



The Honorable Jim Jordan
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Andy Biggs
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
Subcommittee on Crime
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
Subcommittee on Crime
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

April 16, 2024

Board of Trustees

Mayor Shawyn Patterson-Howard
Mount Vernon, NY
President

Mayor Steven Reed
Montgomery, AL
1st Vice President

Mayor Byron Brown
Buffalo, NY
2nd Vice President

Mayor Wayne Messam
Miramar, FL
Treasurer

Mayor Sharon Weston Broome
Baton Rouge, LA
Secretary

Mayor Frank Scott, Jr.
Little Rock, AR
Immediate Past President

Mayor Eric Adams
New York, NY

Mayor LaToya Cantrell
New Orleans, LA

Mayor Van Johnson
Savannah, GA

Mayor Tishaura Jones
St. Louis, MO

Mayor Quinton Lucas
Kansas City, MO

Mayor Vi Lyles
Charlotte, NC

Mayor Rachel Proctor
DeSoto, TX

Mayor Brandon Scott
Baltimore, MD

Mayor Errick Simmons
Greenville, MS

Mayor Victoria Woodards
Tacoma, WA

Mayor Randall L. Woodfin
Birmingham, AL

Dear Chairman Jordan, Ranking Member Nadler, Chairman Biggs, and Ranking Member Jackson Lee:

We, the African American Mayors Association (“AAMA”), are writing you to express our support for H.R. 3269, the Law Enforcement Innovate to De-Escalate Act. As the only organization exclusively representing African American mayors in the United States, we believe that Congress’ enactment of this bi-partisan bill is of the utmost importance for the safety and well-being of our constituents and cities.

One of AAMA’s core pillars is the promotion of public safety in our communities. As an association, we recognize that law enforcement authorities play an indispensable role in keeping our communities safe. However, we cannot ignore the fact that 1,105 people across the United States have been killed during encounters with law enforcement officers in just the past twelve months alone. Even with the progress that our country has made in recent years through the improvement of agency policies and practices, the Washington Post’s data clearly shows that there has been a steady – and unacceptable – rise in the number of fatal officer-involved shootings every year since 2019. As Ranking Member Nadler correctly noted in his floor statement in support of the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, this is an issue which disproportionately impacts the Black community in America.

Although the use of deadly force is unfortunately an unavoidable reality in some circumstances today, the AAMA urges you to take this opportunity to promote the development and adoption of less-than-lethal technologies which will render the unnecessary loss of life during law enforcement encounters in America a thing of the past.

In the past year, some of the less-than-lethal technology necessary for building this better future for our communities has already been released, and more is in the research and development pipeline. As in older models of less-than-lethal technologies, this new generation of devices use a primer (a small explosive charge) in the process of expelling a projectile. However, unlike the older models, the new generation directly expel a projectile through the action of an explosive instead of using that explosive force to activate an intermediary piston which then expels the projectile. We note that compared to older models of less-than-lethal devices, the new generation of less-than-lethal technology shows a notable improvement in range, reliability, and the number of opportunities to de-escalate a situation through the streamlining and simplification of a projectile’s internal engineering processes. In light of the above, the only obstacles left standing in the way of the widespread adoption of modern less-than-lethal technologies are our nation’s archaic federal firearms laws which – incredibly – regulate and tax these devices as if they were lethal firearms because of the simple engineering change made to their propulsion technology.





Board of Trustees

Mayor Shawyn Patterson-Howard
Mount Vernon, NY
President

Mayor Steven Reed
Montgomery, AL
1st Vice President

Mayor Byron Brown
Buffalo, NY
2nd Vice President

Mayor Wayne Messam
Miramar, FL
Treasurer

Mayor Sharon Weston Broome
Baton Rouge, LA
Secretary

Mayor Frank Scott, Jr.
Little Rock, AR
Immediate Past President

Mayor Eric Adams
New York, NY

Mayor LaToya Cantrell
New Orleans, LA

Mayor Van Johnson
Savannah, GA

Mayor Tishaura Jones
St. Louis, MO

Mayor Quinton Lucas
Kansas City, MO

Mayor Vi Lyles
Charlotte, NC

Mayor Rachel Proctor
DeSoto, TX

Mayor Brandon Scott
Baltimore, MD

Mayor Errick Simmons
Greenville, MS

Mayor Victoria Woodards
Tacoma, WA

Mayor Randall L. Woodfin
Birmingham, AL

H.R. 3269 proposes a simple, bi-partisan, and commonsense way to address this emerging issue through the establishment of a statutory definition for a “less-than-lethal projectile device.” This definition simply ensures that modern generations of less-than-lethal projectile devices (which directly expel a non-lethal projectile through the action of an explosive) are subjected to the same federal regulatory treatment – no worse, and no better – as the older generations of less-than-lethal projectile devices (which indirectly expelled a non-lethal projectile through the action of an explosive).

In order to be classified as a less-than-lethal projectile device, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives (“ATF”) must find that the device meets both the objective and subjective criteria established in H.R. 3269. To satisfy the objective prong, the device can fire a projectile no faster than 500 feet per second. To satisfy the subjective prong, ATF must find that the device is designed or intended to be used in a manner that is not likely to cause death or serious bodily injury. Both findings are necessary, and neither finding alone is sufficient, for the device to qualify as a less-than-lethal projectile device.

Although we are aware that there are other legislative approaches that Congress could take to resolve these technical flaws in our nation’s firearms laws, we strongly believe that H.R. 3269 is the only vehicle which creates a simple and harmonious federal definition for less-than-lethal projectile devices across all relevant statutes. Simplicity and cohesiveness play an integral role in preventing the creation of loopholes which could be exploited to further fuel the gun violence epidemic in our communities. At the same time, H.R. 3269 preserves the legal status quo for vulnerable members of our communities such as LGBTQIA+ persons, victims of domestic violence, and individuals with disabilities who may need access to a safe and effective civilian less-than-lethal device for self-defense purposes.

The safety of our communities is wholly dependent upon our law enforcement officers being equipped to respond to dynamic situations in a safe and appropriate manner. As evidenced by the sheer number of fatal officer involved shootings in America during the past year, there is obvious room for improvement, and this is a meaningful way to spark the innovation necessary to make those improvements. To that end, H.R. 3269 eliminates unnecessary barriers to the development of future less-than-lethal technologies and competition in that industry which have been erected through the unforeseen application of firearms laws intended to provide support to Federal, State, and local law enforcement officials in their fight against violent crime.





Board of Trustees

Mayor Shawyn Patterson-Howard
Mount Vernon, NY
President

Mayor Steven Reed
Montgomery, AL
1st Vice President

Mayor Byron Brown
Buffalo, NY
2nd Vice President

Mayor Wayne Messam
Miramar, FL
Treasurer

Mayor Sharon Weston Broome
Baton Rouge, LA
Secretary

Mayor Frank Scott, Jr.
Little Rock, AR
Immediate Past President

Mayor Eric Adams
New York, NY

Mayor LaToya Cantrell
New Orleans, LA

Mayor Van Johnson
Savannah, GA

Mayor Tishaura Jones
St. Louis, MO

Mayor Quinton Lucas
Kansas City, MO

Mayor Vi Lyles
Charlotte, NC

Mayor Rachel Proctor
DeSoto, TX

Mayor Brandon Scott
Baltimore, MD

Mayor Errick Simmons
Greenville, MS

Mayor Victoria Woodards
Tacoma, WA

Mayor Randall L. Woodfin
Birmingham, AL

Although we are aware that there are other legislative approaches that Congress could take to resolve these technical flaws in our nation's firearms laws, we strongly believe that H.R. 3269 is the only vehicle which creates a simple and harmonious federal definition for less-than-lethal projectile devices across all relevant statutes. Simplicity and cohesiveness play an integral role in preventing the creation of loopholes which could be exploited to further fuel the gun violence epidemic in our communities. At the same time, H.R. 3269 preserves the legal status quo for vulnerable members of our communities such as LGBTQIA+ persons, victims of domestic violence, and individuals with disabilities who may need access to a safe and effective civilian less-than-lethal device for self-defense purposes.

The safety of our communities is wholly dependent upon our law enforcement officers being equipped to respond to dynamic situations in a safe and appropriate manner. As evidenced by the sheer number of fatal officer involved shootings in America during the past year, there is obvious room for improvement, and this is a meaningful way to spark the innovation necessary to make those improvements. To that end, H.R. 3269 eliminates unnecessary barriers to the development of future less-than-lethal technologies and competition in that industry which have been erected through the unforeseen application of firearms laws intended to provide support to Federal, State, and local law enforcement officials in their fight against violent crime. Furthermore, H.R. 3269 will help expedite the process of getting these vital public safety tools into the hands of our law enforcement officers.

Incentivizing the creation and adoption of more innovative and effective less-than-lethal technologies that save lives of community members and law-enforcement officers alike is truly a bi-partisan initiative which we encourage you to support.

Sincerely,

CEO, AAMA

