



April 30, 2025

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC. 20510

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Durbin,

We write to you today to prioritize efforts to pass S.1283, the "Innovate to De-Escalate Modernization Act" introduced by Senators Bill Hagerty (R-TN) and Ruben Gallego (D-AZ). The Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA) represents the largest Sheriff's Offices in the country and over 130 million Americans. Our members know firsthand the importance of allowing the use of less lethal tools like CEWs to help keep the people we serve and our personnel safe.

As you aware, the current law that regulates CEWs and other less-lethal technologies is the Gun Control Act of 1968 (GCA), which was passed before the TASER was invented. As a result, the GCA's "firearm" definition does not match today's reality for law enforcement. As it stands, any weapon which propels an object at a particular rate of speed can be classified as a "firearm," meaning the most modern technology being used in CEWs today causes them to be inappropriately regulated to the same degree as a deadly firearm. This modern technology revolves around the latest TASER models expelling projectiles directly by a primer instead of using compressed air like in previous models. This advancement puts the newest TASERs over the line and causes the misclassification of them as firearms, as the GCA views using a primer to mean that the device expels projectiles through the action of an explosive.

Unfortunately, this antiquated definition will result in limits on the use of CEWs by law enforcement on the front lines and will have negative impacts on the ability of officers to de-escalate dangerous situations without the need to use greater, or even deadly force. CEWs are designed to be a non-lethal option to subdue threats and their deployment in the field has become increasingly widespread, saving countless lives in both the public and private sectors. The existing outdated regulations have the power to prevent law enforcement from using the tools that they need to do their jobs safely and effectively. It is up to our country's lawmakers to ensure that those on the front lines are able to continue using the best solutions and technology available to them.

The new legislation also leaves no room for devices that could be modified into lethal firearms to be given less stringent regulations. New classification criteria have been added to the newest version of this bill, prohibiting any device that accepts, or can be readily modified to accept, an ammunition feeding device commonly used in semiautomatic firearms. The new criteria also prohibit devices that are able to use lethal ammunition for handguns, rifles and shotguns.

Updating current federal policy may also spur innovation and accelerate a new generation of less-lethal weapons to increase opportunities for de-escalation tools to be available for law enforcement. MCSA encourages Congress to prioritize this legislation that will update the existing statute and allow enforcement the means for success in the field.

Sincerely,

Megan E. Noland
Executive Director
Major County Sheriffs of America