

PRESS RELEASE | VICTORY

Everytown Applauds Biden-Harris Administration's Finalization of Ghost Guns Rule, Nomination of New ATF Director

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Everytown Has Led the Charge Against Ghost Guns Since 2019, Petitioning ATF to Address Growing Threat and Then Suing Agency Over Inaction, Filing Multiple Lawsuits Against Ghost Guns Sellers, Testifying Before A U.S. Senate Panel and Pushing for State Legislation; Full Timeline at Bottom

If Confirmed, Dettelbach Will Be First ATF Director Since 2015 – A Critically Important Position To Enforce Gun Laws

WASHINGTON — Today, Everytown for Gun Safety, Moms Demand Action, and Students Demand Action celebrated a major win for gun violence prevention as the Biden-Harris Administration finalizes a rule that will require ghost guns to be treated like the deadly weapons they are. The final rule updates the definitions of “firearm” and “frame or receiver” to cover kits and components easily assembled into untraceable ghost guns.

President Biden is also announcing today that he is nominating former U.S. Attorney Steve Dettelbach to become the next director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). A Senate-confirmed ATF Director is crucial to robust implementation and enforcement of gun laws, including this new rule, finally leading the agency into the 21st century. Dettelbach is a former U.S. Attorney for Ohio who has held senior positions at the Department of Justice.

“Ghost guns look like a gun, they shoot like a gun, and they kill like a gun, but up until now they haven’t been regulated like a gun,” said **John Feinblatt, president of Everytown for Gun Safety**. “We applaud the Biden-Harris Administration for doubling down on its commitment to gun safety by taking action to rein in ghost guns and nominating an ATF Director who will end its culture of complicity with the gun industry. Steve Dettelbach will be the strong leader the ATF needs to lead a top-to-bottom overhaul of the agency, and we urge the Senate to swiftly confirm him.”

“In finalizing this bold, necessary rule to stop untraceable ghost guns from flooding our communities while also nominating a strong ATF Director to fully enforce it, the Biden-Harris Administration is putting bad actors in the gun industry on notice,” said **Shannon Watts, founder of Moms Demand Action**. “Our army of grassroots volunteers has fought for years to crack down on ghost guns and elect gun sense champions — and today we’re seeing the results. With gun violence killing 110 people every day and wounding hundreds more, the Senate must quickly confirm Steve Dettelbach.”

“If you can put together an IKEA dresser, you can build a ghost gun,” said **Mia Tretta, a volunteer leader with Students Demand Action and a gun violence survivor who was shot and wounded with a ghost gun in a school shooting in 2019**. “Unfortunately, it is that easy to get a weapon that has not only changed my life but has done the same thing to thousands of others. Finalizing this rule is a critical step to making sure no one else has to go through what my family has had to go through. I’m thankful to the Administration for its leadership in this space.”

Moms Demand Action and Students Demand Action volunteers and Everytown supporters drove nearly [100,000 comments](#) in support of the proposed rule on ghost guns, which are one of the fastest growing threats to gun safety in the country and allow people who shouldn't have guns to easily purchase parts and assemble them at home in a matter of hours without a background check.

ATF estimates that nearly 24,000 ghost guns have been recovered at crime scenes since 2016, and local law enforcement agencies are seeing staggering increases in rates of recovery — rising as much as 100 percent in the last three years in places like San Diego and Los Angeles. Other communities have seen significant ghost gun recoveries, with sharp increases in the past year. According to the LAPD, the department recovered [1,921 ghost guns in 2021](#), more than double the 813 ghost guns recovered in 2020. In Philadelphia, the police reported recovering [571 ghost guns](#), compared to 95 in 2019 and 250 in 2020. Ghost guns have also been weapons of choice for militant right-wing extremists and people who otherwise would not be able to pass a background check. In recent months, the country has also seen an increase of gun fire on school grounds with ghost guns and recoveries of ghost guns on campuses. Schools in [Arizona](#), [New Mexico](#), [Maryland](#), and [Kansas](#) have been devastated with these instances of gun fire on school grounds – highlighting a scary trend and another important reason to regulate these guns.

Everytown has compiled examples of ghost gun shootings from across the country since 2013, available [here](#). Everytown's report on ghost guns, featuring testimonials from law enforcement officers, can be found [here](#).

Everytown has been on the forefront of the fight against ghost guns. In December of 2019, Everytown filed a [petition for rulemaking](#), urging ATF to address the rising threat posed by ghost guns. In August 2020, after ATF failed to undertake the rulemaking requested by the petition, Everytown, joined by the cities of Syracuse, NY, San Jose, CA, Chicago, IL, and Columbia, SC, [sued](#) ATF to compel the agency to correct its misinterpretation of federal law that had allowed the ghost gun threat to emerge.

ATF first proposed the rule in May 2021 as part of a slate of [executive actions](#) announced by President Joe Biden to curb gun violence.

For years, Everytown has worked in the **legal, regulatory, and grassroots arenas** to push for action on ghost guns, including taking the following steps:

- **December 2019:** Everytown files a [petition for rulemaking](#), urging ATF to address the growing menace of ghost guns.
- **May 2020:** Everytown releases [groundbreaking original research](#) on ghost guns, including an analysis of more than 100 federal prosecutions involving ghost guns that showed ghost guns are connected to violent criminal enterprises, gun trafficking rings, and far-right extremists.
- **August 2020: In the first lawsuit over the regulatory failure on ghost guns**, Everytown and four cities (Columbia, Syracuse, Chicago, and San Jose) [sue ATF](#) over its failure to act on the threat posed by ghost guns and to correct its misinterpretation of federal law. Everytown Law represents the cities in [the ongoing suit](#), which has been on hold pending the ATF's final rule and seeks a court order overturning prior erroneous determinations and compelling the ATF to take action.
- **December 2020:** As part of a roadmap outlining ways the Biden-Harris Administration can protect the public from gun violence, Everytown [urges the Administration to act](#) on threat of ghost guns.
- **December 2020:** Everytown [sues a website selling ghost guns kits](#) and parts on behalf of Mia Tretta, who was wounded with a ghost gun in the 2019 shooting at Saugus High School in Santa Clarita, California.
- **February 2021:** With Everytown serving as co-counsel, [Los Angeles City Attorney Mike Feuer sues Polymer80](#) on behalf of the people of California, noting that over 700 of the ghost guns LAPD recovered in 2020 were made from Polymer80 parts.
- **May 2021:** Nick Suplina, Everytown's senior vice president for law and policy, [testifies](#) before a U.S. Senate subcommittee on the threat posed by ghost guns.

- **August 2021:** Everytown files a comment letter in support of the proposed rulemaking. Everytown and Moms Demand Action drive nearly 100,000 comments in support of ATF's proposed ghost guns rule.
- **August 2021:** Everytown sues Polymer80 on behalf of two L.A. county sheriff's deputies wounded in a 2020 ghost gun shooting.
- **April 2022:** Earlier this month, Everytown ran digital ads on the home pages of *The Washington Post* and *The Wall Street Journal* calling on the ATF to finalize the proposed ghost gun rule.

Everytown, Moms Demand Action, and Students Demand Action have also advocated for **state-level regulation** of ghost guns: Moms Demand Action and Students Demand Action volunteers have been on the ground at statehouses urging state lawmakers to act and have been pivotal to the passage of laws to regulate ghost guns in almost every state they've passed, most recently in Maryland just last week. 10 states and D.C. now have laws on the books to regulate ghost guns.