

## News Report

# President Biden Declares War on Ghost Guns

By Edward Locke

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“Today, the United States Department of Justice is making it illegal for a business to manufacture one of these kits without a serial number [...] Illegal for a licensed dealer to sell them without a background check,” announced President Biden in the Rose Garden, White House. The new actions are aimed at combating violence “ghost gun,” i.e., guns that can be bought online, assembled at home, on a kitchen table, but cannot be traced by law enforcement. Speakers in the event also include Vice President Kamala Harris, Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco, ghost gun shooting survivor Mia Tretta, and Steve Dettelbach, Biden’s nominee to lead the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). The Conference, attended by many gun violence victims and their relatives has been reported and scripted by C-SPAN.

“The gun lobby tried to tie up the regulators in paperwork for a long, long time. The NRA called this rule I’m about to announce, extreme.” Biden denounced the opponents of gun control. “Is it extreme to protect police officers? Extreme to protect our children? Extreme to keep guns out of the hands of people who couldn’t even pass a background check? [...] In fact, the ATF reports that they’ve been able to trace less than 1 percent - less than 1 percent of ghost guns reported by law enforcement. And so it makes sense that police across the country are increasingly finding ghost guns at crime scenes. [...] Last year alone, law enforcement reported approximately 20,000 suspected ghost guns to be - to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. That’s a tenfold increase in these ghost guns from 2016. Tenfold in five years.”

The president personally demonstrated how easy it is to assemble a ghost gun out of a box and explained the areas the Federal Government is working on to combat “ghost gun” related violence. “First, we’re going after rogue gun dealers. The last time we had data on this was more than 20 years ago. Five percent of gun dealers sold 90 percent of illegal guns found at crime scenes [...] Second, we’re disrupting illegal gun trafficking. Attorney General Garland has directed all U.S. Attorneys to prioritize combatting gun trafficking that is moving guns across state lines and city boundaries. The Justice Department is surging prosecutorial resources to help shut down these trafficking corridors, including the one known as the ‘Iron Pipeline’ that funnels weapons - from gun shops in states like Georgia to crime scenes up and down the East Coast. Thirdly, we’re funding strategies we know reduce gun crime: community policing and community violence interruption [...] I’ve already made clear that I want cities, states, counties, and Tribes to use some of the \$350 billion we sent to them in the American Rescue Plan [...] to reduce gun violence, hire police officers for community policing, pay police overtime, purchase crime-fighting technologies [...] I’m calling for additional funding to put police on the streets for community policing. One thing we learned in the middle of the crime wave not long ago: When the cop knows by first name who owns the corner drug store, who lives in the apartment above 6B, who the people who are - the pastors of the churches, guess what? People talk to them. They trust them. We’re also investing in community violence intervention. These are areas, local programs that utilize trusted messengers - community members and leaders - to work directly with people who are the most likely to commit a gun crime or become victims of gun crime - get

to them early. It works. It works. They intervene before it's too late. Fourth, we're funding jobs and training for young people, summer programs, drug treatment, mental health, housing availability, criminal justice reform, and reentry support for people coming home after incarceration. Right now, you get let out of prison after serving your time; you get a bus ticket and 25 bucks. You end up under the same bridge you left 2, 5, 10 years earlier. If you serve your time, you qualify for Pell Grants, you qualify for housing, you're qualified for food, you qualify to get back into the community - give them a fighting chance. These are all demonstrated ways to reduce crime. And I'm strongly urging cities, states, counties, and Tribes to use the Rescue Plan funding we've sent them to do more in each of these areas. And they need to do more and do it quickly, before the summer, when crime typically surges around America. We need Congress to pass universal background checks. Universal background checks. And I know it's controversial, but I got it done once: Ban assault weapons and high-capacity magazines."

The Conference was opened by Vice President Kamala Harris; she recalled her previous endeavors combating gun violence at various positions, working at local, state and Federal agencies, such as in Alameda County District Attorney's Office, in San Francisco District Attorney's Office, as District Attorney of San Francisco, and as California's Attorney General. She said that she feels pain and damage of gunfire violence to victims, parents, entire community, and her first priority fighting gun violence is driven by proliferation of guns, and that new actions are needed to get ghost guns off street. After her speech, Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco talked about the danger of ghost guns, and the Department of Justice's critical role addressing issues of gun violence, by requiring dealer to conduct potential buyers' background check and to assign serial number to existing ghost guns, and by continuing to go after gun traffickers, to combat crime and keep communities safe.

Next, Saugus High School gun violence survivor Mia Tretta recalled her traumatic experience in the city of Santa Clarita, surviving gunshot wound in her abdomen, just millimeters away from her main artery, and sad memory of her two schoolmates, 15-year-old Gracie Anne Muehlberger and 14-year-old Dominic Blackwell, who died in the shooting spree, November 14, 2019, when 16-year-old Nathaniel Berhow shot five schoolmates, with a ghost pistol before killing himself. After her recovery, she joined groups opposed to gun violence, and is happy to celebrate progress through activism, standing up against gun lobbies.

The last speaker is Steven M. Dettelbach, Biden's nominee for Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Explosives (ATF). Dettelbach recalled his three decades experience as a career prosecutor since 1992, dealing with a variety of violent crimes, including gun shooting, arson and other hate crimes, "watching and admiring agents and staff at the ATF - along with its federal, state, and local law enforcement partners - as they work tirelessly and courageously to protect the American people." He declared that "If confirmed, I promise to support the men and the women of the ATF and to do everything in our power to protect the people of this nation every single day."

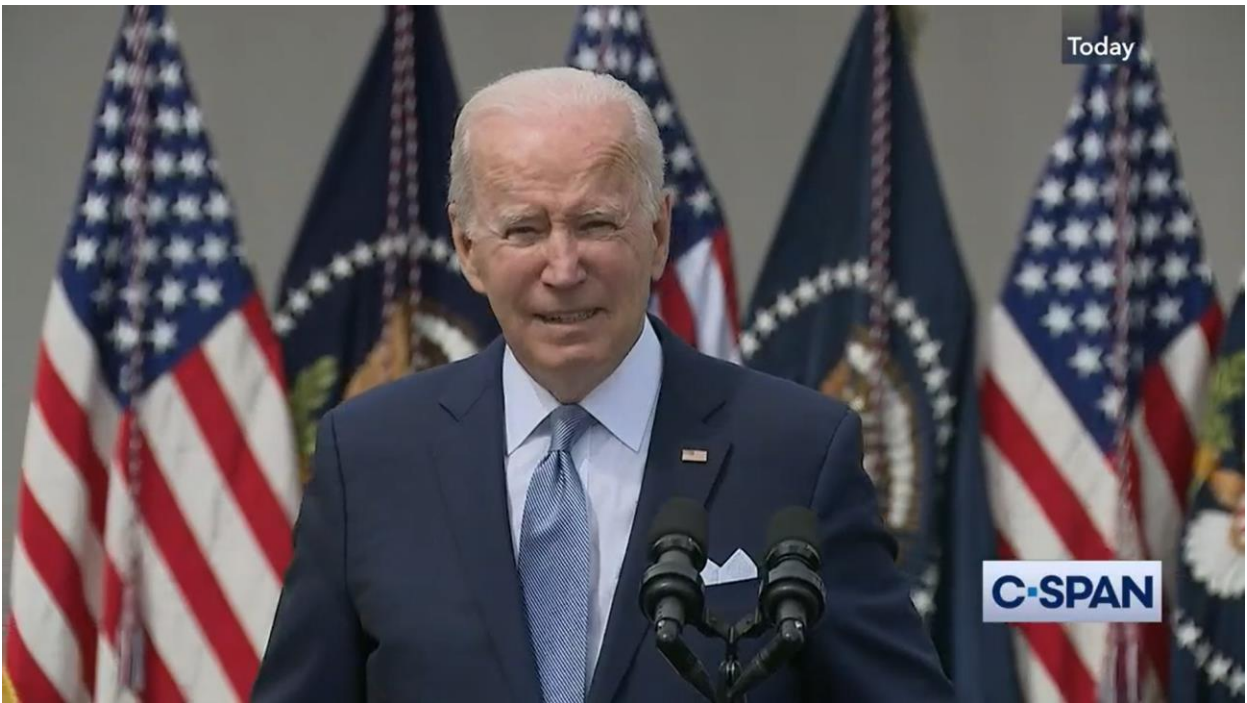
**Source of Information:**

News Conference: President Biden’s Remarks on Ghost Guns from the Rose Garden

(URL: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?519413-1/president-biden-announces-rule-regulate-ghost-guns-nominates-atf-director&live=>)

**Screenshots from C-SPAN Video**

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President Biden announced new actions against “ghost guns.”



President Biden demonstrated how easy it is to assemble a “ghost gun.”



Vice President Kamala Harris recalled her past endeavors to end gun violence.



Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco explained measures taken by the Department of Justice to fight gun violence in cooperation with other law enforcement agencies.



Survivor of gun violence Mia Tretta told her own story suffering from gun violence and overcoming trauma through political participation.



Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Explosives (ATF) Director Nominee Steve Dettelbach spoke about his efforts at supporting the fight against gun violence.