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WGO Opposes ATF's Unconstitutional Definition Change Criminalizing Triggers

Madison, Wis. — Wisconsin Gun Owners, Inc. (WGO) — Wisconsin's only no-compromise gun rights organization — opposes the ATF's labeling any person in possession of anything that can increase the rate of fire, resembles a part that can increase the rate of fire, or has the potential of being altered to increase the rate of fire, as illegally owning a machine gun.

The ATF has used its unconstitutional ability to change the definitions of words within a law regulating firearms to increase their power and purview for decades. It has changed the wording of the National Firearms Act NFA to define a machine gun as anything that increases or has the potential to increase a gun's rate of fire. This broad generalization, done outside judicial or legislative oversight, has given the ATF unlimited power to create new de facto laws and outlaw almost any part of a firearm by simply changing definitions within the law.

"This is unacceptable across the board, and our thoughts and prayers are with Matthew Hoover, of CRS Firearms, who was arrested for simply selling metal cards with a drawing of a 'lightning link' on them," said Thomas Leager, executive director of WGO. "The ATF says it considers these cards to be machine guns. Any reasonable person can see they aren't even firearms. Still, these actions show that under the new definition, the ATF can regulate and outlaw just about any part of a firearm, confiscate it without compensation, and put you in jail for property that was legally purchased and poses no threat. On its face, this is a ridiculous mockery of the Constitution and our natural rights and aims to harass innocent gun owners."

Currently, the ATF is also targeting owners and manufacturers of binary triggers under this new definition, labeling these triggers as machine guns as well. This new definition was given precedence by the illegal and unconstitutional "bump stock ban" that the Trump administration put in place as a response to the Las Vegas shooting, where there were conspicuous claims of the shooter using these items to increase the rate of fire on his weapons.

WGO plans to continue to oppose the ATF's actions related to this new definition. "We hope that Wisconsin politicians will realize the danger to their constituents and pass Second Amendment Sanctuary in the State of Wisconsin, offering protection from these obvious infringements created by a belligerent federal agency," Leager stated.