



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT

Taylor Maxwell, Berlin Rosen: 646-200-5330 or Taylor.Maxwell@berlinrosen.com

MOMS DEMAND ACTION LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN ASKING FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM TO PROHIBIT GUN SALES AND TRADES

Facebook and Instagram Facilitate an Unregulated Online Marketplace that Make it Easy for Criminals to Get Guns

(Indianapolis, IN) Jan. 27, 2014 – Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America launched a campaign today asking Facebook and Instagram to immediately enact a policy prohibiting all sales and trades of firearms on their platforms. Unlike other online platforms, including eBay and Craigslist, Facebook and Instagram allow gun sales and trades – making them an unregulated online marketplace where felons, domestic abusers, and other dangerous people can easily obtain firearms.

“Facebook and Instagram are effectively hosting online gun shows—allowing private sales and trades that are not subject to background checks,” said Shannon Watts, founder of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. “It requires more information to open a Facebook account than it does to purchase a gun in a private sale on their platform.”

The campaign will shine a light on the vast, unregulated market for private gun sales on the internet. An estimated 6.6 million gun transfers occur every year without a background check, many through online transactions such as those initiated on Facebook and Instagram. In 2011, the [City of New York conducted an unprecedented undercover investigation](#) of private firearm sales online by determining whether private sellers advertising guns for sale on the Internet are complying with federal law to refuse to sell to people who could not pass a background check. The disturbing results were that 62 percent of private gun sellers on the Internet agreed to sell a firearm to buyers who said they probably couldn’t pass a background check. As further evidence of the dangers of how private gun sales allow criminals to easily get their hands on guns – a national survey of incarcerated firearm offenders found that nearly 80 percent of the inmates who used a gun in a crime said they acquired it from a person who was not a licensed dealer.

-more-

“American moms are among the most frequent and loyal users of Facebook and Instagram. We call on Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Instagram CEO Kevin Systrom to keep our social networks safe—online and offline—by closing the private sale loophole they enable on their sites,” said Watts.

Moms Demand Action is asking its members to pressure both companies by:

- Posting comments on the public Facebook pages of [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) demanding that they ban gun sales and trades on their platforms, using the hashtag #EndFacebookGunShows
- Tweeting @Facebook and @Instagram with the hashtags #EndFacebookGunShows #GunSense and #MomsDemand. Members can visit Moms Demand Action’s Fast Tweet page to easily send pre-formatted tweets: <http://mcrbt.net/tweetendfbgunshows>
- Sharing memes on Facebook and Instagram: <https://mcrbt.net/fbgunshowsgraphics>
- Signing a petition asking the CEOs of Facebook and Instagram to immediately enact policies prohibiting private sales: <http://mcrbt.net/petitionendfbgunshows>

Other online marketplaces including eBay and Craigslist already prohibit gun sales on their sites – and Facebook and Instagram already prohibit certain content in the interest of public safety and welfare but not the gun sales that put them at risk of becoming networks that enable dangerous people to buy guns with no questions asked. Facebook’s terms of use prohibits hate speech; bullying and threats; content that incites violence and other inappropriate content. Instagram’s terms of use prohibits users from posting photos that are “violent, nude, partially nude, discriminatory, unlawful, infringing, hateful, pornographic or sexually suggestive.” In addition, Facebook and Instagram do not allow ads that promote or feature smoking, but they do allow users to run ads promoting guns and gun sales.

“Private gun sales between anonymous parties are a clear threat to public safety, and must be added to the list of prohibited content,” said Watts. “We are shocked and disappointed that the platforms we use to share photos of our children and stay connected to friends and family are also being used for unregulated gun sales and trades.”

According to Edison Research’s Moms and Media 2013 report, seven out of 10 American moms have a Facebook profile, and there are more than 1,000 mommy groups, public and private. Of all the demographic niches on Facebook, moms check in the most: an average of 5.1 times a day.

“Even though Congress has failed to enact laws requiring background checks for private gun sales, including those initiated online, Facebook and Instagram can still do the right thing and help close that loophole by immediately enacting policies to prohibit all gun sales and trades on their platforms.”

About Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America

Much like Mothers Against Drunk Driving was created to change laws regarding drunk driving, Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America was created to build support for common-sense gun reforms. The nonpartisan grassroots movement of American mothers is demanding new and stronger solutions to lax gun laws and loopholes that jeopardize the safety of our children and families. In just one year, the organization has more than 130,000 members with a chapter in every state in the country. The group recently joined forces with [Mayors Against Illegal Guns](#), the largest gun violence prevention organization in the country. For more information or to get involved visit www.momsdemandaction.org. Follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/MomsDemandAction or on Twitter @MomsDemand

###