concealed Carry in up to 34 States. Get certified to...
[Our Guarantee](#) · [Do I Qualify?](#) · [Get Certified](#) · [Affiliates](#) · [Products](#) · [Permit Reciprocity](#)

Ad · www.aliengearholsters.com/ ▾
Concealed Carry Holsters | Holsters For Concealed Carry
★★★★★ Rating for aliengearholsters.com: 4.6 - 4,023 reviews
Conceal And Carry In Total Comfort With The Best Holsters In The Galaxy. Lifetime Warranty.
[Shop Online](#) · [Contact Us](#) · [Search Holsters](#) · [Customers Testimonials](#) · [Blog Center](#)

Ad · www.uslawshield.com/ ▾ (855) 727-6813
U.S. LawShield® | Plans as low as \$10.95/month
24/7/365 access to Attorney-Answered Emergency Hotline. We cover the "use" of any legal weapon. Sign-up Now. Fish & Game Violations. Find An Event. Self-defense Education. Sign Up For Seminars. Firearms Law Discussion. Legal Defense Program.

Searches related to concealed carry

concealed carry laws	concealed carry age
concealed carry map	what states honor my concealed carry permit?
concealed carry permit	concealed carry vs open carry
concealed carry illinois	concealed carry class

< **Go**oooooooooooo **gle** >
Previous 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Next

Google does not disclose ads for goods and services that it deems apolitical, but a search for “concealed carry” reveals that the platform also carries advertisements for online concealed carry certification, holsters, and gun owners insurance. Google does not disclose its revenue from non-political advertisers, so it is impossible to estimate how much the platform earns from these ads.

While ads for gun accessories may seem innocuous enough, the Wall Street Journal reported in 2019 that unlicensed weapon dealers sometimes use accessory sales on Facebook to establish contact with potential buyers.⁵³

BUSINESS AS USUAL

Despite statements by Facebook and Google executives condemning gun violence, their companies have maintained a business-as-usual relationship with the NRA, accepting the group’s ad dollars even as it boosts spending after mass shootings.

Facebook also demonstrates a lax attitude toward NRA ads that, according to our assessment, violate the company’s policies with disturbing imagery and implied violence. The platforms’ willingness to run ads for gun accessories like holsters and shooting scopes is another example of how the companies profit off the gun market.

The tech giants’ behavior is all the more striking given that many of America’s biggest corporate brands are splitting with the NRA. As other major companies take a stand, however, Facebook and Google have remained silent—and continued to provide a megaphone to the pro-gun lobbying group.

⁵³ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/gun-sellers-are-sneaking-onto-facebooks-booming-secondhand-marketplace-11566315198>