
Protect American Gun Exporters Act

On October 27, 2023, the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) within the Commerce Department announced the implementation of a 90-day pause on the issuance of new export licenses for gun manufacturers selling firearms, ammunition, and component parts to non-governmental end users in most foreign countries. The decision was announced through an update on the Commerce Department's website, and without soliciting any feedback from gun manufacturers. This unprecedented action, the first of its kind since the authority to approve export licenses was transferred to BIS in 2020, is indicative of the Biden Administration's longstanding efforts to target and demonize gun manufacturers operating across the United States.

The Biden Administration and Commerce Secretary claim that imposing this pause is necessary to protect the national security of the United States – a claim that they have been unable to back up with any evidence. The Commerce Secretary already possesses the authority to reject, terminate, and suspend export licenses on a case by case basis, underscoring the reality that such an unprecedented pause was never necessary. Instead of evaluating individual export license applications, as is standard practice, the Commerce Secretary's unilateral pause on granting any additional export licenses subjects gun manufacturers to an unacceptable regulatory purgatory.

While the justification and legal authority underpinning this move remains unclear, what is crystal clear is the economic harm this pause will cause to gun makers across the country. The National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) estimates that the pause on issuing new licenses will cost the industry nearly \$90 million, jeopardizing the livelihoods of countless business owners who rely on exports to keep their businesses afloat. Law abiding American citizens, who willingly comply with all of the rules and regulations surrounding the sale of firearms abroad, are being punished by an Administration determined to inflict financial pain upon them solely because of the industry in which they work.

Bill Specifics

In response to the Commerce Secretary's heavy handed order, Senator Lee is introducing the Protect American Gun Exports Act. This commonsense legislation, a similar version of which was introduced by Rep. Mark Green in the House, would:

- Prohibit the Secretary from imposing any future pauses in the issuance of new export licenses to businesses seeking to sell firearms, ammunition, and components parts to non-governmental end users in foreign countries.
- Prohibit the Secretary from unilaterally carrying out any policy changes as a result of the Commerce Department's proposed "assessment" of existing export controls related to the previously mentioned products.

Original Cosponsors as of 12/11/23: Senators Lummis and Rick Scott.

Endorsing Organizations: NRA-ILA.

For more information concerning this bill or to be added as a cosponsor, please contact Will Mascaro (william_mascaro@lee.senate.gov) or Emme James (emme_james@lee.senate.gov) with Senator Lee's Office.