

Hunters Against Gun Violence
Statement in Support of Denver's Proposed Bump Stock Ban

Good afternoon. My name is Don Macalady and I am a founding member of Hunters Against Gun Violence, a group of Denver and Denver area residents. We are all hunters, former hunters and/or gun owners. We cherish our right to use firearms in a safe and responsible manner to pursue recreation and provide food for our families. We enthusiastically support efforts to ban weapons fitted with bump stocks or similar devices, all of which are designed to enable very rapid firing of a weapon without repeated pulling of the trigger.

We believe in the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution as interpreted by the U.S. Supreme Court. The Court affirmed that the right to keep and bear arms is not absolute or unlimited, but is subject to regulation. Such regulations already include concealed weapons prohibitions, limits on the rights of felons and the mentally ill, laws forbidding the carrying of weapons in certain locations, laws imposing conditions on commercial sales, **and prohibitions on the carrying of dangerous and unusual weapons.**

It seems to me that bump stocks should already be prohibited as a consequence of this US Supreme Court ruling regarding dangerous and unusual weapons. Currently it is illegal for private citizens to possess fully automatic firearms manufactured after May 19, 1986; ownership of earlier models requires a federal license. Such weapons continue firing as long as the trigger is engaged and the weapon's magazine is not empty. So do legal semi-automatic weapons fitted with a bump stock. In my opinion, bump stocks should also be prohibited since they enable continuous firing. The federal government's position on this follows:

"The classification of these devices depends on whether they mechanically alter the function of the firearm to fire fully automatic," Jill Snyder, a special agent in charge at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, said at a news conference in Las Vegas. "Bump-fire stocks, while simulating automatic fire, do not actually alter the firearm to fire automatically, making them legal under current federal law (source: NY Times, 4 October 2017)

Because of this interpretation, bump stocks are legal for most types of recreational use in most places and their use and occurrence continues to spread. There is evidence, however, that even the most conservative and gun-friendly places see the danger posed by bump stocks. Several weeks ago, I visited a privately operated shooting range north of Denver. As I entered the shooting area, there was a large sign indicating that the use of bump stocks in this shooting range is prohibited.

In general, our organization does not support the proliferation of guns that have no relationship to, or utility for, reasonable self-defense, recreational use such as target shooting, or lawful hunting of game animals and varmints. Semi-automatic weapons fitted with a bump stocks clearly fit into these categories. Nor do we support the sale of guns or other lethal weapons to persons with a history of violent crime, spouse abuse or mental instability. So, we strongly supported the passage of Colorado's law requiring universal background checks for gun purchases

In addition, and also relevant to the City of Denver's proposed new legislation, we support limitations on the size of magazines for center-fire weapons. The use of high capacity magazines cannot be justified for hunting, recreation or self-defense. In fact, high capacity magazines in rifles or shotguns are already illegal for use in hunting in Colorado and most states. High capacity magazines were designed for military use, to provide the opportunity for maximum killing potential for members of our armed forces. There is no reason to provide such massive killing power for ordinary citizens interested in recreation, hunting, or defense against household intruders.

Citizens interested in the public good, in public safety, and in the curbing of senseless violence against innocent persons, must be encouraged to support common sense regulations. Such regulations, such as Denver's proposed bump stock ban, can limit the proliferation of the type of gun violence that involves the killing or injuring of large numbers of people in a very short period of time. We are dedicated to encouraging this support.

For more information about our organization, visit our web site at huntersagainstgunviolence.com.

My name is Harold Koch. I am a Denver resident, and I am here today representing the Denver Chapter of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence. I want to thank you for considering an ordinance to properly regulate the sale and possession of bump stocks by civilians within the city and county of Denver, Colorado. In the wake of the largest mass shooting in modern U.S. history in Las Vegas, Nevada just a few months ago, where a lone gunman armed with semi-automatic weapons, bump stocks and thousands of rounds of ammunition in just 10 minutes left 58 dead, nearly 500 shot, and 22,000 injured and traumatized victim-survivors, it is prudent and justified for this committee and the council to consider common sense proposals to prevent future mass shootings and promote public safety.

As you may know, the Brady Campaign has long supported reinstatement of the 1994 federal law to limit civilian access and use of military-style assault weapons and high capacity magazines. This is consistent with the non-partisan recommendations of the leading national law enforcement organizations that together form the National Law Enforcement Partnership to Prevent Gun Violence. The Partnership includes the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA), the Police Executive Research, Forum and the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA), among others.

Indeed, just last month, Brady was represented at a hearing before the United States Senate Judiciary Committee on the need for proper regulation of bump stocks and similar accessories. Heather Gooze, one of the victim-survivors from the Las Vegas mass shooting incident at the Route 91 Country Music Festival testified alongside MCCA's President Chief Thom Manger. They both stated their strong support of S. 1916, a bill that would outlaw bump stocks and similar accessories. This bill would prevent manufacturers and consumers from circumventing current law that prohibits the manufacture, ownership or possession of machine guns and other automatic weapons by civilians.

While there is a grandfathered exception that allows certain individuals to undergo an extensive background check, provide their fingerprints, and register such weapons through the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and through the National Firearms Act (NFA) system, civilian ownership and possession of automatic weapons or machine guns is otherwise banned. Bump stocks and other similar accessories purposely attempt to skirt current law by turning semi-automatic firearms into virtual machineguns, and, as Vegas proved, to devastating effect.

The Brady Campaign strongly supports common sense laws and regulations that keep dangerous weapons out of the hands of dangerous and prohibited people for whom we all agree should not have access or possess such weapons.

Therefore, on behalf of the Denver Chapter of the Brady Campaign, I want to applaud this committee for considering this ordinance, and we look forward to working with you and the Council. Hopefully, your leadership will inspire others in state legislatures, in other cities and counties, and our representatives in Congress to swiftly enact such common sense measures that protect all of our rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness in public spaces such as movie theatres, places of worship, places of work and learning, and music venues.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to provide a statement to the committee, and I urge you to vote FOR the ordinance. It is entirely appropriate for the Denver City Council to regulate these and similar accessories. Indeed, the first responsibility of government is the safety of all of its citizens.

