

United States Senate

January 27, 2022

President Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for your leadership to stop the growing threat of unserialized firearms known as ghost guns with your Executive Order that required the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) to regulate the building blocks for ghost guns under current gun laws. We urge your Administration to finalize this critical rule as quickly as possible to help save lives in Maryland and across the nation.

As you know, ghost guns are sold as untraceable component parts that can be easily assembled by the purchaser. With only a credit card and a shipping address, it is possible to purchase unfinished frames or receivers for ghost guns from at least 100 online sellers. Instructional videos on websites like YouTube have millions of views and can teach people to assemble their untraceable guns with a jig kit, common tools, and minimal effort. The ATF's proposed rule would close the loophole that allows people to build and sell these untraceable weapons and treat them as we would any other gun under federal law.

Here in Maryland, we were tragically reminded of the urgency of this issue last week, after a student at Magruder High School in Montgomery County allegedly shot a classmate with a ghost gun. According to press reports, the teenaged suspect purchased the components online and the parts were delivered to his home. Montgomery County State's Attorney John McCarthy reports that they've recovered four ghost guns from schools since starting to track them.

The threat of ghost guns continues to grow across Maryland. During a hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee last May, Baltimore City Police Commissioner Michael Harrison testified that his department has seen a 300 percent increase in the number of ghost guns seized compared to last year. Of particular concern, nearly one quarter of the guns seized were from individuals that were too young to legally possess a gun - including a 14 year old. According to the latest statistics from the Baltimore Police Department, officers seized 345 ghost guns last year - nearly 15% of all firearms seized in the city - and that number is expected to double in 2022.

In the coming session, Maryland's Attorney General Brian Frosh and leaders in our state legislature are working to pass legislation to prevent dangerous individuals and children from accessing ghost guns and building unserialized guns. This is a critically important step to increase public safety in our state, but more action is needed at the federal level to ensure that other states have strong protections against ghost guns.

We appreciate the priority that your Administration has placed on gun violence prevention by taking action to protect our schools, police officers, and communities from unserialized ghost guns. The proposed ATF ghost gun regulation is a common sense update that will address

evolving technology and save lives. We urge your Administration to finalize it without further delay. We look forward to continuing to work closely with you and your Administration as we take steps to prevent gun violence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Van Hollen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Chris" being particularly prominent.

CHRIS VAN HOLLEN
U.S. Senator

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Benjamin L. Cardin". The signature is cursive and elegant, with the first name "Benjamin" being the most prominent part.

BENJAMIN L. CARDIN
U.S. Senator