



March 30, 2020

Director Christopher C. Krebs  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency  
*Office of the Director*  
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Director Krebs:

Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund, the country's largest gun violence prevention organization, Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense, a part of Everytown, and Students Demand Action, an initiative of Everytown, write to strongly oppose the administration's recent decision to add gun dealers to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's Guidance dated March 28, 2020 on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce: Ensuring Community and National Resilience in COVID-19 Response (Guidance).

Everytown, Moms Demand Action, and Students Demand Action are concerned that the Guidance may unduly suggest to state and local officials that purchasing firearms is essential to confronting this public health crisis and protecting our country's infrastructure. The fact is that firearms won't make people safer in the face of this pandemic — and leaving gun stores open puts their owners and customers at risk of contracting the virus, for no public health benefit at all.

This Guidance is the first time the federal government has ever identified the gun industry as essential to our country's infrastructure during a pandemic, placing it on the same level as law enforcement, first responders, hospital workers, and others who are working to serve and protect our communities. In fact, the prior two administrations did not make this determination when assessing essential industries nor did this administration in its previously released advisory lists of essential critical infrastructure on March 19 and March 23.

Indeed, the day after the March 23 guidance was released it was reported that the trade association for the gun industry was pressing the White House to classify gun and ammunition dealers and manufacturers as essential businesses that must remain open. This lobbying effort came in a moment when the two publicly traded gun companies saw their stock prices rise and the industry saw an opportunity to capitalize on fear of social collapse. The gun industry has been fear-mongering to stoke gun sales throughout this pandemic, pedaling a fiction that the only way to stay safe right now is to buy a gun — even in a time when there are troubling indicators of increased risk of domestic gun violence and gun suicide. For example, calls to a National Suicide Prevention Hotline call center are up 300 percent and domestic violence hotlines are seeing increased volume across the country. The advisory list also fails to acknowledge the serious risks that come with unsecured firearms in the home. While not binding, the Guidance ratifies the propaganda being spread during this crisis and ignores actual risks to public health.



In sum, while the Guidance states that the gun industry is critical to American infrastructure during this epidemic, the gun industry itself is selling guns based on the fear that our public safety infrastructure will crumble. We strongly urge CISA to immediately reverse its decision and reject the gun industry's lobbyists by removing "Workers supporting the operation of firearm or ammunition product manufacturers, retailers, importers, distributors, and shooting ranges" from its advisory list.

Sincerely,

John Feinblatt

Sincerely,

Shannon Watts