

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 30, 2018

Contact: David Carl

(505) 288-2465

AG Balderas joins Multistate Effort to Prevent Distribution of Online Files for 3-D Printed Firearms

AGs from 20 States and the District of Columbia Urge Federal Government to Reconsider Proposed Rules and Abrupt Settlement

Albuquerque, NM – Today, Attorney General Hector Balderas joined a coalition today of 21 attorneys general urging U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions and U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to withdraw from a settlement that would allow a company to post plans online to print plastic guns using 3-D printers, writing that these actions recklessly disregard public safety.

“This settlement puts the safety of every New Mexican at risk,” said Attorney General Hector Balderas. “It would allow unsafe, untraceable and undetectable guns to easily make their way into the hands of dangerous criminals. Attorney General Sessions and Secretary Pompeo must do what is right for New Mexicans, not the NRA.”

A letter sent by the state attorneys general today expresses serious concern over the federal government’s recent settlement with Defense Distributed, an online company that in 2013 was previously instructed by the U.S. Department of State to remove downloadable files for firearms from its website.

In the settlement, the Department of State also agreed to amend federal rules regulating the export of weapons on the United States Munitions List. The proposed rules would allow information about certain military weapons such as semi-automatic firearms, previously considered critical to national security and public safety, to be uploaded to the Internet. The attorneys general argue that these actions will facilitate violations of state and federal law and create unprecedented risks to public safety, allowing terrorists, transnational criminals, convicted felons, and individuals otherwise prohibited by federal and state laws from purchasing, manufacturing, selling, and possessing firearms to have unrestricted access to computer designs for unsafe, undetectable and untraceable firearms.

The Arms Export Control Act requires the federal government to reduce the international trade of firearms abroad, which the federal government has successfully done through the International Traffic in Arms Regulations, in part by prohibiting certain technical data about weapons from being made publicly available. Many states also have independent laws and regulations to prevent gun violence and protect public safety. In the letter, the attorneys general argue that publicly available information on 3-D printed weapons will enable the production of firearms that are untraceable and undetectable by magnetometers in places such as airports, government buildings and schools. Additionally, unrestricted access to this kind of information will increase illegal trafficking of weapons across state and national borders.

In the letter, the attorneys general also express their serious concern over the Department of State's abrupt change in position on these matters, pointing to arguments the Department of Justice and Department of State have made for years in the challenge brought by Defense Distributed. Until very recently, the Department of State had argued that the federal government has a strong national security interest in the regulation of these types of files. The attorneys general also note that courts have previously recognized the risk of allowing these gun designs to be publicly available on the Internet, and urge the Administration not to disregard those rulings.

AG Balderas is joined in signing this multistate letter by AG's from California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington.

###