

Do Not Stand Idly By

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PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT LEADERS – PURCHASERS OF FIREARMS ON BEHALF OF 22 MILLION TAXPAYERS – JOIN FAITH AND CITIZEN LEADERS SEEKING DISCUSSIONS WITH GUN MANUFACTURERS –

“A NEW PATH FORWARD ON GUN SAFETY” –

DO NOT STAND IDLY BY CAMPAIGN ASKS MANUFACTURERS TO MAKE GUNS SAFER AND DISTRIBUTE THEM RESPONSIBLY

On Monday, a bloc of public-sector gun purchasers will submit a Request for Information (RFI) to major gun companies serving the United States market. Officials in 59 jurisdictions in 13 states – mayors, governors, police chiefs, sheriffs and county executives – will ask seven manufacturers to provide information on their distribution practices, safety technologies, and cooperation with law enforcement. Participating officials represent 22 million Americans.

In coordinated actions in several states (including Connecticut, Maryland, New York and Georgia), religious leaders and public officials will announce the query of manufacturers and send delegations to deliver it to the companies' headquarters. Monday's actions mark the beginning of a new stage in the *Do Not Stand Idly By* campaign, a national effort launched last year by the Metro Industrial Areas Foundation (Metro IAF) non-partisan citizens' organizing network.

Reverend Anthony Bennett, a Baptist pastor in Bridgeport, Connecticut and co-chair of the campaign, called Monday's events “the beginning of a long-overdue conversation about how the manufacturers can help reduce the unbearable toll of deaths and injuries associated with guns in America.”

Campaign co-chair Rabbi Joel Mosbacher of New Jersey described the campaign as “a new path forward on gun safety, created by citizens and faith leaders across the country who are determined to find common ground and practical solutions.”

“More than Congress, more than the President, the people with the ability to do the most good in this area are the CEO’s of the companies that make and distribute guns in America,” Rabbi Mosbacher said. “And the people who are in the best position to start this conversation with the gun companies are their customers in the public sector.”

According to reports by market research firm IBISWorld, the public sector buys 40 percent of the guns and ammunition sold in the United States. The *Do Not Stand Idly By* campaign seeks to use this purchasing power to leverage change in how guns are made and distributed.

“Every gun purchased with taxpayer dollars is purchased for one reason,” Rabbi Mosbacher said, “and that is to keep Americans safe. So we’ve gathered public officials from across the country who want to work together to make sure we’re getting the greatest amount of safety possible for those expenditures.”

Rev. Bennett will chair a news conference Monday in Bridgeport – a city hit hard by gun violence, and located near the heart of the U.S. gun industry. Participants will include Bridgeport Mayor Bill Finch and two key officials from Newtown – First Selectman Patricia Llodra and Chief of Police Michael Kehoe. “In Newtowns and Bridgeports across America, there is a determination to stop standing idly by while 30,000 of our neighbors die each year from acts of gun violence,” Rev. Bennett said. “We want the leaders of the gun industry to share that determination.” (The campaign’s name comes from a passage in the Book of Leviticus: *Do not stand idly by while your neighbor’s blood is shed.*)

From the Bridgeport event, delegations will be sent to deliver the Request for Information to three major gun manufacturers with headquarters in the area. Nationwide, the RFI will be submitted to the following companies:

- Glock (Austria-based, with U.S. headquarters in Smyrna, GA)
- SIG Sauer (Germany-based, with U.S. headquarters in Exeter, NH)
- Smith & Wesson (based in Springfield, MA)
- Colt’s Manufacturing Co. (based in West Hartford, CT)
- Beretta (Italy-based, with U.S. offices in Accokeek, MD)
- Sturm, Ruger & Co. (based in Southport, CT)
- Freedom Group (owned by Cerberus Capital Management, based in NYC)

Sheriff Tom Dart of Cook County, Illinois said that the RFI is “a set of reasonable questions that any law enforcement officer or agency should know about the companies they buy their guns from. If we can identify the leaders in gun safety and responsible distribution, this will put optimal law enforcement technology in the hands of Cook County officers at a reasonable cost to taxpayers.”

The RFI seeks responses by December 31, 2014.