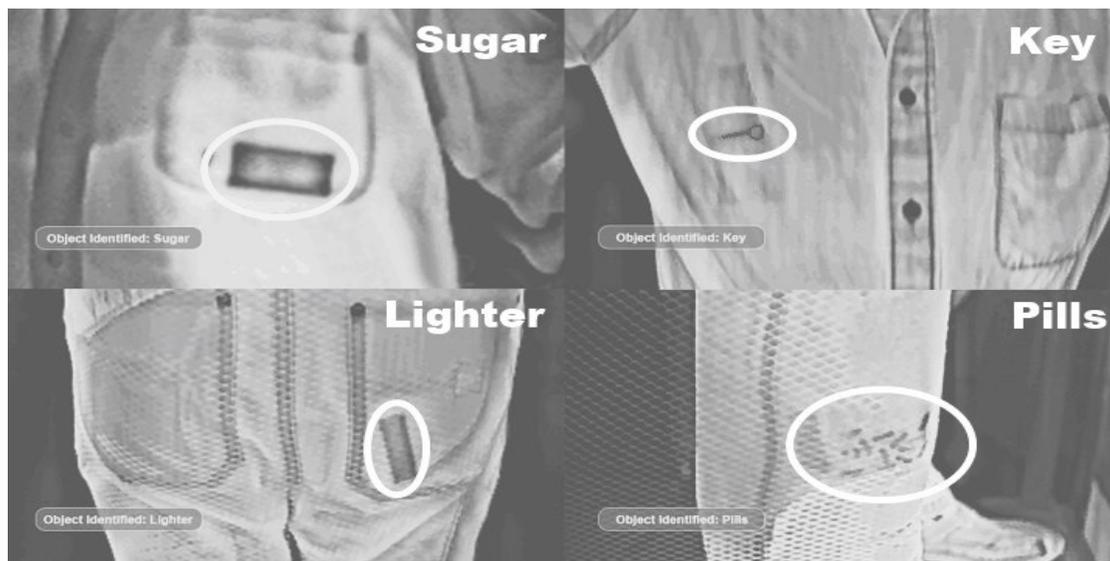


Basic Case for Allowing 3D-Printing of Firearms/Components

Lawmakers have promoted restrictions on using 3D printers for firearms-related purposes, such as by renewing the “Undetectable” Firearms Act and expanding it to prohibit individuals from printing entire guns, major parts, or even *ammunition magazines*. Ironically, these restrictions would make those same people choose to spend more money on the *gun industry* rather than on *3D printing*. Thus such prohibitions should be opposed by all sides of the gun control debate.



Objects **detected** and **identified** through **thermo-conductive imaging**. 3D-printed objects are **just as visible** with such technology, as well as via **backscatter x-ray** and **millimeter-wave scanners**.

“Undetectable” no longer applies to plastic or other synthetic materials anymore.

1. Very Detectable: With the advent of new detection technologies (such as [backscatter x-ray](#), [millimeter-wave](#), and [thermo-conductive](#) imaging systems), firearms can easily be detected [irrespective of what material they are composed of](#). This means *all polymers*, including *3d-printed plastic*. Recently new versions of such scanners have been developed that can detect hidden objects [without violating the personal privacy](#) of the person being scanned. So far no bill seeking to reinstate the Undetectable Firearms Act in “modernized” form has mentioned any of these. Yet even the first 1988 Undetectable Firearms Act anticipated that such restrictions would [no longer be necessary as detection technologies improved](#). The advancement of new detection systems is why the act was set to expire ten years after it was first passed.

2. Arbitrary: Bills seeking to ban the use of 3D-printing to personally manufacture firearms have nothing whatsoever to do with the actual *lethality* of such guns. [Just as “assault” weapon bans focused on the aesthetics of various firearms](#), any modernized “Undetectable Firearms Act” only places emphasis on *how something is made*. There is no reason death tolls from shootings or annual murder rates ought to be [weighed differently due to the manufacturing means](#) of the guns used.

3. Concealment: Proponents of restrictions on the personal use of 3D-printers to manufacture firearms or certain components might insist that a printed firearm can be easily “disguised” to *look* like something else. [Disassembled firearms](#) and [disguised guns](#) illustrate that this has already been possible without any significant security issues.

4. No New Threats: For decades now, information on how to produce improvised firearms (which could be disguised as something else) for as little as \$10 has been [available to anyone who seeks it](#). These have not been shown to pose the same kind of threats that printed guns are purported to pose, yet they are cheaper to make and just as easy to smuggle.

5. Source of Crime Guns: [According to the ATF](#) and the [Bureau of Justice Statistics](#), personally-constructed firearms are not a key source of criminally-used guns. Nearly 80% of all firearms possessed by criminals at the time of their offense are obtained through either straw purchases, or other illegal sources such as theft or black market purchases. Thus it makes no sense to say that “subverting” background checks through *3D-printed guns* will be of new value to criminals.

To summarize: 3D-printed guns don't offer criminals anything they don't already have access to, and criminalizing their production could imprison non-violent persons at the expense of the public at large.

Public policy should focus on prosecuting acts of violence and not mere possession.

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