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September 30, 2022

Joseph Bartozzi  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
National Shooting Sports Foundation  
Flintlock Ridge Office Center  
11 Mile Hill Road  
Newtown, CT 06470-2359

Dear Mr. Bartozzi:

I am writing to request more information about the way in which the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) and gun manufacturers utilize and maintain warranty information and other personally identifiable information (PII) that they appear to have used to identify lawful gun owners. As you know, Congress has oversight responsibilities over the firearms market and consumer privacy in our role to protect public safety and individual liberties.

According to documents released in 2020, NSSF contracted with Cambridge Analytica (CA) during the 2016 election cycle to assist in campaign work.<sup>1</sup> In the documents, a CA employee explains the NSSF engagement, in part, in a February 12, 2016 email:

. . . NSSF is a trade organization made up of all the gun manufacturers selling in the US. Each year, they run a large campaign aimed at ‘voter education’. They call it voter education to avoid the corporate proxy tax by directly endorsing any candidates and focusing on issues. Pat O’Malley, our contact with access to the money, has been running this campaign for them since 2002 and it has been almost entirely direct mail. Pat was leveraging a database of fire arms [sic] manufacturing warranty cards (collected by the fire arms companies) to determine his targeting in key states (millions of people, if they bought a gun, and what kind of gun they bought).<sup>2</sup>

The employee went on to describe that CA “would get data from NSSF, Cabela’s, Bass Pro Shops, and online gun retailers (every outdoorsmen or gun customer in 14 targets states” (sic), and underscored the importance of such data by writing “I can’t emphasize how big of a deal this

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<sup>1</sup> As you are no doubt aware, Cambridge Analytica has since disbanded, after facing several investigations for misusing user data, including accessing user Facebook accounts without authorization.

<sup>2</sup> “Gun Work,” 2/12/16, p. 536, Cambridge Analytica - Select 2016 Campaign-Related Documents. These documents are available online at <https://archive.org/details/ca-docs-with-redactions-sept-23-2020-4pm/>.

is for us”, and also that “the other upside [of the NSSF engagement] is we have an opportunity to impress the CEO’s of the largest gun companies in the world.” According to the same CA employee, the firm would “match” the data provided to it by the NSSF and “model it, enhance it with our gun data, and determine groups of persuadable voters who support gun rights and also turn them out to vote.” A separate CA document from September 2016 further noted, with respect to the NSSF engagement, that the firm was “in a process of obtaining more data from gun brokers.”<sup>3</sup>

The claim by Cambridge Analytica that NSSF maintains and leverages a database, akin to a registry, of gun owners’ personal information should come as a surprise to millions of law abiding gun owners, many of whom, undoubtedly, would never have consented for firearms manufacturers or retailers to retain, share, and expose their sensitive personal data for political purposes.

Given the implications on firearms regulation as well as consumer privacy protections and data security risks, Congress deserves a full explanation of the data collection process, the way the data was used, and the safeguards that NSSF put in place to protect the private information of gun owners. Please provide detailed answers to the following questions:

1. What was the nature of the relationship that existed between NSSF and CA or any of its subsidiaries, intermediaries, or affiliated entities, including the services provided by CA to the NSSF?
2. Please provide a copy of the contract between NSSF and CA pertaining the use, analysis and storage of gun owner data.
3. Please describe any data on gun owners or gun purchases that NSSF provided to Cambridge Analytica, including: (a) where the NSSF initially obtained that data; (b) whether the data provided included gun owners’ personal information; (c) whether the data included information about specific firearms purchases that gun owners made, such as brand and model information, and (d) what limitations were placed on how the data was used and distributed.
4. Please describe what happened to the database of gun owners CA collected after the election and the steps that were taken to protect this sensitive information from misuse or unauthorized disclosure.
5. Please describe how data on gun owners is stored by NSSF and what data security measures are taken to prevent unauthorized access to this personal information.
6. Please provide a comprehensive list of all individuals or entities to whom NSSF has provided information to regarding gunowners’ firearm purchases or warranty registrations, including any similar engagements to the NSSF-CA engagement, for voter education, voter registration, or election work after the 2016 election cycle.

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<sup>3</sup> Cambridge Analytica Projects Meeting, 9/12/16, p. 734, Cambridge Analytica - Select 2016 Campaign-Related Documents.

7. Documents indicate the NSSF's engagement with Cambridge Analytica started on April 5, 2016, the same day that Cambridge Analytica also began a project with the National Rifle Association (NRA).<sup>4</sup> Documents also indicate that certain Cambridge Analytica employees worked on both engagements during the course of the 2016 election, with another email indicating the NRA's lobbyist Patrick O'Malley was a decision-maker on the NRA project. Please describe the NSSF's knowledge of the Cambridge-NRA engagement during the 2016 election cycle, and if applicable, NSSF's involvement and/or coordination with the Cambridge-NRA engagement.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request. I look forward to your reply no later than October 20, 2022.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard Blumenthal". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Richard" being the most prominent.

Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator

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<sup>4</sup> Cambridge Analytica Projects Meeting, 9/12/16, p. 734, Cambridge Analytica - Select 2016 Campaign-Related Documents.