



North Dakota Legislative Council

Prepared for the Judiciary Committee
LC# 23.9108.01000
August 2021

FIREARM AND AMMUNITION SHORTAGE

[House Concurrent Resolution No. 3021 \(2021\)](#) provides for a study of the factors contributing to the nation's firearm and ammunition shortage and the impact the shortage has had on the quality of life for North Dakota citizens. The study must also include the development of a plan of action to resolve the state's firearm and ammunition shortage.

BACKGROUND

Testimony during the hearings for House Concurrent Resolution No. 3021 indicated the United States is experiencing a shortage of firearms and ammunition. Testimony further indicated the shortage may be the result of a lack of raw materials necessary to manufacture both firearms and ammunition. The shortage began in the 1st quarter of 2020 as the effects of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic impacted supply lines for raw materials and components such as lead, copper, brass, and gunpowder while at the same time retailers experienced a surge in demand for firearms and ammunition. Since 2019, the number of individuals applying for a Federal National Instant Criminal Background Check to purchase a firearm increased 39 percent from the previous year with approximately 8 million first-time gun owners in the United States in 2020.

Although large manufacturers are running at maximum capacity, manufacturers face difficult decisions as there are significant costs associated with purchasing new machines and the cost for raw materials is high. Additional factors that may be contributing to the shortage is the bankruptcy, sale, and breakup of Remington, one of the world's largest ammunition manufacturers and one of the two full-line ammunition manufacturers in the country and the increase in protests and civil unrest in 2020.

SUGGESTED STUDY APPROACH

The committee may wish to proceed with the study by inviting stakeholders from firearm and ammunition manufacturers, representatives from state and local law enforcement, representatives from local and state firearm and ammunition dealers, and representatives from other interested parties to provide an update on the shortage of raw materials and finished products and, if possible, how to resolve the shortage for the citizens of North Dakota.