

# **Durbin, Duckworth Join Colleagues In Introducing Legislation To Ban Marketing Of Firearms To Children Through FTC Rulemaking**

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) joined U.S. Senator Edward J. Markey (D-MA) in introducing the *Protecting Kids from Gun Marketing Act*,

legislation that directs the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to prescribe rules that prohibit the marketing of firearms to children. The legislation comes as Americans suffered 52 mass shootings and 3,700 gun-related deaths across the United States in the first month of this year alone. There are restrictions on cigarette and tobacco advertising, on alcohol advertising, and on cannabis advertising, yet the firearms industry is not subject to any specific restrictions or limitations on their marketing practices.

For decades, gunmakers have marketed their automatic rifle-style guns, the weapon of choice in mass shootings, and other weapons, to children. These weapons include Chicago-based WEE1 Tactical's 'JR-15' assault-style weapon, marketed and sold as a child's version of the AR-15 assault rifle.

"It's disgraceful that companies like Wee 1 Tactical, which I'm sorry to say is based in Illinois, are peddling weapons that look like military-style rifles to children. They want more Americans to use these weapons, and they're trying to hook them when they're young. This kind of marketing is reckless. It's dangerous. And it needs to stop," said Durbin. "I join my colleagues in urging the Federal Trade Commission to put an end to this shameful marketing tactic."

"WEE1 Tactical has looked at elementary schoolers, has looked at our babies, and decided that making a few more dollars is worth the added risk to their lives," said Duckworth. "Every minute we let companies like this one try to trick our babies into buying weapons of war, we risk witnessing another classroom turning into a crime scene. Every moment we let this continue, we risk having to bury yet another first-grader in their favorite pair of Converse. We must end this sick marketing strategy—then we must ban the sale of military-style assault weapons altogether."

Specifically, the *Protecting Kids from Gun Marketing Act* would:

1. Direct the FTC to promulgate a rule prohibiting the marketing of firearms to minors;
2. Require the FTC to report to Congress on enforcement of the rule;
3. Authorize state attorneys general to bring actions for violations of the rule; and
4. Establish a private right of action for individuals to bring actions for violation of the rule.

Joining Durbin, Duckworth, and Markey in introducing this legislation are U.S. Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-CT.), Chris Murphy (D-CT.), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA.), Alex Padilla (D-CA), Bob Casey (D-PA), Jack Reed (D-RI), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Mazie Hirono (D-HI).

Last week, Durbin and Duckworth, along with Markey, Blumenthal, Padilla, Murphy, and Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), held a press conference [urging the FTC](#) to investigate WEE1 Tactical's JR-15 marketing and advertising tactics.

The *Protecting Kids from Gun Marketing Act* is endorsed by March For Our Lives, Violence Policy Center, Giffords, Brady, and Everytown.

"There's no world in which deadly firearms manufacturers should advertise guns to children," said Zeenat Yahya, Policy Director, March For Our Lives. "Unsecured access to guns has killed far too many children and young people over the years. The very idea that gun manufacturers want to take advantage of young people by targeting young people who aren't even old enough to drive with ads that sell deadly weapons is sickening. While gun manufacturers profits soar, guns have become the leading cause of death for young people for the second year in a row. That isn't a coincidence. It's time for Congress to take a stand and defend young peoples' lives against an immoral industry practice, and we're pleased to stand with Senator Markey and our congressional partners in the introduction of this bill."

"The gun industry's deceptive and reckless marketing practices have real consequences: our nation's gun violence epidemic is worsening while the gun industry's profits soar. Promoting weapons to young people is especially heinous considering that guns are now the number one cause of death for children. We applaud Senator Markey for introducing the Protecting Kids from Gun Marketing Act to crack down on gunmakers' irresponsible advertising targeting youth and urge the Senate and Congress to pass it swiftly," said Adzi Vokhiwa, Federal Affairs Director, Giffords.

"Few Americans are aware that there is an ongoing, coordinated effort by the gun lobby and firearms industry targeting America's children and teens. Imagine the public outcry if the alcohol or tobacco industries introduced child-friendly versions of their adult products. Senator Markey's legislation is an important step forward to expose and halt the gun industry's outrageous conduct," said Josh Sugarmann, Executive Director, Violence Policy Center.