

Honorable Jim Jordan  
Chair  
Judiciary Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
20515

Honorable Jamie Raskin  
Ranking Member  
Judiciary Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
20515

November 18, 2025

To Chair Jordan and Ranking Member Raskin,

In 2014, a Washington, DC resident (name withheld to protect the victim's privacy) abused his wife with a TASER, repeatedly shocking her in the face and head. While she was still suffering the effects of the TASER, he repeatedly hit her in the head with a baseball bat, punched her multiple times in the face, and then sexually assaulted her.<sup>1</sup> In 2018, a New Jersey man threatened his girlfriend repeatedly with a TASER in the course of raping her several times over multiple incidents. Eventually, he carried through with his threat, tasing her in the neck and raping and sodomizing her.<sup>2</sup>

These incidents are both horrific and emblematic of a larger issue: domestic abusers' use of weapons to exert power and coercive control over their victims. Abusers threaten the victim, the children, pets, and others. As a nation, we should erect more barriers to domestic abusers acquiring weapons, not demolish existing protections. **But that is exactly what H.R.2189/S.1283 would do by undermining laws designed to keep so-called "less-than-lethal projectile devices" such as TASERs classified as firearms and ghost guns out of the hands of adjudicated abusers.**

To be clear, despite their marketing, TASERs are not always "less-than-lethal," as claimed in H.R.2189. Perhaps they are less lethal than other firearms, but between 2012 and 2021, 538 people were killed by TASERs or stun guns.<sup>3</sup> And studies that have found TASERs have only minor health impacts were not only primarily funded by the manufacturer, they did not mimic real-life situations, having exclusively healthy subjects, a short exposure time, and no long-term follow-up.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, domestic violence continues or for some populations even escalates

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<sup>1</sup> United States Attorney's Office, District of Columbia (2014, November 13). *District man sentenced to two years in prison for sexually assaulting his wife: Defendant shocked spouse with taser* [Press release]. <https://www.justice.gov/usao-dc/pr/district-man-sentenced-two-years-prison-sexually-assaulting-his-wifed-efendant-shocked>

<sup>2</sup> Smith, J. P. (2019, April 18). Cherry Hill man held in girlfriend sex assault case, Taser use alleged. *The Daily Journal*. <https://www.thedailyjournal.com/story/news/2019/04/18/new-jersey-upper-deerfield-cherry-hill-leonard-za-wojski-sexual-assault-rape-taser-state-police/3508506002/>

<sup>3</sup> Breen, S. (2024, June 27). *Tasers can kill. When they don't they can still do lasting damage*. MindSiteNews.

<https://mindsitenews.org/2024/06/27/tasers-can-kill-when-they-dont-they-can-still-do-lasting-damage/>

<sup>4</sup> Ballatsas, C., Gerbecks, J., & Duckers, M. L. A. (2021). Human health risks of conducted electrical weapon exposure: A systematic review. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 4(2), e:2037209. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.37209

during pregnancy,<sup>5</sup> and there is evidence that the use of a TASER on a pregnant woman can cause her to miscarry.<sup>6</sup>

Under current federal law, adjudicated domestic abusers (with a few notable exceptions) are prohibited from possessing TASERs that are classified as firearms, ghost guns, and traditional firearms. Removing such TASERs and other “less-than-lethal projectile devices” modified to be lethal from the definition of a “firearm” in 18 USC 921(a) will not only allow domestic abusers to acquire projectile weapons without a background check, it will make it perfectly legal for a domestic abuser—and other people convicted of violent and abhorrent crimes such as felony child molestation—to possess these weapons. While that might not be the intent of the bill authors, that will be the real-life impact.

H.R.2189/S.1283 will have another chilling unintended consequence: domestic abusers and others who are prohibited under federal law from possessing firearms will modify “less-than-lethal projectile devices” to circumvent federal laws and regulations, including those regulating so-called ‘ghost guns.’ In 2022, an adjudicated domestic abuser who was prohibited from possessing firearms used a ghost gun to murder his three daughters in a Sacramento church during a supervised visitation then murdered the chaperone and killed himself. Unable to pass a background check, he assembled his own firearm from untraceable gun parts which were unregulated at the time. Since that incident, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives issued a regulation, upheld by the United States Supreme Court in *Bondi v. Vanderstock*, to require background checks and serial numbers on unfinished frames and receivers and on some weapons parts kits. But only firearms frames and receivers are thus regulated, and removing “less-than-lethal projectile devices” from the definition of “firearm” in 18 USC 921(a) would also allow ghost guns modified from these devices to proliferate among individuals with criminal records. And since only firearms frames and receivers are regulated, kits to modify these devices into fully lethal projectile weapons would be entirely legal and unregulated. Plus, while the bill stipulates that “less-than-lethal projectile devices . . . must be designed and intended to be used in a manner that is not likely to cause death or serious bodily injury,” the bill fails to prohibit or even acknowledge the inevitable modification of “less-than-lethal projectile devices” into entirely-lethal projectile devices. Once again, adjudicated domestic abusers who are prohibited from possessing firearms under federal law would be legally permitted to possess a firearm-equivalent, with the same lethal capacity, due simply to semantics.

So, now, let us return to the depraved domestic and sexual violence offenders whose heinous acts were detailed in the opening paragraph. Despite their use of TASERs to physically and sexually abuse their intimate partners and the attendant criminal convictions that would prohibit them from possessing firearms, immediately upon their release from prison these individuals

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<sup>5</sup> Alhusen, J. L., Ray, E., Sharps, P., & Bullock, L. (2015). Intimate partner violence during pregnancy: Maternal and neonatal outcomes. *Journal of Women's Health*, 24(1). 100-106. doi: 10.1089/jwh.2014.4872

<sup>6</sup> Mehl, L. E. (1992). Electrical injury from taser and miscarriage. *Acta Obstetrica et Gynecologica Scandinavica*, 71(2), 118-123. doi: 10.3109/00016349209007967

would legally be permitted under federal law to acquire TASERs and other high-powered “less-than-lethal projectile devices” that today are classified as firearms. Moreover, once they obtained such weapons, there would be no barrier in federal law to obtain the necessary parts to modify them into lethal projectile weapons.

The purpose of this bill is truly perplexing. Not only will H.R.2189/S.1283 arm adjudicated domestic abusers and others who pose a danger to public safety, it in no way achieves its stated goals and is a solution in search of a problem. The federal classification of TASERs as firearms in no way precludes law enforcement agencies from accessing TASERs, just as it does not preclude them from accessing an array of “less-than-lethal” devices currently classified as firearms. Law enforcement agencies are easily able to procure firearms, including “less-than-lethal projective devices” currently classified as firearms, with many civilian requirements for purchasing firearms—and federal taxes—being waived. And contrary to a further argument in support of H.R.2189/S.1283, removing “less-than-lethal projectile devices” from the federal definition of a “firearm” will not decrease law enforcement’s liability for the use of deadly force. In terms of federal law, both regulations and courts have held that, on its own, the use of TASERs and other “less-than-lethal projectile devices” do not constitute deadly force. Moreover, even if that were not the case, changing the *federal* definition of a firearm to exclude TASERs and similar devices would in no way impact liability for using deadly force, because such liability outside the context of federal law enforcement is established in state and local law, which H.R.2189/S.1283 cannot alter.

So what, then, is the purpose of H.R.2189/S.1283? Perhaps it is to exempt individuals attempting to acquire TASERs and similar devices from undergoing a background check. In that case, the benefits to public safety are unclear, while we have amply demonstrated the risks. Perhaps an individual seeks to acquire such a device for self-protection. If the individual does not have a prohibiting record, they should be able to pass a firearms background check with no inconvenience to themselves—most firearms background checks take only a few minutes to complete. And if they do have a prohibiting record, for the safety not only of victims and survivors of domestic violence but for public safety more broadly, they should not have access to either a “less-than-lethal” device or a fully-lethal firearm.

For all of these reasons, we oppose H.R.2189/S.1283, and we urge you to oppose it as well. If you have any questions, please reach out to [rgraber@jwi.org](mailto:rgraber@jwi.org).

Sincerely,

Jewish Women International  
Catholics for Family Peace  
Illinois Accountability Initiative  
Just Solutions  
Legal Momentum  
National Domestic Violence Hotline