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65° / 53°

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Double Standard: NPR Applies Varying Terminology on Gun Rights vs. Abortion



By Jeff Poor ([Bio](#) | [Archive](#))
Thu, 03/04/2010 - 11:46 ET

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One's bias can come out in subtle ways depending on your world view, and try as National Public Radio may be fair, **their leanings are transparent.**

In a **March 2 story on NPR's "Morning Edition,"** Nina Totenberg reported on a pending Supreme Court case involving the Second Amendment and how it applies state and local laws. Her story is specifically about a Chicago handgun ban and how those on both sides of this issue view it (h/t [Chris Moody](#) at [the Cato Institute](#)).

"Gun rights advocates contend that the Chicago handgun ban is unconstitutional, that the Supreme Court already has held that the right to bear arms is an individual and fundamental right, and that means the Second Amendment limits apply to every jurisdiction in the nation," Totenberg said on "Morning Edition."

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However, [David Boaz](#), the executive vice president of the Cato Institute, pointed out [on the Cato @ Liberty blog in a post on March 2](#), NPR plays fast and loose on how it describes advocacy based on what so-called civil liberty it is reporting on. Boaz compared how NPR described the proponents of the right to bear arms in this story, traditionally a right-of-center issue, often deemed "gun advocates" or "gun rights advocates," to its reporting on so-called abortion "rights," a left-of-center issue.

"In 415 NPR stories on abortion, I found only one reference to 'abortion advocates,' in 2005," Boaz wrote. "There are far more references, hundreds more, to 'abortion rights,' 'reproductive rights,' and 'women's rights.' And certainly abortion-rights advocates would insist that they are not 'abortion advocates,' they are advocates for the right of women to choose whether or not to have an abortion. NPR grants them the respect of characterizing them the way they prefer."