

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of this legislation. My name is Greg Lickenbrock, and I am Everytown for Gun Safety's Senior Firearms Analyst. Before joining Everytown, I was a gun magazine editor for 10 years. I worked with dozens of gun manufacturers, attended media events and training courses, and tested hundreds of firearms, including machine guns and firearms designed to mimic machine guns. That is why I would like to focus my remarks on the machine gun provisions in this bill.

Federal law prohibits civilians from possessing machine guns manufactured after May 19, 1986, as well as the parts used to create them. These parts are known as "auto sears" or "machine gun conversion devices" (MCDs) because they convert semi-automatic firearms, which fire one shot per trigger pull, into fully automatic machine guns that will continue firing as long as the shooter depresses the trigger and the gun has ammunition.

New technologies, particularly 3D printing, have made it significantly easier for people to manufacture auto sears quickly at home. The most common auto sears today — devices known as "Glock switches" because they convert Glock-style pistols into machine guns — can be 3D-printed in roughly 30 minutes. A pistol modified with a switch can fire 20 rounds per second. (And I've included some photos w/ my testimony.)



A switch installed on a Glock pistol.

It takes less than 10 minutes to 3D-print an auto sear that will convert an AR-15 into a machine gun like the kind used by the U.S. military. Like Glock switches, these auto sears are routinely sold online as innocuous products like keychains and wall hangers.



A red, 3D-printed auto sear is shown inside an AR-15.

Police around the country have seen a surge in auto sear recoveries. In January 2024, the ATF announced that it had recovered more than 31,000 auto sears in the past five years, and Glock switches in particular have been used in over 20 mass shootings.

These figures highlight the difficulty of stopping these devices. To bolster federal law enforcement efforts, 29 states have enacted laws prohibiting machine guns and auto sears on the state level, giving state law enforcement agencies the power to go after criminals who obtain machine guns. In other words, if enacted, this bill will be a powerful crime-fighting tool.

But auto sears are not the only modifications people seek to enhance their weapons' lethality. As you know, Vermont made the wise decision to prohibit bump stocks and high-capacity magazines in the wake of the Las Vegas mass shooting, in which a gunman fired over 1,000 rounds of ammunition in 10 minutes using fourteen AR-15s equipped with bump stocks and high-capacity magazines. The gunman killed 60 concertgoers and wounded over 400 others.

Since then, gun makers have not only doubled down on AR-15s and other assault weapons, but also other rapid-fire devices designed to get around the federal ban on machine guns.

Trigger cranks are manually operated devices that pull the gun's trigger each time the crank rotates.

Bump grips and Hellfire triggers operate just like bump stocks — they harness a semi-automatic firearm’s recoil energy to continue firing — but do not make use of shoulder stocks. In other words, they get around Vermont’s current bump stock prohibition.

Binary triggers are replacement triggers for semi-automatic firearms, including AR-15s and Glock pistols, that allow you to fire one shot when you pull the trigger and another shot when you release it. In this way, binary triggers effectively double the host weapon’s rate of fire.

Forced-reset triggers, or FRTs, go a step further. Once installed in a semi-automatic firearm, an FRT will automatically return forward after it is pulled. If a shooter holds the trigger to the rear, the gun will continue firing. That is the very definition of a machine gun, which is why the federal government originally cracked down on these devices. But last year, the Trump administration reversed course and effectively legalized FRTs.

These are just a few examples of the rapid-fire devices that have proliferated in recent years, and I respectfully urge you to consider an amendment that would prohibit rapid-fire devices as well as machine guns, as they have no legitimate uses and should have no place in our communities. The original draft of this bill included language prohibiting “rapid-fire devices,” and several states have used similar language in their legislation. (And I’ve included some examples with my testimony.) Thank you.

Colorado

“Rapid-fire device” means any device, part, kit, tool, accessory, or combination of parts that has the effect of increasing the rate of fire of a semiautomatic firearm above the standard rate of fire for the semiautomatic firearm that is not otherwise equipped with that device, part, or combination of parts.

Illinois

“Rapid-fire device“ means any device, part, kit, tool, accessory or combination of parts that is designed to and functions to increase the rate of fire of a semiautomatic firearm above the standard rate of fire for semiautomatic firearms that is not equipped with that device, part, or combination of parts.

Massachusetts

“Rapid-fire trigger activator”, any: (i) manual, power-driven or electronic device that is designed and functions to increase the rate of fire of a semiautomatic firearm, rifle or shotgun when the device is attached to the weapon; (ii) part of a semiautomatic firearm, rifle shotgun or combination of parts that is designed and functions to increase the rate of fire of a semiautomatic firearm, rifle or shotgun by eliminating the need for the operator of the weapon to make a separate movement for each individual function of the trigger; or (iii) other device, part or combination of parts that is designed and functions to substantially increase the rate of fire of a semiautomatic firearm, rifle or shotgun above the standard rate of fire for semiautomatic weapons that are not equipped with that device, part or combination of parts.



A trigger crank shown on a Ruger 10/22.



A bump grip shown on an AR-15.



A binary trigger installed in an AR-15.



A forced-reset trigger (FRT) for AR-15s.