



August 12, 2021

Andrew Lange, Office of Regulatory Affairs
Enforcement Programs and Services
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives
99 New York Ave. NE
Mail Stop 6N-518
Washington DC 20226

Re: Definition of “Frame or Receiver” and Identification of Firearms proposed rule (ATF 2021R-05)

Dear Mr. Lange,

The American College of Physicians (ACP) is pleased to offer comments on the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) proposed rule on Definition of “Frame or Receiver” and Identification of Firearms. ACP is the largest medical specialty organization and the second largest physician membership society in the United States. ACP members include 163,000 internal medicine physicians (internists), related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge and clinical expertise to the diagnosis, treatment, and compassionate care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness. Internal medicine specialists treat many of the patients at greatest risk from COVID-19, including the elderly and patients with pre-existing conditions like diabetes, heart disease and asthma.

As physicians we are too often confronted with effects of the public health epidemic of gun violence on our patients, our communities, our profession, and our own families. In the past year, even as the US has been fighting a global pandemic, injuries and deaths from firearms increased more than any other year in the past two decades. We strongly support the proposed rule on ghost guns, and urge ATF to finalize the rule as proposed and treat ghost guns the same as other firearms.

Ghost guns, which include firearms assembled from kits or made with 3D printers, can currently be acquired without a background check and lack serial numbers so cannot be traced by law enforcement. They are also often undetectable by metal detectors. By selling the key components of firearms as intentionally unfinished rather than as fully assembled firearms, ghost gun manufacturers are not required to include serial numbers and can sell these components without a background check according to the current standards set by ATF. As a

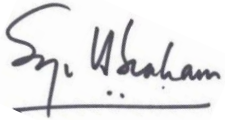
result, individuals prohibited from possessing a firearm can easily convert unfinished parts into fully functional firearms while avoiding a background check.

The proposed rule would change the definition of “firearm” to include components that are intentionally left unfinished. By regulating these parts, they could only be sold after a background check, and would have to include a serial number. This is a critical step to stop the flow of untraceable weapons to individuals legally prohibited from possessing firearms.

The proposed rule is consistent with the types of recommendations ACP put forward in our 2018 policy paper [Reducing Firearm-Related Injuries and Deaths in the U.S.](#) In the paper, ACP offered evidence-based recommendations to reduce firearms-related deaths and injuries. The College supports law enforcement measures, including required use of tracer elements or taggants on ammunition and weapons, and identifying markings, such as serial numbers on weapons, to aid in the identification of weapons used in crimes.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this proposed rule and urge you to finalize it. Changing the laws that surround the purchase and use of firearms, in ways that are fully consistent with the second amendment, is something that must be done in order to end this public health epidemic. If you have any questions, please contact Renee Butkus, Director, Health Policy at rbutkus@acponline.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George M. Abraham". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

George M. Abraham, MD, MPH, FACP, FIDSA
President