

Stop Proposal to Export Gun Violence Abroad **House Amendment #10 to the NDAA 2020: Weapons Export Oversight**

The Trump administration's proposal to transfer export controls of semi-automatic pistols, assault-style firearms, sniper rifles, and ammunition from State Department regulations to the less-stringent controls of the Department of Commerce will thwart congressional oversight and create new and unacceptable risks of exacerbating gun violence at home and abroad, as well as human rights abuses and armed conflict around the globe.

On July 11, the House of Representatives voted to approve Amendment #10 by Rep. Norma Torres (D-CA), which addresses this issue directly. The amendment is now under consideration by "conferees" who will reconcile the House and Senate versions of the massive National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), before the bill is sent to the president for his signature.

Members of Congress are urged to support this amendment of crucial importance to human rights, gun violence prevention, and international arms control groups, more than 100 of whom earlier this year [called](#) for just such steps. This amendment will:

- Keep exports of sniper rifles and semi-automatic rifles classified as the weapons of warfare they frequently are in other countries, not like easily accessible household goods.
- Protect national security by maintaining oversight of weapons exports that are most commonly used in armed conflict, human rights abuses, organized crime, and terrorist activity. Controls over who ends up with these weapons will be greatly reduced without the prohibition in the Torres amendment.
- Maintain Congressional oversight and public knowledge of all firearms export licenses over a million dollars. Otherwise Congress and the public will never know about these weapons exports.
- Strengthen measures to prohibit the production and trafficking of potentially undetectable 3D-printed weapons, since the Commerce Department is unlikely to stop the transfer of 3D gun blueprints.

Opponents of the amendment have made some unfounded claims.

Myth: *More dangerous war materiel items have already been moved from the U.S. Munitions List to the Commerce Control List. This issue is being politicized.*

Fact: Transfers to the Commerce Control List made since 2010 under the auspices of the Export Control Reform Initiative have not seen the same outcry **because they primarily involved parts and components** of weapons systems and auxiliary defense items like military electronic equipment and protective gear. Only *unarmed* and *unarmored* ground transport vehicles, sea vessels, and aircraft have been transferred; all *armed* equipment remains on the US Munitions List, subject to the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR).

The proposed transfer is different from previous transfers in two ways. **First, until now the US has not proposed to transfer any complete, lethal weapon that allows a soldier to aim and fire on a target. Secondly, the weapons slated for transfer include sniper rifles and semi-automatic assault rifles like the weapons that have been used with deadly effect in recent incidents of domestic terrorism.** The current proposal is thus a significant new development, and Congressional action is required to prevent these dangerous regulatory changes. At home, these are the weapons of choice in mass shootings. Abroad, they are widely used in human rights abuse, and they are in high demand by criminal gangs and smugglers supplying weapons to conflict zones. Export of these weapons should remain subject to the stringent controls of ITAR.

Myth: *Under current rules small U.S. gunsmiths are burdened by excessive registration fees.*

Fact: According to the State Department, “Most gunsmiths are not required to register as manufacturers under the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) today.” Only gunsmiths who perform activities that meet the ordinary, contemporary, common meaning of “manufacturing” are required to register. Gunsmiths whose activities consist of the domestic sale or resale of firearms, the occasional assembly of firearms without drilling, cutting, or machining, and/or gunsmithing activities that do not improve the accuracy, caliber, or operations of the firearm beyond its original capabilities are not manufacturing within the meaning of the ITAR. Gunsmiths that do not engage in manufacturing, exporting, temporarily importing or brokering defense articles or services, are not required to register with the State Department’s Directorate of Defense Trade Controls. Moreover, there is no truth to the assertion that hobbyists who handload their own ammunition are subject to ITAR registration. Only those who are “engaged in the business” and use automated loading systems are classified as manufacturers and must register.

For more information*, go to: <https://forumarmstrade.org/catitooiii.html>

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