

NHMS Policy Position: Opposing “Ghost Guns”

Subject: Firearm Safety – Opposing Ghost Guns

Whereas, homicides, injuries and mass shootings by firearms are a significant public health concern as evidenced by increasing numbers of homicides, injuries and mass shootings by firearms over the last seven years, including 19,362 murders in 2020 (compared with 12,356 in 2014), 39,423 injuries in 2020 (compared with 21,951 injuries in 2014) and 611 mass shootings in 2020 (compared with 269 in 2014) (*Gun Violence Archive*), and

Whereas, the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) was created by the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act in 1993 to prevent purchase and ownership of firearms by individuals prohibited from possession of firearms (criminals, domestic abusers and other prohibited persons), and

Whereas, firearms manufactured from known manufacturers have a specific serial number so that each firearm can be registered and traced by NICS from initial purchase through subsequent transfers or purchases from gun shops or individuals, so that ownership of firearms are limited to persons allowed to possess firearms, and

Whereas, “ghost guns” are made from kits or 3-D printers without serial numbers (homemade), so that sales, ownership and use of such firearms cannot be traced through the NICS, and

Whereas, such ghost guns often end up in the hands of criminals or other prohibited persons as evidenced by

1. According to the ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms) 30% of all weapons recovered by the bureau in California were homemade (“ghost guns”),
2. “Ghost guns” have been used in a number of mass shootings, as well as high-profile shootouts with police (*the Trace*),
3. One such mass shooting with a “ghost gun” took place at Saugus High School in Santa Clarita, California in November 2019 by a 16-year-old student of that high school who killed two students, injured three students, before shooting and killing himself,
4. Arms traffickers have also identified homemade firearms as a lucrative enterprise (*the Trace*).

Resolved, that NHMS opposes the manufacture and ownership of homemade guns (“ghost guns”) that do not have serial numbers and are not registered with National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) and traceable.

Adopted by NHMS Council on April 14, 2021