

NJ STATE COMMISSION OF INVESTIGATION



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SCI FINDS EXISTING STATE LAWS NEED REVISION TO BETTER COMBAT HOMEMADE ‘GHOST GUNS’ AND MODIFIED FIREARMS

TRENTON – New Jersey criminal laws should be updated to outlaw the possession of 3-D printing plans used to create privately manufactured “ghost guns” and to ban conversion devices that can transform semi-automatic firearms into a rapid-firing machine guns, the State Commission of Investigation (SCI) found in a report issued today.

The report culminated an SCI investigation into illegal firearms trends in New Jersey that found the proliferation of illicit homemade firearms and conversion devices, known as “switches,” had enabled criminal elements to outgun the police in some communities. These devices – no larger than a Lego block – can be purchased online for as little as \$20 to \$40 apiece through an international black market, the SCI found.

The initial findings made in the SCI's investigation were aired during an April 16 public hearing. To view the archived video recording of the public hearing, click here: [SCI Public Hearing on Illegal Gun Trends](#).

The SCI's investigation revealed the ease with which 3-D printing plans could be easily found and procured online to create parts to build ghost guns and other firearms accessories. While it is illegal in New Jersey to distribute the computer code to print firearms and attachments, it is not against the law to possess the printing plans. Further, the SCI found that a small number of guns were driving a large share of the violence in numerous New Jersey municipalities. In one instance, ballistics data analyzed by the SCI revealed that the same gun was linked to 10 separate shooting events in Paterson over the course of a 12-month period. While some municipalities have created local ordinances criminalizing the reckless or intentional public discharge of a weapon, state law does not address public firearms discharges.

To safeguard the citizens of New Jersey and assist law enforcement personnel to combat the constantly evolving efforts by criminal elements to circumvent gun legal restrictions, the SCI recommended criminalizing the possession of machine gun conversion devices and 3-D printing plans for ghost guns and other gun parts. Additionally, police should receive training on the identification of these devices. Among other reform proposals, the SCI also recommended the New Jersey consider permitting extensions for pre-trial detention hearings for gun offenders pending ballistics analysis.

“The Commission’s findings demonstrate that homemade ghost guns and gun conversion devices are becoming easier and easier for bad actors to obtain, posing a clear and significant danger to New Jersey citizens,” said SCI Chair Tiffany Williams Brewer. “While New Jersey has some of the strictest gun control laws in the country, the Commission is recommending that the State adopt additional measures to address the latest technological advances now fueling gun violence in our communities.”



The State Commission of Investigation is an independent New Jersey watchdog agency established in 1968 to investigate organized crime and corruption, waste of tax money and other abuses of the public trust. Copies of public reports are available at the Commission’s offices or via its Web site at www.nj.gov/sci.