



## MAJORITY SUPPORT FOR SHAREHOLDER PROPOSAL AT STURM RUGER SHOWS GROWING INVESTOR CONCERN WITH GUN VIOLENCE

***Proposal requesting reporting on efforts to improve gun safety garners majority support at today's annual meeting in Prescott, AZ***

**NEW YORK, NY – WEDNESDAY, MAY 9<sup>TH</sup>, 2018** - Amid mounting public attention to the role played by military, assault-style weapons in recent acts of public violence like the school shooting in Parkland, FL, shareholders voted today on a proposal requesting a report on what activities, if any, Sturm Ruger is taking to promote gun safety.

A majority of shareholders supported the resolution, sending a strong message to Sturm Ruger's board that business as usual is insufficient given the current climate, and that new safety standards responding to the risks guns pose for society are needed.

The shareholder vote was also a signal of growing unease amid calls for investors to either engage constructively with gun companies on the topic of gun violence or divest portfolios of gun stocks.

In response to public pressure, national gun retailers are imposing greater restrictions for guns sold to the public and clearing their shelves of the most dangerous, assault-style weapons and accessories. Moreover, banks, credit card companies, institutional investors and large asset managers are all reassessing their relationships with the industry.

At the shareholder meeting, Colleen Scanlon of Catholic Health Initiatives, lead filer of the proposal, asked the board to describe actions Sturm Ruger is taking to design and manufacture safer guns and accessories, and any other safety measures the company is undertaking to mitigate the reputational and financial risks it faces as a result of episodes of gun violence.

Said Scanlon, ***"Although Sturm Ruger has in the past asserted its support of gun safety measures, we see no evidence of the company's efforts to produce safer gun products for use by the public."***

Investors see gun violence as a human rights concern. The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights clearly articulate corporations' responsibility to protect, respect and remedy human rights abuses within their operations and value chains. As episodes of gun violence persist, investors argue Sturm Ruger must ensure that it is actively seeking solutions to mitigate the human rights impacts associated with its products.

Sr. Judy Byron representing the Sisters of the Holy Names who co-filed the resolution at Sturm Ruger said, ***"We believe the board has a responsibility to implement policies and practices that will safeguard the lives of its customers and, more broadly, society. Too many lives have been lost to gun***

***violence for the manufacturers of these products to wash their hands of their responsibility in these events."***

Members of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility purchased stock two years ago in gun manufacturers Sturm Ruger and American Outdoor Brands and gun retailer Dick's Sporting Goods, with the intention of engaging the companies on ways to promote gun safety. After constructive dialogue with Dick's, the company stopped selling assault-style weapons and increased the minimum age required to purchase a gun. Dick's further announced late last week that it would begin lobbying for common sense gun laws at the federal level.

A recent Quinnipiac Poll shows public support for sensible gun policy at an all-time high. Background checks are now favored by 95% of the population likely to vote. Survey participants also supported: a ban on sales of assault weapons (65%); a ban on sales of guns to people convicted of a violent crime (91%); banning gun modifications that convert weapons to fully automatic capabilities (74%); and stricter regulations on ammunition sales (62%).

***"Shareholder support for ICCR's resolution is very encouraging, and shows the breadth of concern about gun violence,"*** said Rev. J. Michael Solberg, Senior Pastor, The Union Church of Hinsdale and leader in Metro IAF's *Do Not Stand Idly By* campaign, who attended today's shareholder meeting.

***"Metro IAF has asked similar questions of Sturm Ruger for three years, and now the pressure is growing for them to give answers. Sturm Ruger needs to take their responsibilities seriously for public safety to ensure future profitability. We encourage them to face these issues and be part of the solution."***

Continued Scanlon, ***"The American public will continue to seek solutions to gun violence from all stakeholders, but they will look first to hold gun manufacturers accountable for the safety of their products. We are heartened by today's vote and look forward to dialoging with the company on ways to make episodes of gun violence a thing of the past."***

#### **About the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR)**

Celebrating its 47th year, ICCR is the pioneer coalition of shareholder advocates who engage corporations on their environmental and social impacts. Its 300 member organizations comprise faith communities, socially responsible asset managers, unions, pensions, NGOs and other socially responsible investors with combined assets of over \$400 billion. ICCR members engage hundreds of corporations annually in an effort to foster greater corporate accountability. [www.iccr.org](http://www.iccr.org)