



(Original Signature of Member)

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. _____

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

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mrs. CHERFILUS-McCORMICK introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

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:

1 (1) According to a 2023 joint report by the
2 Caribbean Community Implementation Agency for
3 Crime and Security (IMPACS) and the Small Arms
4 Survey, the average number of violent deaths in the
5 Caribbean is nearly triple the global average.

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

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

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

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

20 (6) In 2022, the Department of Homeland Se-
21 curity's Homeland Security Investigations reported
22 observing a significant increase in the quantity, cal-
23 iber, and type of firearms being illegally trafficked
24 to the Caribbean, including .50 caliber sniper rifles,
25 .308 rifles, and a belt fed machine gun.

1 (7) According to a 2023 assessment by
2 UNODC, the flow of illicit firearms into Haiti en-
3 ables violent gangs and contributes to forced dis-
4 placement across the country.

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

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

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

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

22 (12) On June 8, 2023, Vice President Kamala
23 Harris announced that “the Department of Justice
24 will name a Coordinator for Caribbean Firearms

1 Prosecutions who will be an experienced Department
2 of Justice prosecutor”.

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

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

12 **SEC. 3. PURPOSES.**

13 The purposes of this Act include the following:

14 (1) To combat illicit firearms trafficking from
15 the United States to the Caribbean.

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

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

1 **SEC. 4. REPORT ON THE PROSECUTIONS ACTIVITIES OF**
2 **THE COORDINATOR FOR CARIBBEAN FIRE-**
3 **ARMS PROSECUTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT**
4 **OF JUSTICE.**

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

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

9 (2) the Committee on the Judiciary of the
10 House of Representatives;

11 (3) the Committee on Homeland Security of the
12 House of Representatives;

13 (4) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the
14 Senate;

15 (5) the Committee on the Judiciary of the Sen-
16 ate; and

17 (6) the Committee on Homeland Security and
18 Governmental Affairs of the Senate.

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

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

5 (2) specifies—

6 (A) the total number of investigations and
7 prosecutions launched by the Coordinator for
8 Caribbean Firearms Prosecutions,
9 disaggregated by—

10 (i) the judicial district involved;

11 (ii) the alleged destination of the fire-
12 arm, ammunition, and firearm accessories,
13 as applicable;

14 (iii) the number and types of firearms,
15 ammunition, and firearm accessories, to
16 the extent the information is available; and

17 (iv) the method of transportation of
18 the firearm, ammunition, and firearm ac-
19 cessories, to the extent the information is
20 available;

21 (B) coordination efforts of the Department
22 of Justice with the Department of State, the
23 Department of Homeland Security, and any
24 other Federal, State, or local law enforcement
25 agencies; and

1 (C) coordination efforts of the Department
2 of Justice with the Caribbean Crime Gun Intel-
3 ligence Unit of the Caribbean Community (com-
4 monly referred to as “CARICOM”), and any
5 other regional or international organizations de-
6 termined necessary by the Secretary of State.