

Hunters Against Gun Violence
Statement in Support of Colorado's Proposed Bump Stock Ban
Colorado State Senate Committee Hearing, March 19, 2018

Good afternoon. My name is Don Macalady and I am a founding member of Hunters Against Gun Violence. 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 gun 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. The last time I visited a privately operated shooting range north of Denver, there was a large sign at the entrance 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, we supported Colorado's Law limiting 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.