



February 2004 Findings Memo – Guns

ACTIVITY

- **During February, 25 gun-related ads aired 733 times within 35 media markets in 24 states.**
- **U.S. Congress – Congressman John Carter**, Republican candidate in Texas' 31st Congressional District, sponsored an ad that prominently featured an endorsement from the National Rifle Association. The ad aired five times in Waco, Texas.
- **Down Ballot Elections – Angus McQuilken**, Democratic candidate for Massachusetts State Senate, sponsored an ad criticizing his opponent for voting to “let criminals and domestic abusers have handguns.” **Joseph Consiglio**, a candidate for Trumbull County Sheriff, released an ad that opened with a picture of a handgun and the candidates promise to ensure the public’s safety through effective law enforcement.
- **Immunity – The Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence** sponsored an ad in late February urging U.S. Senators to vote against a bill that would grant legal immunity to gun manufacturers and dealers. According to the ad, reckless gun dealers are responsible for supplying guns used in most crimes. The ad ran 10 times in the Washington DC media market for an estimated cost of \$13,670.

OVERVIEW

- **Gun Advertising** generated 733 airings at an estimated cost of **\$238,055**.
- **Gun Safety PSAs** accounted for 29% (\$67,862) of gun-related advertising in February. Trigger locks and keeping firearms away from children were the most dominate PSA themes in the ads captured by CMAG.
- **Pro-Hunting Organizations – Outdoorsman International, Sportsman’s Alliance of Maine, and SCI First for Hunters** spent a combined \$131,116 on ads promoting sportsman’s rights.
- **Political Activity** accounted for 5% (\$38,088) of gun-related advertising in February.

Top Markets by Spending - Feb		Top Markets by Spending YTD	
CABLE/NETWORK	\$149,651	CABLE/NETWORK	\$308,977
BOSTON	\$22,560	SHREVEPORT	\$63,994
WASHINGTON DC	\$13,670	BOSTON	\$22,560
BIRMINGHAM	\$13,662	WASHINGTON DC	\$13,670
SAN ANTONIO	\$3,014	BIRMINGHAM	\$13,662

Top Markets By Spots - Feb		Top Markets by Spots YTD	
CABLE/NETWORK	336	CABLE/NETWORK	566
BIRMINGHAM	63	SHREVEPORT	156
WACO	37	CHARLOTTE	84
CHARLESTON	26	BIRMINGHAM	63
ROANOKE	23	NORFOLK	41

TRENDS

- **2004:** The expiration of the federal assault weapons ban in September 2004 will likely emerge as the principal gun control issue of the year. We expect to see a substantial amount of advertising by supporters of the ban during the months and weeks leading up to the expiration date. In 2003, a Democratic candidate for the New Jersey State Senate spent nearly \$1 million on ads attacking his opponent's record on assault weapons. Rep. Carolyn McCarthy, D-N.Y., has already introduced a reauthorization bill with tougher restrictions. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., has introduced her own version in the Senate.

IN OTHER ADVERTISING:

During February, one large campaign of note was the special election for Kentucky's 6th Congressional District, which had been vacated when Dr. Ernie Fletcher resigned the position to take the office of Governor. The 6th Congressional District is comprised of much of central Kentucky, including Frankfort and Lexington. On February 17th, Ben Chandler defeated Alice Forgy Kerr by **12.2%**, to claim the seat. Here's a recap of the advertising.

- With a campaign focusing on his role as Attorney General, and attacking Forgy Kerr on her votes in the State Senate (including a vote for a "pension grab"), Chandler's campaign spent an estimated **\$540,000**. Almost half of that spending came in the month of February. His campaign was supported by the **Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee**, who spent an estimated **\$400,000**, and the **League of Conservation Voters**, spending just under **\$25,000**.
- In a state that was strongly behind President Bush in the 2000 presidential election, Alice Forgy Kerr's campaign focused on her support for President Bush's agenda. She outspent her opponent by approximately **\$240,000**, spending an estimated **\$783,000**. She was supported by the **National Republican Congressional Committee**, who spent close to **\$450,000** during the course of the election, half of that coming in the last weeks before the election.