

Exhibit D




- [OAG Home](#)
- [OAG Contact](#)

OAG Services from A - Z

Servicios en Español

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Gurbir S. Grewal
 Attorney General

[OAG Home](#)
 AG's Executive Leadership Team

AG's Message	Ask the AG
Contact OAG	About OAG
OAG News	OAG FAQs
OAG Library	Employment
OAG Grants	Proposed Rules
OAG History	Services A-Z

[Statutes / Regulations / Rules](#)
[Agencies / Programs / Units](#)

Other News Pages

- [Governor's Office](#)
- [Otras Noticias en Español \(OAG\)](#)
- [Civil Rights \(Division of\)](#)
- [Consumer Affairs \(Division of\)](#)
- [Criminal Justice \(Division of\)](#)
- [Election Law Enforcement Comm.](#)
- [Gaming Enforcement \(Div. of\)](#)
- [Highway Traffic Safety \(Division of\)](#)
- [Insurance Fraud Prosecutor \(Office of\)](#)
- [Juvenile Justice Commission](#)
- [State Police \(Division of NJ\)](#)
- [Law \(Division of\)](#)

For Immediate Release:

July 26 2018

Office of The Attorney General

- Gurbir S. Grewal, Attorney General

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AG Grewal Demands That Gun Developer Halt Plans to Publish Printable-Gun Computer Files; Threatens Imminent Legal Action

Citing Threat to Public Safety, AG Warns of Lawsuit Before August 1

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TRENTON – Acting to protect New Jersey residents from an emerging threat to public safety, Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal today sent a “cease and desist” letter to a firearm developer that plans to publicly release computer files on August 1 that would enable individuals to create firearms using a 3-D printer.

“You are directed to cease and desist from publishing printable-gun computer files for use by New Jersey residents,” Attorney General Grewal warned Texas-based Defense Distributed in today’s letter. “The files you plan to publish offer individuals, including criminals, codes that they can use to create untraceable firearms—and even to make assault weapons that are illegal in my state.”

Citing New Jersey’s public nuisance law and prior court decisions that have upheld claims against gun manufacturers for similar reckless actions, Attorney General Grewal threatened Defense Distributed with “legal action” if it fails to comply with his demand to halt its planned publishing of printable-gun computer files starting next week.

“Defense Distributed’s plans to allow anyone with a 3-D printer to download a code and create a fully operational gun directly threatens the public safety of New Jersey’s residents,” Attorney General Grewal stated. “Posting this material online is no different than driving to New Jersey and handing out hard-copy files on any street corner. The federal government is no longer willing to stop Defense Distributed from publishing this dangerous code, and so New Jersey must step up.”

Defense Distributed plans to “make do-it-yourself guns available to anyone, even if the individuals are prohibited from owning guns because of prior convictions, history of mental illness, or history of domestic violence, even if the weapons they print are illegal in my state, and even if they plan to use their weapons to further crimes and acts of violence,” added Attorney General Grewal. “Not only are these plans to publish printable-gun files dangerous, they also violate New Jersey law.”

Defense Distributed made national headlines by developing gun computer files that enable consumers to create fully operational firearms with a 3-D printer. The company’s founder, Cody Wilson, developed a printable plastic pistol known as the “Liberator .380” in 2012 and put the plans online, but was blocked by the federal government. Wilson

sued, and under a settlement he reached with the U.S. State Department, his company is free to begin releasing computer files for printable guns beginning on August 1.

In his cease-and-desist letter, Attorney General Grewal warns Defense Distributed that its actions will “flood the illegal firearms market and pose a direct threat to the public safety of my state.” He also takes the company to task for striving to make do-it-yourself guns readily available to people deemed unfit to have them. “By broadly sharing an inherently dangerous product,” the letter adds, Defense Distributed “should reasonably foresee the resulting governmental and public costs and must bear them.”

The letter also highlights that Cody Wilson has “no intention of precluding [these] printable-gun computer files, including designs for assault weapons, from winding up in the hands of criminals, minors, and the mentally ill.” Wilson has publicly stated, ““All this Parkland stuff, the students, all these dreams of ‘common sense gun reforms’? No. The internet will serve guns, the gun is downloadable.” He has even announced, “I’m not worried about public safety.” As a result, the letter notes, his “interference with the public’s health and safety is intentional and per se unreasonable.”

“As the chief law enforcement officer for New Jersey, I demand that you halt publication of the printable gun computer files,” Attorney General Grewal concludes. “Should you fail to comply with this letter, my Office will initiate legal action barring you from publishing these files before August 1, 2018.”

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[News Index Page | top](#)

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