

Gannett Shareholder Meeting Question
Amy Ridenour
The National Center for Public Policy Research
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I'm Amy Ridenour, a shareholder, and also representing the National Center for Public Policy Research. Last year, a Gannett newspaper published the names and addresses of everyone holding a legal handgun permit in two well-populated counties in New York State in the form of an interactive map.

One effect was to frighten people. People without guns wondered if they'd be targets of criminals. People with guns wondered if they'd be targets of criminals who want to steal their guns. Police officers and judges feared retribution visits. Inmates in prisons taunted guards. Women who had successfully hidden from stalkers were exposed.

I understand that Gannett journalists and executives received threats. I disapprove of that and I sympathize; I myself was the only adult at home with three children under 7 when some political activists tried to beat our door in, and left only after spray-painting "F- You" all over our house. I don't believe people should be threatened for exercising their First Amendment rights, but neither do I believe they should be threatened for exercising their Second Amendment rights.

That the publishing move was political there can be no doubt. I note that the paper's president and publisher just six days ago tweeted out a picture of the head of the National Rifle Association under the words "stark raving mad." This was on an account identifying her as president and publisher of a Gannett newspaper, and not noting in any way that her tweets were personal opinion only.

If reporting is correct, no one in upper management here at Gannett was consulted before the Journal News outed legally-registered handgun owners. If there was no policy at that time that management should be consulted before such a controversial, and even dangerous action -- for Gannett employees as well as law-abiding members of the general public -- is there one in place now? Or are publishers of local Gannett papers empowered to publish anything they see fit, even if controversial, potentially-dangerous and on topics on which they have intense personal views?

Contact:

David Almasi at (202) 543-4110 x11 or (703) 568-4727 (text-enabled) or dalmasi@nationalcenter.org

Judy Kent at (703) 759-7476 or jkent@nationalcenter.org

*The National Center for Public Policy Research
501 Capitol Court NE
Washington DC 20002
(202) 543-4110
www.nationalcenter.org
www.conservativeblog.org
[@NationalCenter](https://twitter.com/NationalCenter)*

