



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on August 11, 2021

Letter From House Members Blasts ATF Attempt to Expand Definition of a Firearm

When the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) proposed expanding its power over firearms in May, it invited public response. On Tuesday, the bureau received [a blistering response](#) from eight Republican members of the House Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security:

[Your] attempt to expand the definition of firearm, like other ATF regulatory efforts, is deeply flawed, beyond the scope of ATF's authority, contrary to years of previous ATF opinions, and harmful to millions of law-abiding American firearm owners....

[Your] proposed rule goes well beyond the authority granted to the agency in any applicable federal statutes ... [and] expands the definition of a firearm beyond the intent of Congress....

[Your proposed] rule appears to be a deliberate attempt to usurp the authority of Congress. In so doing, ATF has also unconstitutionally infringed on American citizens' fundamental Second Amendment rights [as well as] privacy rights under the Fourth Amendment.



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In its [statement of proposed redefining of "Frame or Receiver"](#) on May 21, the bureau claimed that the present definitions "fail to capture the full meaning of those terms" and it proceeds to "clarify" such terms as "complete weapon," "complete muffler or silencer device," "privately made firearm," and "readily," stating that redefining, or clarifying, such terms is necessary "given advancements in firearms technology."

It added, "Because 'frames' or 'receivers' are included in the definition of 'firearm,' any person who engages in the business of manufacturing, importing, or dealing in frames or receivers must obtain a license from ATF."

A large portion of the 34-page expansion was dedicated to "Privately Made Firearms or 'Ghost Guns':"



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Technological advances have also made it easier for unlicensed persons to make firearms at home from standalone parts or weapon parts kits, or by using 3D printers or personally owned or leased equipment, without any records or background check....

[This] makes it difficult for law enforcement to determine where, by whom, or when they were manufactured, and to whom they were sold or otherwise disposed.

The ATF cited “intelligence reports” from the FBI, the DHS, and the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) that claim that “ghost guns ... enable prohibited buyers to purchase deadly weapons with just a few clicks online ... [while] hamstringing law enforcement’s ability to investigate crimes committed with untraceable weapons.” They also claim that the “wide availability of ghost guns and the emergence of functional 3D-printed guns are a homeland security threat.”

All of which, as *The New American* has repeatedly pointed out, are lies (see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)). Hundreds of millions of firearms are already untraceable, either due to inheritance or private purchase. “Ghost guns” are costly both in terms of money and time expended in their manufacture. While popular media suggest that the average “ghost gun” can be made or purchased for around \$400, the real cost is over \$1,000 and approaches \$2,000 when all related costs are counted.

And “ghost guns” make up an imperceptibly small percentage of the estimated 400 to 600 million firearms already legally possessed by American gun owners.

Finally, criminals find it much easier to steal, or purchase on the street, a firearm rather than to manufacture one.

Unfortunately missing from the letter was mention of the fact that any attempt to regulate the possession or use of a firearm is an infringement on the Second Amendment-protected right to keep and bear arms. That would include the first infringement dating back to 1934 — the National Firearms Act. Everything from that moment on concerning the regulation, licensing, limiting, etc., of the right to keep and bear arms is an infringement.

And, it must be asked, where did Congress gets its power to assign its legislative responsibility to an unelected agency (the ATF) in the first place?

The New American has repeatedly noted that the real effort is the ultimate disarming of the American public so that all weaponry remains in the hands only of the police, the government, and criminals. As Adolph Hitler said:

The most foolish mistake we could possibly make would be to allow the subject race to possess arms. History shows that all conquerors who have allowed their subject races to carry arms have prepared their own downfall by so doing.

There is good news in all of this. As the effort to disarm the public becomes increasingly obvious, so does the mounting pushback. The John Birch Society, smeared repeatedly in its early days by the leftist media, is seeing enormous growth in numbers and influence. Its program is simplicity itself: A lone citizen, concerned about how to fight the coming tyranny, can do little. But organized and following a strategic plan to expose the plans where the communists are most vulnerable, just a few can make an enormous difference.

If you’ve read this far, consider [JBS.org](#) for more information on how to join the increasing resistance to



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the tyranny planned and being implemented by agencies such as the ATF.

Related articles:

[California Sues ATF, Demanding It Banish “Ghost Guns”](#)

[“Ghost Gun” Laws Likely to Fail](#)

[State Department Demands “Ghost Gun” Company Stop Publishing 3D Files. Too Late.](#)

[What Are “Ghost Guns” and Why Does Biden Want to Keep You from Owning Them?](#)

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