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Dems demand details from AG Bondi on Trump's directive to review gun regulations

The White House last month ordered the Justice Department to conduct a broad review of federal firearms regulations, a move which appeared aimed at walking back Biden-era gun control measures.

[BENJAMIN S. WEISS](#) / March 3, 2025



FILE - Assault weapons and hand guns are seen for sale at Capitol City Arms Supply on Jan. 16, 2013, in Springfield, Ill. (AP Photo/Seth Perlman, File)

WASHINGTON (CN) — House Democrats on Sunday demanded that the Justice Department explain how it plans to implement President Donald Trump's recent executive order for a whole-of-government review of federal firearms regulations.

And, writing in a letter to Attorney General Pam Bondi, the lawmakers sought to reaffirm Congress' role in writing — and changing — the country's gun control

laws.

The Trump administration last month directed the Justice Department to undertake a sweeping review of existing regulations, which it said was designed to determine whether there were any “ongoing infringements” of Second Amendment rights. The president instructed the agency in the executive order to sift through federal rules, guidance and international agreements, as well as other actions taken by the White House and executive agencies.

But in their letter to Bondi, obtained by Courthouse News, Democrats told the attorney general they were “confident” that the Justice Department’s survey would confirm that existing firearms regulations are constitutionally sound, so long as the review was conducted “objectively and in good faith.”

“There is plainly no need for any new plan of action to, in the words of the executive order, ‘protect the Second Amendment rights of all Americans,’” read the letter, penned by Maryland Representative Jamie Raskin, ranking member of the House Judiciary Committee, and Georgia Representative Lucy McBath, who serves as the No. 1 Democrat on the panel’s crime and government surveillance subcommittee.

In the order, the Trump administration specifically directed the Justice Department to examine firearms regulations promulgated by the president and federal agencies between January 2021 and January 2025, a provision which put the Biden administration’s gun control efforts squarely in the crosshairs.

Former President Joe Biden took several steps during his term aimed at reducing gun violence, including a raft of executive orders clamping down on emerging firearms technology and raising background check requirements for gun purchases. Biden also signed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act in 2022, a bill which again hiked standards for purchasing firearms and funded state-level gun control programs.

Though Trump’s executive order does not specifically request a review of gun control legislation, House Democrats on Sunday thumped the Safer Communities Act as an example of what they said was Congress’ power to legislate firearms regulations. They positioned the bill as part of a century of gun control measures that have given the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives the authority to make rules that have “prevented violent crime and saved lives.”

“Our courts have repeatedly agreed that Congress has the authority to regulate the sale and use of firearms and that these regulations do not violate the Second Amendment,” the lawmakers told Bondi. “And while every administration has enforced our nation’s firearms laws to help keep us safe, any changes to those laws must come from Congress.”

The House Democrats also took particular issue with the executive order’s stipulation that the Justice Department examine the ATF’s 2023 enhanced regulatory enforcement policy, which allows the firearms regulator to revoke licenses for gun dealers who violate federal law. They pointed out that, in the handful of years the policy has been in effect, less than 1% of gun dealers nationwide have had their licenses revoked.

“The ATF’s enhanced regulatory policy has not prevented a single American who may lawfully possess a firearm from exercising his or her Second Amendment rights,” the lawmakers wrote.

The Democrats demanded that the Justice Department provide lawmakers with information about how it plans to determine whether federal regulations or international agreements violate the Second Amendment, and asked how the agency will ensure that any plan for altering or rolling back those restrictions will not increase the risk of gun deaths. They also requested that Bondi inform them whether the Justice Department plans to consult with stakeholders outside of the federal government as it reviews regulations and develops a plan of action.

And they pressured the agency to remain transparent during the process, asking Bondi if she would provide the department's plan of action to Congress within 30 days of transmitting it to the White House. The lawmakers also demanded to know whether the Justice Department would make such a plan — as well as its constitutional analysis of gun regulations — publicly available.

“The ability to be safe from gun violence is essential to the enjoyment of our foundational rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” the Democrats told the attorney general. “We cannot exercise any of our other most precious rights — the right to vote, the right to free speech, the right to worship freely, the right to peacefully assemble and indeed the right to keep and bear arms — unless we are alive and safe in our communities.”

The Justice Department did not immediately return a request for comment.

The Trump administration's February executive order was [hailed by gun rights advocates](#), said at the time that the directive was emblematic of the president's campaign promises to shield Second Amendment rights. John Commerford, director of the National Rifle Association's legislative advocacy section, said the regulations review would dismantle the work of the “anti-gun radical” Biden administration.

But gun control groups, such as Everytown for Gun Safety and Moms Demand Action, argued that Biden's actions were consistent with the Constitution.

Under the White House order, the Justice Department has until Friday to complete its review.

Renewed focus on federal gun regulations comes as the Supreme Court prepares this week [to begin reviewing Mexico's 2023 lawsuit](#) against a group of U.S. gun manufacturers who it has said knowingly facilitated the sale of firearms to drug cartels via third-party vendors.

The gunmakers, led by Smith & Wesson, have asked the high court to toss the case, citing a federal law that [shields firearms manufacturers from liability](#) for crimes committed using their products. Arguments are scheduled for Tuesday.

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