



## Downloads of 3D-Printed Firearms Increase After Judge Tries to Stop Them

A federal judge's [ruling](#) to limit the transfer of files allowing citizens to print their own guns using 3-D technology has resulted in exactly the opposite: The number of downloads of those files has exploded since his ruling in August.

It was Western Washington's District Court Judge Robert Lasnik who ordered the settlement between the Justice Department and Cody Wilson's company Defense Distributed to be suspended. He should have known better. He and other gun-grabbers such as New Jersey Governor Chris Murphy and Massachusetts Democrat Edward Markey are trying to play catch-up and instead are falling farther and farther behind.



It isn't that gun grabbers haven't tried. Within days of Cody Wilson displaying in May 2013 the single-shot pistol that he built using software and a 3-D printer (which he appropriately called "The Liberator") the Obama administration's Department of Justice demanded he take down those files.

It was too late. By the time Wilson got the letter and took down those offending files, they had been downloaded hundreds of thousands of times. Replication and echo websites around the world continued the multiplication process. The genie of firearms freedom was out of the bottle.

Wilson went on to other ventures. But in 2015 his company teamed up with the Second Amendment Foundation (SAF) to sue the Department of Justice, complaining that the department had violated Wilson's First Amendment-guaranteed right to free speech.

Fast forward to late July this year. Without fanfare the Department of Justice not only settled the lawsuit with Wilson and his company, it agreed to pay a large part of his legal fees as well.

Wilson was naturally delighted and put his people back to work on developing more files for more firearms to be made available for free for anyone who wanted them through his company. Said Wilson: "I have developers for anything and everything, some of the best talent in the world.... It's all ready to go. I have interested stakeholders [and] a large network [of supporters who] care about what I do.... I am the internet."

At *The New American*, we called the settlement a "rare and remarkable retreat":

Surprisingly the U.S. Justice Department offered to settle the case, surrendering its pursuit of Cody and his code...

The long and short of the Justice Department's rare and remarkable retreat is that publishing code that can be used to print a weapon capable of firing ammunition is now a constitutionally protected



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on December 26, 2018

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expression of free speech!...

It's three years on and we have found out. We've found that in our day, firearms may be manufactured in diverse ways, and, as of July 10, 2018, using computer code to command a printer to produce a three-dimensional gun is [now] constitutionally protected free speech.

That is indeed a victory for liberty.

Alan Gottlieb of the SAF said the decision by the DOJ wasn't political as much as it was practical. In court, the DOJ was likely to lose, and the department didn't want to set a precedent. Said Gottlieb:

We asked for the Moon [figuring that] the government would reject it, but they didn't want to go to trial. The government fought us all the way and then all of a sudden folded their tent.

These were all career people [in the DOJ] that we were dealing with. I don't think there was anything political about it.

Wilson's attorney Josh Blackman agreed: "They were going to lose this case. If the government litigated this case and they lost, this decision could be used to challenge other kinds of gun control laws [in the future]."

Enter Judge Lasnik. His ruling suspended the settlement but it didn't faze Wilson. He read Lasnik's ruling: "Regulation under the (Arms Export Control Act of 1976) means that the files cannot be uploaded to the internet but they can be emailed, mailed, securely transmitted, or otherwise published within the United States." So now Wilson is selling his software instead of giving it away. He lets them set their own price and then emails or ships the code to them.

Wilson isn't the only beneficiary of gun-grabbers' attempts to shut down the flow of weapon-printing code. Within a single day of Lasnik's ruling the website CodeIsFreeSpeech.com, which posted eight sets of files, reported more than 100,000 hits and nearly 1.5 terabytes of data were downloaded. Brandon Combs, president of the Firearms Policy Coalition, which posted those files, said "Just in the past 48 hours I would be shocked if hundreds of thousands of people don't [now] possess these files." Combs gave credit to Wilson for opening the door: "Cody was the pioneer, and all credit goes to him and Defense Distributed. I just wanted to give the government another target, if that's what they want to do."

Anti-gunners are up in arms about all of this. New Jersey Governor Chris Murphy expressed his horror: "Ghost guns can be created by anyone with a computer and access to a 3D printer, giving the public at large the ability to build their own unregistered, unsafe and untraceable firearm." Massachusetts Democrat Senator Edward Markey was equally horrified at the turn of events: "That is absolute insanity to allow people to be able to download guns [sic: software] and then use them." When Markey was asked just how he would enforce laws prohibiting them since there were already so many files downloaded, he said the penalties "were still to be determined."

Wilson is delighted with Lasnik's ruling: "All that's happened here because of this judge's ruling is perhaps the doubling or tripling of the valuation of my own company," adding that "really what's at stake ... is simply the government's power to tell you what you can or can't have, or can or can't download online."

Thanks to the power of the Internet and the guarantees the Founders built into the Bill of Rights, gun-grabbers have been set back enormously in their efforts to disarm American citizens. That horse escaped from their barn years ago.



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*Image: Murat Göçmen via iStock / Getty Images Plus*

*An Ivy League graduate and former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at [LightFromTheRight.com](#), primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at [badelman@thenewamerican.com](mailto:badelman@thenewamerican.com).*

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