



ASSOCIATION OF  
PROSECUTING  
ATTORNEYS

# **MACHINE GUN CONVERSION DEVICES**

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**Defining the Threat and  
Taking Action**

## Introduction

Machine gun converter devices, also known as Glock switches or auto sears, are small mechanical components that can modify semi-automatic firearms which fire one bullet per trigger pull into machine guns with continuous fire. These devices have gained significant attention due to their increasing presence in illegal firearm modifications and their association with criminal activities. Despite being illegal under U.S. federal law, Glock switches are increasingly accessible through the internet and easily made on 3-D printers. The ease of access creates significant challenges for law enforcement in identifying and intercepting Glock switches, as their small size and untraceable nature make them difficult to detect. The proliferation of these devices contributes to an overall rise in gun violence, elevating risk to both law enforcement officers and the public.

The growing use of firearms modified with machine gun converter devices (MCDs) has contributed to a disturbing rise in gun violence, as seen in several tragic incidents across the United States. In 2021, one Houston police officer was killed, and another was wounded while serving an arrest warrant when the suspect immediately opened fire on the officers. Because of a MCD installed in his weapon, the suspect was able to fire 30 rounds at the officers in under three seconds.<sup>1</sup> In 2022, six people were killed and 12 wounded in a mass shooting outside a nightclub in Sacramento, California<sup>2</sup>, where one of the guns was equipped with a MCD. In Cincinnati, Ohio in 2023, an 11-year-old boy was killed and four children were injured when 22 shots were fired from a passing car in “the blink of an eye”—something possible, law enforcement officials stated, because of the weapon being modified to fire like a machine gun.<sup>3</sup> In 2024, eight high schoolers in Philadelphia were shot while waiting at a bus stop after gunmen fired 30 rounds in mere seconds; one of the guns used in the shooting was a Glock handgun equipped with a MCD and laser sights.<sup>4</sup> These incidents highlight the urgent need for stronger strategies to prevent the proliferation of modified firearms, which continue to escalate the scale and speed of gun violence across the nation.

The Association of Prosecuting Attorneys (APA) is focused on providing meaningful information for prosecutors, legislators, and policy makers to combat the prevalence of MCDs. To that end, APA hosted a two-day national summit where experts in law enforcement, prosecution, and technology addressed the threat of machine gun diversion devices and offered innovative strategies and solutions.<sup>5</sup> This report is phase two and aims to provide an overview of Glock switches, including their functionality, legal implications, and the challenges they present to law enforcement and public safety. By examining the prevalence of Glock switches and the risks they pose, the report seeks to inform discussions on potential policy responses and the existence of innovative strategies in combating the spread of these dangerous devices.

<sup>1</sup> Chloe Alexander and Marcelino Benito, “‘This is what we’re up against’ | HPD releases bodycam of two officers shot with gun rigged as mini machine gun,” KHOU 11, October 12, 2021, <https://www.khou.com/article/news/crime/bodycam-video-released-bill-jeffrey-auto-switch/285-c4f49390-3580-4b48-9fba-6d007a45c012>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-05-03/gang-members-charged-in-sacramento-gang-shooting>

<sup>3</sup> Lindsay Whitehurst, “A surge of illegal homemade machine guns has helped fuel gun violence in the US,” Associated Press, March 9, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/machine-guns-modified-illegal-switches-gun-violence-ddc2e9b6602ee1eb62e75732bbd54784>

<sup>4</sup> Bill Hutchinson and Jennifer Vilcarino, “Machine-gun conversion device dubbed ‘Glock switches’ taking violence to the ‘next level’: Experts,” ABC News, June 12, 2024, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/machine-gun-conversion-device-taking-violence-level-experts/story>

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix for additional information on the National Summit.

## Statement of Issue: Defining the Threat

Between 2017-2021, the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearm (ATF) recovered 5,454 machine gun conversion devices, a 570% increase over just 5 years.<sup>6</sup> MCDs are now the most frequently recovered type of illegal firearm accounting for almost 55% of firearms recovered in ATF investigations between 2017-2021.<sup>7</sup> Between 2012 and 2016, police departments in the U.S. found 814 conversion devices and sent them to the ATF. Glock switches are not legally available for civilian purchase under U.S. federal law, making their acquisition and use a criminal act. Despite this, they are widely trafficked through illegal channels and are accessible to individuals' intent on modifying their firearms for illegal purposes.



A Glock switch's functionality centers around its ability to engage the firearm's trigger in a way that allows continuous fire if the trigger is held down, rather than requiring a separate pull for each shot. In a standard semi-automatic firearm, each pull of the trigger releases one round of ammunition. After the round is fired, the firearm's action (e.g., the slide) cycles to eject the spent cartridge and load a new round, requiring the user to release and pull the trigger again to fire the next shot. When a Glock switch is installed, it alters the action of the firing pin and trigger assembly. The device effectively holds the trigger in the firing position, enabling the pistol to continuously fire if the user maintains pressure on the trigger. This automatic firing mode significantly increases the weapon's rate of fire, often reaching several rounds per second, depending on the configuration of the device. For example, a standard Glock 17 can typically fire at a rate of around 15-20 rounds per minute in semi-automatic mode, but with the switch engaged, this could escalate up to 1,200 rounds per minute in fully automatic mode.

While the increase in rate of fire makes the weapon far more lethal, it also drastically decreases accuracy. The combination of rapid fire, along with decreased accuracy, enhance the chances that more innocent individuals will be impacted by gun violence. This rapid-fire capability makes the weapon far more dangerous, especially in crowded or public spaces, as it increases the likelihood of mass casualties in a short amount of time. With the increase in MCDs, there has also been an increase in gunshot fatalities in the United States, as well. The University of Chicago Crime Lab says MCDs, along with high-capacity magazines, have dramatically increased the lethality of shootings because they let a shooter fire more bullets far more rapidly—and hit their targets more often.<sup>8</sup> One in seven shooting victims died of their wounds in 2010 in Chicago. Now, the rate is closer to one in five.<sup>9</sup>

MCDs are illegal in the United States. Nevertheless, MCDs are alarmingly accessible through a variety of illegal channels, making it easy for individuals to obtain despite their illegality. One of the primary means of acquiring these devices is through the black market,

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.atf.gov/firearms/docs/report/nfcta-volume-ii-part-vii-recommendations/download>

<sup>6</sup> [www.atf.gov/file/190676/download](https://www.atf.gov/file/190676/download)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ncja.org/crimeandjusticenews/rise-in-gun-switches-increases-lethality-of-chicago-shootings>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ncja.org/crimeandjusticenews/rise-in-gun-switches-increases-lethality-of-chicago-shootings>

where they are sold by underground dealers or criminal organizations over the internet. These transactions often occur on encrypted platforms or through word-of-mouth in criminal networks, which makes detection particularly difficult. The rise of 3D printing technology has further exacerbated the problem, as MCDs can now be created at home using digital blueprints that are widely available on YouTube, Instagram, the dark web, and other underground forums.

Additionally, online marketplaces that stem from other countries, such as China, make the acquisition of Glock switches even more accessible with many online platforms allowing for anonymous transactions. These devices are shipped using false documentation, making their detection especially difficult. The ease with which MCDs are acquired and installed on the firearm means that even individuals with little firearm experience can modify their guns into automatic weapons. This accessibility has amplified the threat, as these modified firearms are increasingly used in criminal activities such as gang violence, drug trafficking, and shootings. Law enforcement faces significant challenges in identifying and intercepting Glock switches, as their small size and untraceable nature make them difficult to detect. The proliferation of these devices contributes to an overall rise in gun violence, elevating risks to both law enforcement officers and the public and straining the effectiveness of current gun violence reduction initiatives.

There are countless examples of the danger MCDs pose to the public and law enforcement officers across the United States. In Fresno, California in November 2019, 6 gang members took up firearms modified with MCDs to seek revenge on a rival gang. They opened fire into a backyard, killing 4 people and wounding 6. The assailants went to the wrong location and targeted a family getting together to watch football.<sup>10</sup> In September 2024, 4 people were killed and 17 wounded with a firearm outfitted with a MCD near the University of Alabama in Birmingham. Glock switches have been used to injure or kill law enforcement officers across the United States, including officers in Illinois, Mississippi, Texas, and Colorado.<sup>11</sup> In fact, just a week before APA's National Summit on MCDs, Chicago Police Officer Enrique Martinez was shot and killed with a firearm equipped with an MCD. MCDs pose a severe threat to public safety and increase the potential for mass violence. They enhance the lethality of firearms, complicate law enforcement efforts, and escalate the dangers of armed confrontations.

## **Taking Action: Innovative Solutions**

As highlighted at the National Summit, the prevalence and availability of MCDs makes this problem a complex one to solve. Addressing the rise of these devices requires a multifaceted approach that includes stricter regulations, enhanced law enforcement efforts and coordination, technological innovations to detect and prevent firearm modifications, and public awareness campaigns. By implementing comprehensive solutions, prosecutors can work toward reducing the accessibility of machine gun conversion devices and curb the devastating impact they have on our communities.

In September 2024, the White House took a step forward in combatting the proliferation of MCDs through an Executive Order that established an 'Emerging Firearms Threat Task Force' that has been directed to issue a report within 90 days that includes: an assessment of the

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.vice.com/en/article/glock-switches-auto-sears/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.everytown.org/press/mass-shooting-in-birmingham-sheds-light-on-public-safety-crisis-across-the-country-diy-machine-guns-continue-to-devastate-american-communities/>

threat posed by machinegun conversion devices and unserialized, 3D-printed firearms; an assessment of federal agencies' operational and legal capacities to detect, intercept, and seize machinegun conversion devices and unserialized, 3D-printed firearms; and an interagency plan for combatting these emerging threats.<sup>12</sup> The report will include any additional authorities or funding the federal agencies need from Congress in order to complete this work.

### **Joint Taskforces, Use of NIBIN, and other Technological Tools**

A key theme emerging from the National Summit was the critical need for collaboration and coordination among law enforcement agencies. Joint task forces at the federal, state, and local levels, supported by technological advancements, have proven highly effective in combatting violent crime across the country.<sup>13</sup> Several jurisdictions have already established such task forces, bringing together agencies like the ATF, Homeland Security Investigations, the U.S. Postal Service, and local law enforcement to target and investigate the sale, use, and production of MCDs. In Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, District Attorney Kevin R. Steele successfully secured grant funding from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency to enhance a gun reduction task force by adding an additional prosecutor, detectives, and analysts, further strengthening efforts to combat illegal firearms.<sup>14</sup>

In these joint taskforces, the use of NIBIN was an integral component of the overall gun reduction strategy. NIBIN, which stands for "National Integrated Ballistic Information Network," is a national database managed by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) that allows law enforcement to compare ballistic evidence (like shell casings) from crime scenes to identify if a firearm was used in multiple crimes, linking different shootings together and providing investigative leads to solve gun crimes across jurisdictions: NIBIN essentially acts as a "fingerprint" system for firearms by capturing unique markings left on fired ammunition. By capturing digital images of ballistic evidence from crime scenes and comparing them to images in the database, NIBIN can identify potential connections between different shootings, helping to link crimes and identify potential serial shooters. NIBIN can also help identify patterns in gun violence, and support prosecutions by linking firearms to multiple crimes.

NIBIN can help identify if a casing is from a firearm equipped with a MCD by comparing the unique markings left on the casing by the firearm's mechanism, including those potentially altered by the converter, to its database of ballistic evidence, allowing investigators to potentially link the casing to other casings fired from the same modified weapon. But for information from NIBIN to be most effective, it must be timely. This means law enforcement agencies must make a concerted effort to submit bullet casings into NIBIN, and crime labs must not delay processing the submitted evidence. Across NIBIN sites there are considerable variations in elapsed times for NIBIN hits, with some delays caused by cumbersome lab procedures or delay in submitting the evidence to the lab.<sup>15</sup> In October 2015, two shootings took place three hours apart: an attempted carjacking and an attempted robbery/homicide in another jurisdiction. Investigators identified the carjacker, but because the second jurisdiction did not

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2024/09/26/executive-order-on-combating-emerging-firearms-threats-and-improving-school-based-active-shooter-drills/>

<sup>13</sup> In September 2024, the Department of Justice announced its strategy to reduce the prevalence of MCDs and combat violent crime. To learn more of the strategy, go to <https://www.justice.gov/dag/media/1366606/dl>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/pccd/newsroom/commission-on-crime-and-delinquency-visits-montgomery-county-to-highlight-how-governor-shapiros-proposed-budget-will-combat-gun-violence-and-make-communities-safer>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/243977.pdf>



enter casings from the homicide for 10 months, NIBIN did not link the two cases.<sup>16</sup> The 10-month delay in NIBIN acquisition meant that investigators lost precious leads, including cell phone records, surveillance videos, and associate interviews. The lack of timeliness prevented a quick arrest and the potential recovery of a crime gun.

The City of Chicago, through funding from the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), launched the Chicago Crime Gun Intelligence Center. This Center puts federal and local law enforcement, prosecutors, and analysts under the same roof for purposes of combatting gun violence. To ensure it was effective, the Chicago firearms lab expedited and triaged processing of recovered casings in gun violence scenarios into NIBIN. As a result, Chicago found that 45% of guns modified with MCDs are returned with an investigative lead. The timeliness of submissions and processing maximized the use of NIBIN, generating more effective investigations and a greater chance of recovering the modified firearm and holding those responsible for gun violence accountable.

Other technological tools are also used by gun violence reduction taskforces, such as gun fire detection technology. Gunfire detection technology (GDT) is a gunshot detection system that uses microphones and artificial intelligence algorithms to identify and locate gunfire in real time. Monitoring by ShotSpotter, Inc. alone detected approximately 5,600 incidents of automatic weapon fire in 2021—a 1,400% increase from 2019.<sup>17</sup> GDT can facilitate the differentiation of machine gun fire from other modes of gunfire, pinpointing the location and recording time, date, and duration. This allows users to discover patterns and trends that may drive the implementation of new tactics, strategies, and policies. It also allows law enforcement to respond immediately when machinegun fire is detected, even if there are no reports from the public, which could lead to recovery of shell casings and/or modified firearms. Another GDT company, Shooter Detection Systems (SDS), developed two source detection--sound and flash—to confirm a gunshot, real-time alerts that provide near-instant situational awareness to law enforcement and emergency medical responders, and enhanced data recording that aids apprehension and conviction of alleged shooters.<sup>18</sup>

## **Prosecutorial Strategies**

Whether or not attached to a firearm, MCDs are considered machine guns under both the National Firearms Act and Gun Control Act and are therefore illegal. Federal prosecutors have been tasked with prioritizing MCD cases for those that use, sell, transfer, purchase or possess the devices. Still, this complex problem requires prosecutors and law enforcement to strategically target those who are driving the prevalence of MCDs on the street, whether by internet sales or produced by at home 3D printers.

On September 6, 2024, Department of Justice Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco announced a comprehensive strategy to combat MCDs, including the following:

- Establishment of the “Action Network to Terminate Illegal Machine Gun Conversion Device Committee” (Anti-MCD Committee) to provide leadership and guidance for how

<sup>16</sup> Best Practices for NIBIN Sites: <https://www.atf.gov/file/133571/download>

<sup>17</sup> A Device that Can Turn a Semi-Automatic Weapon into a Machine Gun in Moments Is Wreaking Havoc on American Streets, CNN, Aug. 30, 2022, <https://rb.gy/8bhp14>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.dhs.gov/science-and-technology/news/2023/04/27/feature-article-reimagining-gunshot-detection-enhanced-community-safety>

to best deploy Department resources to reduce the proliferation of MCDs, work with interagency and external partners on initiatives and joint MCD prosecution and enforcement efforts and ensure coordination among Department components and other stakeholders.

- Upgrade of seizure, tracking, technology monitoring, and intelligence gathering and dissemination of trackable data on numbers and types of MCDs seized during law enforcement operations. ATF will monitor changes in MCD technology and gather intelligence on trends in MCD seizures and prosecutions in real time.
- Enhance MCD prosecution initiatives by prioritizing MCD investigations through a district specific MCD enforcement strategy.
- Launch a national MCD training initiative to expand existing efforts to educate and train all law enforcement and prosecutors on legal, operational, and technical issues relating to the manufacture, sale, trafficking, and use of MCDs and the available enforcement options.<sup>19</sup>

Because of the threat posed by MCDs, many federal and state prosecutors have actively focused on enforcement actions and educational campaigns. The United States Attorney in Western Oklahoma, Robert J. Troester, started “Project Switch Off” in 2023.<sup>20</sup> This initiative includes: (1) specialized training of law enforcement on the illegality of MCDs and how to identify the many different types of conversion devices that exist, (2) public education of danger and illegality of these devices, and (3) the federal prosecution priority for those who illegally possess or sell these devices and the significant penalties they face. As a result of this initiative, federal prosecutors and ATF have trained nearly 750 law enforcement officers on MCDs. Between 2020 and 2022, the Western District charged eight individuals with MCD-related offenses, compared to 39 individuals prosecuted over the last year through Project Switch Off.<sup>21</sup>

In Massachusetts, Acting US Attorney Joshua Levy led an effort to seize 350 internet domains that were used for the illegal importation of MCDs from China. Through the cyber investigation, they were able to establish probable cause that the domains illegally used the “Glock” trademark to sell the MCDs and through undercover purchases, showed the domains violated the National Firearms Act. While individuals were not prosecuted in this matter because they are in China, the effectiveness of taking down the “storefront” where individuals were purchasing the MCDs cannot be understated. Visitors to the website are now directed to a landing page indicating the domain has been seized:

<sup>19</sup><https://www.justice.gov/dag/media/1366606/dl>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.justice.gov/usao-wd-ok/pr/united-states-attorney-and-atf-discuss-emerging-threat-machinegun-conversion-devices>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.justice.gov/usao-wd-ok/pr/united-states-attorney-co-chair-justice-departments-new-anti-mcd-committee-targeting>

# THIS DOMAIN HAS BEEN SEIZED



*This domain has been seized by U.S. Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), in accordance with a seizure warrant issued pursuant to Title 19, United States Code, Section 1595a(a), 18 U.S.C. § 2125(a)(2), and/or 18 U.S.C. § 2132(b)(1), by the United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts as part of a law enforcement action by HSI with support from US Postal Inspection Service, United States Attorney's Office for the District of Massachusetts, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, Massachusetts State Police, and the Office of the Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.*

*It is unlawful to import, distribute, and possess certain firearm components prohibited under the National Firearms Act such as machinegun conversion devices, commonly known as "switches," or "drop sears," and silencers/suppressors. These devices alter a firearm's functionality by converting it to a fully automatic weapon and silencing the sound a firearm makes when fired. Furthermore, the unauthorized use of a registered trademark is illegal. If you have purchased any of these components from this site, you can arrange to surrender it to law enforcement by contacting: [HSINCYberCrimes@hsn.dhs.gov](mailto:HSINCYberCrimes@hsn.dhs.gov)*

Prosecutors play a pivotal role in combating MCDs. Their reach goes beyond ensuring those involved in their illegal manufacture, distribution, or possession are held accountable under the law. Prosecutors can partner with civil enforcement divisions to target various illicit website activity. Prosecutors are at the hub of the criminal justice system and are in a unique position to bring together law enforcement agencies to create robust gun violence reduction strategies. They are also instrumental in advocating for stronger laws and penalties to deter further violations. Through strategic prosecutions, prosecutors not only bring justice to victims of gun violence but also contribute to reducing the availability and impact of these dangerous devices on public safety.

Many states have antiquated definitions and laws that impede efforts by local law enforcement and prosecutors to investigate and prosecute individuals for possessing, using, or transferring MCDs. Since limiting MCDs is an effective violence reduction strategy, many states have been successful on a bipartisan basis in changing their statutes to make prosecution more feasible. For example, in Louisiana, District Attorney for East Baton Rouge Parish, Hillar Moore, worked with legislators to amend the definition of “machine gun” in his state to include the actual MCDs without the firearm, and to amend the statute so prosecutions could be pursued. DA Moore garnered the support of the Louisiana Shooting Club<sup>22</sup> and the National Rifle

<sup>22</sup> [https://www.theadvocate.com/baton\\_rouge/news/crime\\_police/how-la-legislators-are-cracking-down-on-glock-switches/article\\_3b3a0504-fce0-11ed-99ef-5fba2ac09733.html](https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/crime_police/how-la-legislators-are-cracking-down-on-glock-switches/article_3b3a0504-fce0-11ed-99ef-5fba2ac09733.html)



Association of Louisiana by educating on the dangers of MCDs and stressing the anti-violence component, not anti-gun, or gun regulation.

Some states have gone further. New York State passed a firearm manufacturer liability law that holds firearm manufacturers liable for business practices that endanger the health or safety of the public. Thus far, 10 manufacturers have been sued by the New York Attorney General under this nuisance theory. New York also just enacted a statute grounded in consumer product law that requires gun manufacturers to take reasonable steps to ensure their firearms are not easily modified by MCDs.

Other states have taken steps to solidify residents' ability to pursue lawsuits against the industry. Last year, seven states established laws affirming residents' right to sue gun-makers. The two largest among them were California and Illinois. Illinois' 2023 law prohibits gun-makers and dealers from endangering public health or safety through unlawful or unreasonable business practices.

Updating the definition of "machine gun" in state law to include MCDs without the firearm, is a strong initial strategy in legislatively combating the prevalence of MCDs. Ensuring the definition of machine gun is up to date to reflect current trends is also productive. By closing legal loopholes and ensuring law enforcement agencies have the authority to address this issue effectively, lawmakers can help reduce the spread and impact of these dangerous devices on public safety.

## **Civil Litigation**

Public lawyers, including many prosecutors, are authorized to file civil litigation to curtail unlawful business practices. Recognizing an anti-violence strategy requires a comprehensive approach, some have used that authority to bring civil actions to hold gun manufacturers and sellers accountable. The City of Chicago recently filed an action specifically targeting MCDs: It filed suit against Glock alleging that the company manufactured pistols with designs that encourage modification with MCDs and failed to make changes that would protect the public. Instead of pursuing remedies against a wide range of companies over multiple allegations, the suit targets just one manufacturer over specific allegations of negligence and wrongdoing barred by a new Illinois law in 2023. The state's Firearms Industry Responsibility Act restricts the way gun dealers and manufacturers can market and sell their products and subjects them to civil penalties for violations. Glock pistols are not the only firearms that can be easily modified with MCDs, but Chicago alleges the Glock design makes its semi-automatic pistol particularly easy to modify, therefore making the firearm more attractive to criminals.

In March 2024, thirteen states' Attorney Generals sent a letter to Glock requesting it to preserve all documents related to the Chicago litigation for future potential production. The letter reads:

The City of Chicago's lawsuit claims that your choices constitute violations of multiple sections of the Municipal Code of Chicago, including through the unreasonable sale and marketing of firearms and unfair business practices; the creation of, maintenance of, and contribution to an ongoing public nuisance; and negligence. If the City's factual allegations are true, your conduct may also involve

violations of our states' laws. We will not hesitate to enforce our laws when they are violated.<sup>23</sup>

As this report was going to print, State Attorneys General of Minnesota<sup>24</sup> and New Jersey<sup>25</sup> sued Glock, over its design, marketing and sale of semi-automatic pistols that allegedly can easily be transformed into machineguns.

Civil litigation presents a promising tool in combating the proliferation of machine gun conversion devices (MCDs) by holding manufacturers, distributors, and individuals accountable for their role in facilitating the illegal modification of firearms. Civil lawsuits can serve as a deterrent and help curb the availability of these dangerous devices. Furthermore, civil litigation can complement existing criminal penalties by providing an additional avenue for justice and financial repercussions, potentially incentivizing companies and individuals to adopt stricter compliance measures. When combined with legislative action and law enforcement efforts, civil litigation can become an essential part of a comprehensive strategy to reduce the spread of MCDs and enhance public safety.

### **Focus on 3-D Printers**

MCDs can be created at home with 3-D printers. Such MCDs are cheap to make with the blueprint readily available on the internet. The ability to curb an individual's access to making the MCDs takes a collaborative approach with software and technology companies. Universities are studying innovative solutions to barring MCD creation on 3-D printers. For example, Dartmouth University School of Engineering is studying ways to curb the ability to create MCDs on 3-D printers. Dartmouth has found that the ability to detect MCD files going to a printer is feasible and could work like an anti-virus software addition to the actual printer. Such software could systemically detect accurately shapes of MCDs and inform law enforcement when it detects MCDs are being created.

Websites and videos that offer instruction on making MCDs on 3-D printers should also be barred and referred to law enforcement.

### **Conclusion**

MCDs are a significant and growing threat to public safety. This illegal modification exacerbates the potential for violence and escalates the risks associated with gun violence, as fully automatic firearms are capable of firing rapidly and indiscriminately. The rising prevalence of MCDs highlights the urgent need for innovative strategies to curb their spread.

To combat this issue, a multifaceted approach is essential. Enhanced legislation and stricter enforcement of existing laws related to firearm modifications can help deter the illegal production and sale of Glock switches. Additionally, law enforcement agencies must be equipped with the necessary training and technology to identify and seize these devices before they can be used in crimes. Public awareness campaigns could also play a critical role in educating communities about the dangers of Glock switches, while promoting responsible gun ownership and the importance of reporting suspicious activities. All of these solutions require

<sup>23</sup> [https://www.nj.gov/oag/newsreleases24/2024-0326\\_Multistate-Letter-to-Glock.pdf](https://www.nj.gov/oag/newsreleases24/2024-0326_Multistate-Letter-to-Glock.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> [https://www.ag.state.mn.us/Office/Communications/2024/12/12\\_Glock.asp](https://www.ag.state.mn.us/Office/Communications/2024/12/12_Glock.asp)

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.njoag.gov/attorney-general-platkin-sues-glock-for-design-and-sale-of-guns-switchable-to-machine->

collaboration and partnership between federal and state agencies, firearm manufacturers, and technology companies. Prosecutors nationwide are urged to forge the path forward by developing these strategic partnerships to safeguard our communities.

## **Acknowledgements**

APA would like to thank former Los Angeles City Attorney Mike Feuer, whose dedication to ending gun violence helped shape and organize the Summit and APA's efforts in providing meaningful information for prosecutors, legislators, and policy makers to combat the prevalence of machine gun conversion devices. APA would also like to extend our deepest gratitude to the Joyce Foundation for their generous support. APA extends its thanks to all the speakers who made the Summit an informative and meaningful event.

## APPENDIX

### Recap of the Virtual National Summit on Machinegun Conversion Devices

APA hosted a **Virtual National Summit on Machinegun Conversion Devices: Defining the Threat and Taking Action** in November 2024 to address the extraordinary rise in gun violence due to the proliferation of machine gun conversion devices, particularly “Glock switches” or “auto sears” and to seek solutions through a collaborative platform ultimately seeking to reduce the prevalence of these lethal devices. This summit brought together leading federal and local prosecutors, law enforcement officials, legal and public policy experts, engineers, and other stakeholders to address the emerging public safety and health threat posed by machinegun conversion devices (MCDs). “These easily accessible devices are making gun violence more lethal than ever. Our summit displayed a wide range of strategies that prosecutors, law enforcement and policy makers can use to make our communities safer. We hope this summit will inspire further action nationwide,” said APA CEO Nichole Parisi.

#### Part One: Defining the Threat

The first session, held on November 12, was all about understanding the threat from MCDs. The discussions were intense and insightful, covering approaches taken by leading local prosecutors and law enforcement officials to the issue and the science behind the increased lethality of gun violence due to MCDs. The session wrapped up with a strong emphasis on the importance of cross-jurisdictional collaborations, including a discussion on violence reduction taskforces and the success of Chicago’s Crime Gun Intelligence Center. The use of technology, such as the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) and Gun Detection Technology, was found to be an effective tool in investigating and prosecuting cases involving MCDs, as discussed more fully below. Research into the prevalence of MCDs, increased fatality rates in gun violence cases, and correlation to mass violence incidents may be helpful to law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies who are educating the public, their policy makers, and grant funders. From Day One, the message is clear that a comprehensive and collaborative strategy must be employed at all levels of law enforcement to successfully combat this violent trend.

#### Part Two: Taking Action

The second session, on November 19, focused on multiple strategies to combat MCDs. First, participants compared and contrasted state legislative approaches, including bipartisan legislation in Louisiana outlawing the sale, possession and use of MCDs that enables state and local law enforcement and prosecutors to combat this scourge; and a New York law establishing civil liability when a firearms manufacturer fails to take reasonable steps to prevent its guns from easily being transformed into machineguns.

Next, the Interim Massachusetts U.S. Attorney and key staff provided a template for other prosecutors to follow in combatting the online sale of MCDs, discussing their groundbreaking seizure of 350 web domains offering MCDs for sale.

Many prosecutors possess authority to file civil litigation to protect the public. Attorneys from Everytown Law and the Giffords Law Center discussed civil litigation strategies to combat

MCDs, including pending litigation filed by the City of Chicago and Everytown Law against Glock, Inc., claiming that faulty design allows its semi-automatic pistols to be easily modified to fire as illegal machineguns, in alleged violation of consumer protection laws.

Next, the Summit turned to model approaches to educate law enforcement (to detect MCDs) and the public (about the dangers MCDs posed and ways residents can collaborate with law enforcement to curb those dangers).

Finally, the Summit focused on technological innovations with the promise of combating MCDs, including teamwork between academic institutions and industry to make 3D printing of MCDs much more difficult.

In sum, the Summit underscored the potential for successfully contending with MCDs by highlighting a wide range of solutions that prosecutors, law enforcement, legislators, experts in technology, advocates and others across the nation are implementing to combat this emerging threat.

### **Highlights and Key Takeaways**

The summit was not just about presentations and discussions; it was a platform for meaningful dialogue and actionable solutions. Attendees asked thought-provoking questions, and the engaging discussions provided valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of the threat. Special thanks to our moderator, Prince George's County State's Attorney Aisha Braveboy, and all our panelists.

**Recordings of the presentation, agenda, speaker biographies and summit resources can be found here: <https://www.apainc.org/a-virtual-summit-on-machinegun-conversion-devices-defining-the-threat-and-taking-action/>.**