



One Hundred Fifteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

July 31, 2018

The Honorable Kirstjen M. Nielsen
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Nielsen:

I am outraged that the Trump Administration is allowing downloadable blueprints for 3-D-printed firearms to be published online. Under President Obama, the government stopped the publication of firearm blueprints and defended those actions against a resulting lawsuit, but last month the Trump Administration inexplicably settled the lawsuit, despite having won at every stage of litigation.¹ Allowing unregistered homemade firearms to proliferate in our communities puts public safety and homeland security at risk. As such, the Trump Administration's settlement is baffling and dangerous and, as President Trump himself has said, "doesn't seem to make much sense!"²

The spread of homemade firearms will unquestionably impede the Department of Homeland Security's efforts to protect the American people. For years, security experts have warned of the threat posed by the "lone wolf" terrorist.³ In my estimation, the ability of a lone wolf attacker to print untraceable firearms at home will make it much more difficult for law enforcement to detect terrorist plots and prevent violence. It will complicate efforts to secure transportation, mass gatherings, Federal buildings, and government leaders, as metal detectors will fail to detect plastic guns. Fundamentally, the availability of homemade firearms will lead to more violence as it renders meaningless the few protections in place to prevent the sale of firearms to dangerous individuals.

¹ Editorial Board, "3-D-printed guns put carnage a click away," *The Washington Post*, 28 July 2018, www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/3-d-printed-guns-put-carnage-a-click-away/2018/07/28/3b254a18-91cb-11e8-b769-e3fff17f0689_story.html.

² @realDonaldTrump, "I am looking into 3-D Plastic Guns being sold to the public. Already spoke to NRA, doesn't seem to make much sense!" *Twitter*, 31 July 2018, 8:03 a.m., twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1024264286418489345.

³ See Herrmann, Joshi, "The West's Greatest Threat is the 'Lone Wolf' Terrorist, Say Security Experts," *Newsweek*, 3 Sept. 2014, www.newsweek.com/2014/09/12/wests-greatest-threat-lone-wolf-terrorist-say-security-experts-267936.html.

I hope the Administration will fulfill its duty to protect the American people and reverse its decision to allow the dissemination of firearm blueprints. Failing that, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) must make every effort to mitigate the threats posed by plastic firearms. Accordingly, pursuant to Rules X and XI of the House of Representatives, please provide in writing answers to the following inquiries no later than August 14, 2018:

- 1) Has DHS been involved in interagency discussions with the U.S. State Department and other relevant Federal agencies regarding the decision to allow the publication of plastic firearm blueprints? If so, what was DHS's input?
- 2) Do you believe the publication of firearm blueprints will make homeland security more difficult?
- 3) How will the availability of homemade firearms affect DHS counter-terrorism and law enforcement capabilities?
- 4) What DHS mitigation efforts are underway or planned to prevent attacks using homemade firearms?
- 5) What guidance will DHS provide to State, local, and other stakeholders to assist in protecting against the threat posed by homemade firearms?
- 6) How will the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) protect transportation systems against the threat posed by plastic firearms given its current reliance on metal detectors? Will TSA deploy Advanced Imaging Technology machines capable of detecting non-metallic prohibited items to all airport security checkpoint lanes? What would be the cost of doing so?
- 7) How will the U.S. Secret Service protect government leaders, facilities, and National Special Security Events against the threat posed by plastic firearms given its current reliance on metal detectors?
- 8) How will the Federal Protective Service protect Federal buildings against the threat posed by plastic firearms given its current reliance on metal detectors?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


BENNIE G. THOMPSON
Ranking Member