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NRA, Libertarians Squabble over Supreme Court Case

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The National Rifle Association is fighting with erstwhile libertarian allies over who should be arguing on behalf of gun owners in the next big Supreme Court case.

In the landmark 2008 case *Heller v. District of Columbia*, it was a group of libertarian lawyers who won the case without any help from the NRA. The Supreme Court ruled then that Washington, D.C.'s handgun ban was unconstitutional

Next month, the court will hear *McDonald v. Chicago*, which challenges a handgun ban in Chicago and its suburbs similar to the Washington rule struck down by the court two years ago.

The issue now is whether the Second Amendment offers protection against actions by state and local governments, not merely the feds.

The lawyer who will be arguing for gun holders is Alan Gura, who is affiliated with the libertarian Cato Institute and successfully argued the *Heller* case.

However, the Supreme Court, without explanation, gave the NRA permission to have its attorney offer arguments as well. The NRA's recently hired lawyer Paul Clement, who was solicitor general in the George W. Bush administration, will take away a third of Gura's time.

Needless to say, the libertarians aren't too happy. Ilya Shapiro, a Supreme Court scholar at Cato Institute, told *The Washington Post*, "The NRA prefers to seek glory for itself rather than presenting the strongest case for its purported constituency of gun owners."

The NRA's request for time at the podium was "about fundraising, not lawyering," he said.

In response NRA spokesman Andrew Arulanandam told *The Post*: "Our client is the Second Amendment. We wanted to make sure that all avenues were addressed and all bases covered."

Paul Valone, a Charlotte, N.C., gun owners advocate, sides with Gura. He wrote in the *Charlotte Gun Rights Examiner*, "As a betting man, I would rather place my money on a lawyer who already won the precedent-setting Second Amendment case rather than the lawyer who argued against him."



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