

United States Senate

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August 09, 2019

Sundar Pichai, CEO
Google, Inc.
1600 Amphitheatre parkway
Mountain View, CA 94043

Dear Mr. Pichai:

We write to urge you to immediately implement stronger measures to keep gun accessory sales off your platform. America is in the throes of a gun violence epidemic and it is incumbent upon corporate America to do its part to help end the carnage.

Since 2012, Google Shopping has prohibited sellers from listing guns and gun accessories for sale.¹ Unfortunately, it appears as though Google's efforts to enforce this policy are insufficient. For example, *The Trace* reports that a search on August 5, 2019 found "a 100-round drum magazine nearly identical to the one used by a mass shooter in Dayton, Ohio, on August 4."² A search by *The Washington Post*, also on August 5, returned listings for boxes of shotgun rounds such as the 20-round Hornady Critical Defense set, described on the manufacturer's website as able to "place all projectiles on a man-sized target at seven yards" and "provide excellent penetration."³ This is not a new problem. *Newsweek* reported in March 2018 that when consumers using Google Shopping searched "handgun," results returned a message saying, "Your search - handgun - did not match any shopping results". Yet, if users switched around a few of those letters, like searching "handgnu" or another misspelling, that platform would populate with firearms for sale.⁴ Clearly, Google must do more to keep these items off its platform.

We applaud Google Shopping for refusing to service online firearm and ammunition purchases. This is exactly the type of common sense gun policy that enjoys broad support with the American public. Unfortunately, it is not enough to simply ban such sales. Effective monitoring and the suspension of accounts in violation of these policies is essential. As such, we have concerns that Google's efforts are falling short of what is required in light of the current crisis.

¹ <https://www.newsweek.com/google-blocked-gun-shopping-does-it-work-827109>;
<https://support.google.com/merchants/answer/6150004?hl=en>

² <https://www.thetrace.org/2019/08/google-shopping-high-capacity-magazine-dayton-shooting/>

³ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2019/08/06/google-amazon-prohibit-firearm-parts-listings-its-easy-find-them-anyway/>

⁴ <https://www.newsweek.com/google-blocked-gun-shopping-does-it-work-827109>

To address these concerns, please provide answers to the following questions no later than September 9, 2019:

1. On average, how many listings for gun and/or gun accessory sales does Google take down per month?
2. On average, how many accounts does Google suspend for violating the gun sale policy per month?
3. What measures does Google have in place to ensure that if an account is suspended for violating the gun sale policy, that seller cannot create another account under a different username?
4. What proactive measures does Google take to ensure that users are not able to skirt Google Shopping's ban on gun sales?
5. What policies does Google have in place to alert law enforcement to instances of gun trafficking on its platforms?
6. How does Google handle reports from users alerting it to listings for gun and/or gun accessory sales on Google Shopping? On average how many instances of gun sales are flagged by users each month?
7. Given that Google Shopping searches conducted mere days after the attacks in El Paso and Dayton yielded results for high-capacity magazines and shotgun rounds, please describe in detail what new measures Google will implement to ensure these products are kept off of its platform.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez

United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal

United States Senator



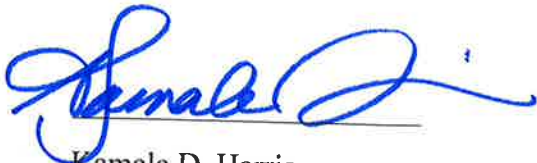
Amy Klobuchar

United States Senator



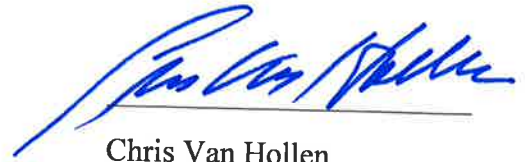
Mazie K. Hirono

United States Senator



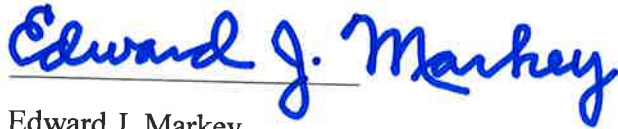
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