

118TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 7799

To provide for an annual report on the prosecution activities of the Coordinator for Caribbean Firearms Prosecutions of the Department of Justice.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 22, 2024

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK (for herself and Mr. CASTRO of Texas) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

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## A BILL

To provide for an annual report on the prosecution activities of the Coordinator for Caribbean Firearms Prosecutions of the Department of Justice.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Caribbean Arms Traf-  
5 ficking Causing Harm Act” or the “CATCH Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds as follows:

8 (1) According to a 2023 joint report by the  
9 Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for

1 Crime and Security (IMPACS) and the Small Arms  
2 Survey, the average number of violent deaths in the  
3 Caribbean is nearly triple the global average.

4 (2) According to the United Nations Office on  
5 Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in 2021, Caribbean  
6 countries accounted for six of the world's top ten  
7 highest national murder rates.

8 (3) Law enforcement officials in Haiti, Antigua  
9 and Barbuda, and Jamaica have identified Florida  
10 as a significant source of illicit firearms.

11 (4) According to the United Nations, Caribbean  
12 countries do not manufacture firearms or ammuni-  
13 tion, nor do they import them on a large scale.

14 (5) According to Bahamian officials, over 90  
15 percent of firearms used in homicides and con-  
16 fiscated by authorities in the Bahamas are traced to  
17 manufacturers and retailers in the United States.

18 (6) In 2022, the Department of Homeland Se-  
19 curity's Homeland Security Investigations reported  
20 observing a significant increase in the quantity, cal-  
21 iber, and type of firearms being illegally trafficked  
22 to the Caribbean, including .50 caliber sniper rifles,  
23 .308 rifles, and a belt fed machine gun.

24 (7) According to a 2023 assessment by  
25 UNODC, the flow of illicit firearms into Haiti en-

1       ables violent gangs and contributes to forced dis-  
2       placement across the country.

3               (8) According to the Migration Policy Institute,  
4       there has been a dramatic increase in migration to  
5       the United States from Haiti in recent years, caused  
6       in part by widespread gang violence.

7               (9) On June 25, 2022, President Joe Biden  
8       signed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act into  
9       law, which created Federal criminal offenses for fire-  
10      arm trafficking and granted the government new au-  
11      thorities to prosecute these offenses.

12              (10) On November 14, 2022, the IMPACS  
13      launched the Crime Gun Intelligence Unit in part-  
14      nership with United States law enforcement agen-  
15      cies.

16              (11) Located in Trinidad and Tobago, the  
17      Crime Gun Intelligence Unit provides intelligence for  
18      its member states on illicit firearms and ammuni-  
19      tion.

20              (12) On June 8, 2023, Vice President Kamala  
21      Harris announced that “the Department of Justice  
22      will name a Coordinator for Caribbean Firearms  
23      Prosecutions who will be an experienced Department  
24      of Justice prosecutor”.

1           (13) On July 5, 2023, Secretary of State  
2 Antony Blinken announced that Michael Ben’Ary  
3 will serve as the Coordinator for Caribbean Firearms  
4 Prosecutions.

5           (14) As of October 31, 2023, the Department  
6 of Justice has prosecuted 207 defendants for fire-  
7 arms trafficking, including 80 defendants for mak-  
8 ing straw purchases, using authorities derived from  
9 the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act.

10 **SEC. 3. PURPOSES.**

11 The purposes of this Act include the following:

12           (1) To combat illicit firearms trafficking from  
13 the United States to the Caribbean.

14           (2) To bolster the security of the Caribbean re-  
15 gion and the United States.

16           (3) To increase oversight of the Coordinator for  
17 Caribbean Firearms Prosecutions inside the Depart-  
18 ment of Justice.

19 **SEC. 4. REPORT ON THE PROSECUTIONS ACTIVITIES OF**  
20 **THE COORDINATOR FOR CARIBBEAN FIRE-**  
21 **ARMS PROSECUTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT**  
22 **OF JUSTICE.**

23           (a) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “appro-  
24 priate congressional committees” means—

1           (1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the  
2 House of Representatives;

3           (2) the Committee on the Judiciary of the  
4 House of Representatives;

5           (3) the Committee on Homeland Security of the  
6 House of Representatives;

7           (4) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the  
8 Senate;

9           (5) the Committee on the Judiciary of the Sen-  
10 ate; and

11           (6) the Committee on Homeland Security and  
12 Governmental Affairs of the Senate.

13       (b) REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 90 days after the  
14 date of the enactment of this Act, and each year thereafter  
15 for 5 years, the Attorney General, in coordination with the  
16 Secretary of State, and any other agency determined nec-  
17 essary by the Attorney General, shall submit a report to  
18 the appropriate congressional committees that includes,  
19 for the previous year—

20           (1) a comprehensive review of the enforcement  
21 of sections 932 and 933 of title 18, United States  
22 Code, by the Coordinator for Caribbean Firearms  
23 Prosecutions of the Department of Justice; and

24           (2) specifies—

1 (A) the total number of investigations and  
2 prosecutions launched by the Coordinator for  
3 Caribbean Firearms Prosecutions,  
4 disaggregated by—

5 (i) the judicial district involved;

6 (ii) the alleged destination of the fire-  
7 arm, ammunition, and firearm accessories,  
8 as applicable;

9 (iii) the number and types of firearms,  
10 ammunition, and firearm accessories, to  
11 the extent the information is available; and

12 (iv) the method of transportation of  
13 the firearm, ammunition, and firearm ac-  
14 cessories, to the extent the information is  
15 available;

16 (B) coordination efforts of the Department  
17 of Justice with the Department of State, the  
18 Department of Homeland Security, and any  
19 other Federal, State, or local law enforcement  
20 agencies; and

21 (C) coordination efforts of the Department  
22 of Justice with the Caribbean Crime Gun Intel-  
23 ligence Unit of the Caribbean Community (com-  
24 monly referred to as “CARICOM”), and any

1 other regional or international organizations de-  
2 termined necessary by the Secretary of State.

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