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July 23, 2019

Mark Zuckerberg  
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer  
Facebook, Inc.  
1 Hacker Way  
Menlo Park, California 94025

Dear Mr. Zuckerberg,

I write with great alarm regarding Facebook's decision to allow certain users to post instructions for obtaining blueprints for 3D-printed firearms.<sup>1</sup> As you know, in August 2018, Facebook announced it would block users from sharing such content. "Sharing instructions on how to manufacture firearms using 3D printers or CNC milling machines is not allowed under our Community Standards," a spokesperson said in a statement. "In line with our policies, we are removing this content from Facebook."<sup>2</sup> Now Facebook will allow "legitimate" gun shops and online vendors to offer instructions for obtaining the instructions for "downloadable guns" in places where it is legal to do so.

As you may know, in June 2018, the Department of State suddenly settled a years-long lawsuit brought by gun activist Cody Wilson that began after the federal government blocked his company's website, Defense Distributed, for posting online directions for a 3D plastic printable pistol, citing international export law.<sup>3</sup> Several states sued, and in August 2018, a federal judge in Washington State blocked the Administration's decision to allow entities such as Defense Distributed from posting CAD files online.<sup>4</sup> Given the court order in effect, the distribution of these blueprints violates the law. I urge you to take immediate action to remove the distribution of the links.

3D-printed lethal weaponry pose a unique risk to the public as they cannot easily or reliably be detected by metal detectors at airports, schools, governmental or other facilities. At a time when the firearm death rate is at a historic high<sup>5</sup>, one of the country's most prominent tech companies should not be facilitating access to these deadly weapons. If Facebook takes the position that facilitating the distribution of such instructions does not violate the law, it raises the obvious

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2019/07/12/facebook-lifts-ban-sharing-3d-printed-gun-blueprints/>,  
[https://www.facebook.com/communitystandards/recentupdates/regulated\\_goods/](https://www.facebook.com/communitystandards/recentupdates/regulated_goods/)

<sup>2</sup> <https://money.cnn.com/2018/08/09/technology/facebook-3d-printed-gun/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/state-department-defends-allowing-distribution-blueprints-3d-print/story?id=56817152>

<sup>4</sup> [https://cdn.vox-cdn.com/uploads/chorus\\_asset/file/12565851/3D-printed\\_guns\\_preliminary\\_injunction.0.pdf](https://cdn.vox-cdn.com/uploads/chorus_asset/file/12565851/3D-printed_guns_preliminary_injunction.0.pdf),  
<https://www.vox.com/2018/8/27/17786940/3d-printed-guns-court-preliminary-injunction>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/18/us/gun-deaths.html>

issue of how Facebook plans on ensure such content from “a real brick-and-mortar store, legitimate website, brand or government agency” doesn’t fall into the hands of those who should not have them. Even when limited to “brick and mortar stores,” a critical difference between this computer code and an actual firearm is that the store can sell the code without a background check.<sup>6</sup>

Again, I strongly urge you to reverse course on your decision to allow instructions for obtaining 3D-printed gun blueprints on your platform. In addition, I would like to know what Facebook is doing to ensure that other users do not use your platform for such nefarious and potentially unlawful actions in the future. Next, I would like to know why Facebook changed its policy regarding the distribution of 3D printed firearm blueprints. Finally, if you allow posting of these blueprints in a manner that any person outside the United States can access them, such action would be potentially illegal under current law; does Facebook really want to enable and facilitate potentially illegal activity? Thank you in advance for your cooperation and I look forward to your timely response no later than August 6, 2019.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez  
United States Senator

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/nation-now/2018/08/01/3-d-guns-how-3-d-printed-gun-parts-made-and-how-theyre-legal/879349002/>