

2013

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2105

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May 8, 2013

B. Todd Jones
Acting Director
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
99 New York Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20226

Dear Acting Director Jones:

In light of the successful firing of a 3D printed firearm, I would like to understand what preparations the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) is making to address the advent of these rapid advances in firearm technology, the blueprints for which are now publicly accessible online.

Last week, what was once relegated to the realm of science fiction – a plastic gun manufactured by a 3D printer – became a new, very real challenge facing those trying to reduce gun violence and gun-related injuries and deaths. According to the BBC, Defense Distributed, the group behind the manufacture of the firearm, used a 3D printer -- bought on eBay for \$8,000 -- to manufacture gun components from ABS plastic. The 16-piece firearm includes a metal nail firing pin, as well as a metal shank that is intended to bring the gun into compliance with the Undetectable Firearms Act of 1988. That law prohibits the manufacture of firearms capable of evading walk-through metal detectors and x-ray machines, such as those used in airports and government buildings.

Defense Distributed appears to be operating within the confines of federal regulations governing the manufacture of firearms. Others seeking to copy Defense Distributed's design without complying with Undetectable Firearms Act could use their blueprint to manufacture guns that do not adhere to federal regulations, such as firearms that lack a metal shank. Yet by distributing digital blueprints providing instructions for printing 3D guns, the gun manufacturer makes it easier for private individuals to manufacture guns that skirt federal regulations and evade metal detectors. Given how far 3D technology technology has come in just a few short years, it is not difficult to imagine that the equipment and instructions needed to print guns will become increasingly accessible and inexpensive.

Not long ago, 3D printed plastic guns were a fantasy. Today, they are a reality. The Gun Control Act of 1968 has long allowed unlicensed individuals to manufacture firearms, provided they do not sell or distribute the gun, but these recent advances raise new

concerns about what could happen when these digital blueprints land in the wrong hands. **Given the rapid development we have witnessed in this industry, please describe how ATF intends to approach the advent of 3D printed guns and the availability of blueprints for creating functioning firearms capable of evading detection.**

I appreciate your attention to this issue. Should you have any questions, please contact Sara Schaumburg at 202-225-2836.

Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey