



When It Comes to Gun Industry Giveaways, Bump Stocks Are the Tip of the Iceberg

- ❑ **Bottom Line:** The Las Vegas shooting has brought attention to the dangers of bump stocks, a firearm accessory that enabled the shooter to effectively convert rifles into machine guns. Under current federal law, automatic weapons are highly regulated but bump stocks are not. Without a doubt, no one should be able to circumvent federal law by purchasing after-market accessories. And by the same token, firearm silencers should be covered by strong public safety laws—and yet the gun lobby is fighting tooth and nail to repeal a provision in federal law that has worked for over 80 years to keep silencers out of dangerous hands. Indeed, the NRA is hard at work in Congress trying to build new workarounds into federal law that can help maximize industry profits without regard to public safety. They are working to repeal bedrock protections against the most dangerous weapons falling into the most dangerous hands. In fact, current US laws are full of loopholes constructed, at the NRA's behest, to shield the gun industry from accountability.
- ❑ **Many of the gun industry's top federal goals revolve around opening new loopholes in the law.**
 - **SILENCERS: The NRA [is pushing](#) radical legislation to make it easy for felons, domestic abusers, and other people with dangerous histories to obtain gun silencers.** The SHARE Act's silencer provisions would remove silencers from the National Firearms Act and enable people with dangerous histories to buy silencers with no background check whatsoever—simply by finding an unlicensed seller. Silencers in the wrong hands create serious public safety risks. The loud and distinctive noise that a gun makes is one of its most important safety features: when people hear it, they realize they may need to run, hide, or protect others. In mass shootings, **being able to hear and identify the gunshots can mean the difference between life and death.**
 - **COP-KILLER AMMUNITION: The NRA [is actively pushing](#) to repeal armor-piercing ammunition protections, putting law enforcement officers in danger.** By gutting a law enacted to protect police officers and signed by President Ronald Reagan, the SHARE Act would legalize the manufacture and sale of a wide range of projectiles more likely to wound and kill officers who are wearing body armor. The legislation would give the gun industry the authority to deem any new product to be legal, without law enforcement oversight. The SHARE Act would give manufacturers **a free pass to flood the streets with dangerous armor-piercing ammunition**—regardless of the danger it poses to law enforcement officers.
 - **MAKING IT EASIER TO BUILD AN ARSENAL OF HIGH-POWERED RIFLES: The NRA [is working to](#) stop an ATF program designed to crack down on gun trafficking along the southwest border.** Since 2011, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) has required gun dealers in the four border states to report when an individual buys multiple high-powered rifles within five business days—just as all dealers report multiple handgun sales. ATF generates useful intelligence on illegal gun trafficking by Mexican drug cartels, and the program could alert law enforcement when a person planning an attack is stockpiling weapons. But the gun lobby's dangerous agenda includes shutting down this important program, even though high-powered rifles sold by U.S. dealers near the border are fueling Mexican cartel violence and directly facilitating the smuggling of drugs into our country.



➤ **IMPORTATION OF CRIME GUNS: The NRA [is working](#) to gut 50-year-old protections for imported firearms in an effort that could lead to a spike in gun trafficking.** Current laws prohibit importation of foreign-made firearms, with broad exceptions for high-quality firearms used by hunters and sportsmen. The 50-year-old import law serves a critical public safety role, protecting the public from especially dangerous firearms, firearms especially likely to be involved in trafficking, and firearms less likely to be successfully traced when recovered at a crime scene. But the SHARE Act would gut the laws that have protected public safety for half a century—and could lead to a spike in gun trafficking, hobble law enforcement investigations, and expose the public to poorly-made firearms that are popular in crime.

- ❑ **Those dangerous goals are set against an existing backdrop of dangerous law and extraordinary exceptions for the gun industry.**
 - **CONVERTING RIFLES INTO MACHINE GUNS:** “Bump stocks” like the one used in the Las Vegas shooting are one type of after-market accessory designed to effectively convert rifles into fully automatic firearms. These accessories, as well as “positive trigger resets” or “trigger cranks,” are widely available, inexpensive, and completely legal under current law -- because they don’t reach the legal definition of “machine gun,” despite the vastly increased firing rate. Manufacturers have boasted about exploiting this gap in the law, declaring that buyers can “simulate[] full-auto firing and it is absolutely legal.” One seller advertises that its bump stock enables firing of 100 rounds in 7 seconds. And the NRA [has boasted](#) that you can get away with a firearm that mimics the firing rate of a machine gun.
 - **DIY GUNS** (“unfinished receivers”): Because of a regulatory gap, gun manufacturers currently sell firearm parts -- without a background check -- that can easily be converted into fully functional firearms. ATF does not currently classify so-called “unfinished receivers” as “firearms,” meaning that no background check is required to purchase them. These items can be made fully functional as weapons by purchasing a basic milling machine (one company sells a machine called “The Ghost Gunner” for this purpose) or learning to complete the receiver by hand at a “build party.” Given the dramatic advancement in technology and subsequent ease of converting unfinished receivers into functional weapons, ATF should classify them as “firearms”—applying the same laws as for other guns, including the criminal background checks requirement. The NRA [has opposed](#) state legislation to classify these parts as firearms.
 - **NO CONSUMER PROTECTION:** For nearly forty years, gun manufacturers have enjoyed a special exemption from regulation by the Consumer Product Safety Commission, meaning the US government has been unable to provide the same type of oversight for firearms that regulators provide for every other consumer product—including for toys, pools, knives, and cars (through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration). The NRA [has lobbied against](#) and defeated lawmakers’ efforts to roll back the gun industry’s special exemption.
 - **INDUSTRY IMMUNITY:** In 2005, Congress—[after being lobbied intensely by the NRA](#)—took this special exemption further by passing the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA). The law provides broad immunity from civil lawsuits for gun manufacturers and gun dealers, *even if they negligently transfer guns when it is foreseeable they will be used in crimes*. With immunity from the law, gun makers can ignore downstream impacts of their business practices, including gun trafficking and transfers to felons or other prohibited people.