

November 1, 2024

David Reece  
Chief Executive Officer  
Armored Republic Holdings, Inc.  
17431 North Black Canyon Highway  
Phoenix, Arizona 85023

Dear Mr. Reece,

In recent months, millions of children across America went back to school. School districts prepared their classrooms and parents took their children shopping for supplies. Sadly, this increasingly means purchasing products that promise to keep children safe from gun violence.<sup>1</sup> I write with concerns about the claims companies like yours have made regarding their allegedly bulletproof school supplies.

While it is tragic that school supplies that purport to protect our children from gun violence in the classroom are necessary, at least 139 instances of gunfire have occurred on K-12 school grounds so far in 2024 alone.<sup>2</sup> Eager to protect their children, parents are paying high prices, such as \$185 for a pencil case and \$149 for a “bulletproof backpack insert.”<sup>3</sup> And costs are even higher for school districts: desks marketed as bulletproof can cost up to ten times the price of a standard desk.<sup>4</sup>

Yet the manufacturers of these products frequently claim certifications that their products have not actually received.<sup>5</sup> Particularly worrying are false claims of certification by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, which neither tests nor certifies school products of any kind.<sup>6</sup> These phony certifications help justify the steep prices for “bulletproof” products while giving parents a fraudulent and unearned sense of security.

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<sup>1</sup> Emily Baumgaertner & Alex Kalman, “Bulletproofing America’s Classrooms,” *New York Times*, Sept. 18, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/09/18/science/bulletproofing-schools.html>.

<sup>2</sup> “Gunfire on School Grounds in the United States,” Everytown Research & Policy, last modified Sept. 4, 2024, <https://everytownresearch.org/maps/gunfire-on-school-grounds/>.

<sup>3</sup> “Tuffypacks 12” x 18” Level IIIA Bulletproof Backpack Insert,” Tuffypacks, available at <https://www.tuffypacks.com/products/tuffypacks-12-x-18-ballistic-shield-level-iiia-bulletproof-backpack-insert>; Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Dave Flessner, “First Line Furniture Creates Bullet-Proof Desks to Act as Shield Against Active Shooters,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, Dec. 1, 2019, <https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2019/nov/30/first-line-furniture-creates-bullet-proof-desks/>.

<sup>5</sup> Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

Your company is among those that have made such claims. Armored Republic claims its “Backpack Armor Insert” is “rated to Level IIIA” and “able to stop multiple rounds of .44 Magnum @ 1440 FPS and all lesser threats.”<sup>7</sup> “IIIA” is one of the levels of protection certified—for body armor, not school supplies—by the NIJ.<sup>8</sup> This unsupported claim of U.S. government approval suggest that your company is interested in profit, not children’s safety. And false promises with expensive price tags risk diverting resources and attention of school districts and parents away from solutions that are proven to help keep kids safe.

I therefore write to ask for a written response to the following questions by no later than November 22, 2024:

1. Does the NIJ certify your alleged “IIIA” products?
2. Does the NIJ test your alleged “IIIA” products?
3. Are your alleged “IIIA” products listed on the NIJ’s Compliant Products List for Ballistic Resistant Body Armor?
4. What, if any, testing is your claim of “IIIA” protection based upon?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
5. What, if any, testing does each individual alleged “IIIA” product receive before being shipped to consumers?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
6. What information is involved in the pricing of your alleged “IIIA” products?
  - a. What is the approximate markup of your alleged “IIIA” products?

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senate

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<sup>7</sup> “Backpack Armor Insert,” Armored Republic, <https://www.ar500armor.com/backpack-insert.html> (accessed Oct. 31, 2024).

<sup>8</sup> Justice Technology Information Center, “Understanding NIJ 0101.06 Armor Protection Levels,” <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/nlectc/250144.pdf> (accessed Oct. 18, 2024).

November 1, 2024

Gray Spate  
Certified Registered Agent  
Atomic Defense, LLC  
2491 Alluvial Avenue  
Clovis, California 93611

Dear Mr. Spate,

In recent months, millions of children across America went back to school. School districts prepared their classrooms and parents took their children shopping for supplies. Sadly, this increasingly means purchasing products that promise to keep children safe from gun violence.<sup>1</sup> I write with concerns about the claims companies like yours have made regarding their allegedly bulletproof school supplies.

While it is tragic that school supplies that purport to protect our children from gun violence in the classroom are necessary, at least 139 instances of gunfire have occurred on K-12 school grounds so far in 2024 alone.<sup>2</sup> Eager to protect their children, parents are paying high prices, such as \$185 for a pencil case and \$149 for a “bulletproof backpack insert.”<sup>3</sup> And costs are even higher for school districts: desks marketed as bulletproof can cost up to ten times the price of a standard desk.<sup>4</sup>

Yet the manufacturers of these products frequently claim certifications that their products have not actually received.<sup>5</sup> Particularly worrying are false claims of certification by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, which neither tests nor certifies school products of any kind.<sup>6</sup> These phony certifications help justify the steep prices for “bulletproof” products while giving parents a fraudulent and unearned sense of security.

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<sup>1</sup> Emily Baumgaertner & Alex Kalman, “Bulletproofing America’s Classrooms,” *New York Times*, Sept. 18, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/09/18/science/bulletproofing-schools.html>.

<sup>2</sup> “Gunfire on School Grounds in the United States,” Everytown Research & Policy, last modified Sept. 4, 2024, <https://everytownresearch.org/maps/gunfire-on-school-grounds/>.

<sup>3</sup> “Tuffypacks 12” x 18” Level IIIA Bulletproof Backpack Insert,” Tuffypacks, available at <https://www.tuffypacks.com/products/tuffypacks-12-x-18-ballistic-shield-level-iiia-bulletproof-backpack-insert>; Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Dave Flessner, “First Line Furniture Creates Bullet-Proof Desks to Act as Shield Against Active Shooters,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, Dec. 1, 2019, <https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2019/nov/30/first-line-furniture-creates-bullet-proof-desks/>.

<sup>5</sup> Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

Your company is among those that have made such claims. Atomic Defense’s “Bulletproof Backpack Insert” comes in various materials and levels of protection: “NIJ IIIA (3A) Stops Pistols,” “NIJ III+ (3+) Stops AR-15 & AK-47 (Ceramic),” “NIJ III+ (3+) Stops AR-15 & AK-47 (PEAD 22% Lighter),” and “NIJ IV(4) Stops Armor Piercing.”<sup>7</sup> “IIIA,” “III+,” and “IV” are three of the levels of protection certified—for body armor, not school supplies—by the NIJ.<sup>8</sup> This unsupported claim of U.S. government approval suggest that your company is interested in profit, not children’s safety. And false promises with expensive price tags risk diverting resources and attention of school districts and parents away from solutions that are proven to help keep kids safe.

I therefore write to ask for a written response to the following questions by no later than November 22, 2024:

1. Does the NIJ certify your alleged “IIIA,” “III+,” or “IV” products?
2. Does the NIJ test your alleged “IIIA,” “III+,” or “IV” products?
3. Are your alleged “IIIA,” “III+,” or “IV” products listed on the NIJ’s Compliant Products List for Ballistic Resistant Body Armor?
4. What, if any, testing are your claims of “IIIA,” “III+,” or “IV” protection based upon?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
5. What, if any, testing does each individual alleged “IIIA,” “III+,” or “IV” product receive before being shipped to consumers?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
6. What information is involved in the pricing of your alleged “IIIA,” “III+,” or “IV” products?
  - a. What is the approximate markup of your alleged “IIIA,” “III+,” or “IV” products?

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senate

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<sup>7</sup> “Bulletproof Backpack Insert,” Atomic Defense, <https://www.atomicdefense.com/products/armor-plate-inserts> (accessed Oct. 18, 2024).

<sup>8</sup> Justice Technology Information Center, “Understanding NIJ 0101.06 Armor Protection Levels,” <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/nlectc/250144.pdf> (accessed Oct. 18, 2024).

November 1, 2024

Joseph Curran  
Chief Executive Officer  
MJ Safety Solutions, LLC d/b/a BulletBlocker  
70 Wilbur Street  
Lowell, Massachusetts 01851

Dear Mr. Curran,

In recent months, millions of children across America went back to school. School districts prepared their classrooms and parents took their children shopping for supplies. Sadly, this increasingly means purchasing products that promise to keep children safe from gun violence.<sup>1</sup> I write with concerns about the claims companies like yours have made regarding their allegedly bulletproof school supplies.

While it is tragic that school supplies that purport to protect our children from gun violence in the classroom are necessary, at least 139 instances of gunfire have occurred on K-12 school grounds so far in 2024 alone.<sup>2</sup> Eager to protect their children, parents are paying high prices, such as \$185 for a pencil case and \$149 for a “bulletproof backpack insert.”<sup>3</sup> And costs are even higher for school districts: desks marketed as bulletproof can cost up to ten times the price of a standard desk.<sup>4</sup>

Yet the manufacturers of these products frequently claim certifications that their products have not actually received.<sup>5</sup> Particularly worrying are false claims of certification by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, which neither tests nor

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<sup>1</sup> Emily Baumgaertner & Alex Kalman, “Bulletproofing America’s Classrooms,” *New York Times*, Sept. 18, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/09/18/science/bulletproofing-schools.html>.

<sup>2</sup> “Gunfire on School Grounds in the United States,” Everytown Research & Policy, last modified Sept. 4, 2024, <https://everytownresearch.org/maps/gunfire-on-school-grounds/>.

<sup>3</sup> “TuffyPacks 12” x 18” Level IIIA Bulletproof Backpack Insert,” TuffyPacks, available at <https://www.tuffypacks.com/products/tuffypacks-12-x-18-ballistic-shield-level-iiia-bulletproof-backpack-insert>; Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Dave Flessner, “First Line Furniture Creates Bullet-Proof Desks to Act as Shield Against Active Shooters,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, Dec. 1, 2019, <https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2019/nov/30/first-line-furniture-creates-bullet-proof-desks/>.

<sup>5</sup> Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

certifies school products of any kind.<sup>6</sup> These phony certifications help justify the steep prices for “bulletproof” products while giving parents a fraudulent and unearned sense of security.

Your company is among those that have made such claims. Bullet Blocker claims its “NIJ IIIA Bulletproof Tactical Organizer” is allegedly “[t]ested to the NIJ IIIA standards stopping a 357 Magnum, 44 Magnum, 9mm, .45 caliber hollow point ammunition and more.”<sup>7</sup> “IIIA” is one of the levels of protection certified—for body armor, not school supplies—by the NIJ.<sup>8</sup> This unsupported claim of U.S. government approval suggest that your company is interested in profit, not children’s safety. And false promises with expensive price tags risk diverting resources and attention of school districts and parents away from solutions that are proven to help keep kids safe.

I therefore write to ask for a written response to the following questions by no later than November 22, 2024:

1. Does the NIJ certify your alleged “IIIA” products?
2. Does the NIJ test your alleged “IIIA” products?
3. Are your alleged “IIIA” products listed on the NIJ’s Compliant Products List for Ballistic Resistant Body Armor?
4. What, if any, testing is your claim of “IIIA” protection based upon?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
5. What, if any, testing does each individual alleged “IIIA” product receive before being shipped to consumers?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
6. What information is involved in the pricing of your alleged “IIIA” products?
  - a. What is the approximate markup of your alleged “IIIA” products?

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senate

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<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> “Tactical Organizer,” Bullet Blocker, <https://www.bulletblocker.com/bulletblocker-nij-iiia-bulletproof-tactical-organizer.html> (accessed Oct. 18, 2024).

<sup>8</sup> Justice Technology Information Center, “Understanding NIJ 0101.06 Armor Protection Levels,” <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/nlectc/250144.pdf> (accessed Oct. 18, 2024).



November 1, 2024

Kevin Lim  
Founder and Owner  
Bulletproof Zone  
1425 Liliha Street #12E  
Honolulu, HI 96817

Dear Mr. Lim,

In recent months, millions of children across America went back to school. School districts prepared their classrooms and parents took their children shopping for supplies. Sadly, this increasingly means purchasing products that promise to keep children safe from gun violence.<sup>1</sup> I write with concerns about the claims companies like yours have made regarding their allegedly bulletproof school supplies.

While it is tragic that school supplies that purport to protect our children from gun violence in the classroom are necessary, at least 139 instances of gunfire have occurred on K-12 school grounds so far in 2024 alone.<sup>2</sup> Eager to protect their children, parents are paying high prices, such as \$185 for a pencil case and \$149 for a “bulletproof backpack insert.”<sup>3</sup> And costs are even higher for school districts: desks marketed as bulletproof can cost up to ten times the price of a standard desk.<sup>4</sup>

Yet the manufacturers of these products frequently claim certifications that their products have not actually received.<sup>5</sup> Particularly worrying are false claims of certification by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, which neither tests nor certifies school products of any kind.<sup>6</sup> These phony certifications help justify the steep prices for “bulletproof” products while giving parents a fraudulent and unearned sense of security.

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<sup>1</sup> Emily Baumgaertner & Alex Kalman, “Bulletproofing America’s Classrooms,” *New York Times*, Sept. 18, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/09/18/science/bulletproofing-schools.html>.

<sup>2</sup> “Gunfire on School Grounds in the United States,” Everytown Research & Policy, last modified Sept. 4, 2024, <https://everytownresearch.org/maps/gunfire-on-school-grounds/>.

<sup>3</sup> “Tuffypacks 12” x 18” Level IIIA Bulletproof Backpack Insert,” Tuffypacks, available at <https://www.tuffypacks.com/products/tuffypacks-12-x-18-ballistic-shield-level-iiia-bulletproof-backpack-insert>; Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Dave Flessner, “First Line Furniture Creates Bullet-Proof Desks to Act as Shield Against Active Shooters,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, Dec. 1, 2019, <https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2019/nov/30/first-line-furniture-creates-bullet-proof-desks/>.

<sup>5</sup> Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

Your company is among those that have made such claims. Bulletproof Zone claims the “ProtectPanel 11” x 14” Level IIIA Backpack Insert” is “[t]ested to NIJ Level IIIA standards” and “can stop bullets from powerful handgun rounds, including .44 magnum.”<sup>7</sup> “IIIA” is one of the levels of protection certified—for body armor, not school supplies—by the NIJ.<sup>8</sup> This unsupported claim of U.S. government approval suggest that your company is interested in profit, not children’s safety. And false promises with expensive price tags risk diverting resources and attention of school districts and parents away from solutions that are proven to help keep kids safe.

I therefore write to ask for a written response to the following questions by no later than November 22, 2024:

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2. Does the NIJ test your alleged “IIIA” products?
3. Are your alleged “IIIA” products listed on the NIJ’s Compliant Products List for Ballistic Resistant Body Armor?
4. What, if any, testing is your claim of “IIIA” protection based upon?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
5. What, if any, testing does each individual alleged “IIIA” product receive before being shipped to consumers?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
6. What information is involved in the pricing of your alleged “IIIA” products?
  - a. What is the approximate markup of your alleged “IIIA” products?

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senate

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<sup>7</sup> “ProtectPanel 11” x 14” Level IIIA Backpack Insert,” Bulletproof Zone, <https://bulletproofzone.com/collections/bulletproof-zone-protect-against/products/protectpanel-11-x-14-level-iiia-backpack-insert> (accessed Oct. 31, 2024).

<sup>8</sup> Justice Technology Information Center, “Understanding NIJ 0101.06 Armor Protection Levels,” <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/nlectc/250144.pdf> (accessed Oct. 18, 2024).



November 1, 2024

James Sellers  
Chief Executive Officer  
Sellmark Corporation  
2201 Heritage Parkway  
Mansfield, Texas 76063

Dear Mr. Sellers,

In recent months, millions of children across America went back to school. School districts prepared their classrooms and parents took their children shopping for supplies. Sadly, this increasingly means purchasing products that promise to keep children safe from gun violence.<sup>1</sup> I write with concerns about the claims companies like yours have made regarding their allegedly bulletproof school supplies.

While it is tragic that school supplies that purport to protect our children from gun violence in the classroom are necessary, at least 139 instances of gunfire have occurred on K-12 school grounds so far in 2024 alone.<sup>2</sup> Eager to protect their children, parents are paying high prices, such as \$185 for a pencil case and \$149 for a “bulletproof backpack insert.”<sup>3</sup> And costs are even higher for school districts: desks marketed as bulletproof can cost up to ten times the price of a standard desk.<sup>4</sup>

Yet the manufacturers of these products frequently claim certifications that their products have not actually received.<sup>5</sup> Particularly worrying are false claims of certification by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, which neither tests nor certifies school products of any kind.<sup>6</sup> These phony certifications help justify the steep prices for “bulletproof” products while giving parents a fraudulent and unearned sense of security.

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<sup>1</sup> Emily Baumgaertner & Alex Kalman, “Bulletproofing America’s Classrooms,” *New York Times*, Sept. 18, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/09/18/science/bulletproofing-schools.html>.

<sup>2</sup> “Gunfire on School Grounds in the United States,” Everytown Research & Policy, last modified Sept. 4, 2024, <https://everytownresearch.org/maps/gunfire-on-school-grounds/>.

<sup>3</sup> “Tuffypacks 12” x 18” Level IIIA Bulletproof Backpack Insert,” Tuffypacks, available at <https://www.tuffypacks.com/products/tuffypacks-12-x-18-ballistic-shield-level-iiia-bulletproof-backpack-insert>; Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Dave Flessner, “First Line Furniture Creates Bullet-Proof Desks to Act as Shield Against Active Shooters,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, Dec. 1, 2019, <https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2019/nov/30/first-line-furniture-creates-bullet-proof-desks/>.

<sup>5</sup> Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

Your company is among those that have made such claims. BulletSafe, a subsidiary of the Sellmark Corporation, claims its “Bulletproof Backpack Insert Level IIIA” can “stop almost all handgun rounds including a .44 Magnum” and “provides NIJ level IIIA protection.”<sup>7</sup> “IIIA” is one of the levels of protection certified—for body armor, not school supplies—by the NIJ.<sup>8</sup> This unsupported claim of U.S. government approval suggest that your company is interested in profit, not children’s safety. And false promises with expensive price tags risk diverting resources and attention of school districts and parents away from solutions that are proven to help keep kids safe.

I therefore write to ask for a written response to the following questions by no later than November 22, 2024:

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  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
5. What, if any, testing does each individual alleged “IIIA” product receive before being shipped to consumers?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
6. What information is involved in the pricing of your alleged “IIIA” products?
  - a. What is the approximate markup of your alleged “IIIA” products?

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senate

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<sup>7</sup> “Bulletproof Backpack Insert Level IIIA,” BulletSafe, <https://bulletproofsafe.com/products/bulletproof-backpack-panel> (accessed Oct. 31, 2024).

<sup>8</sup> Justice Technology Information Center, “Understanding NIJ 0101.06 Armor Protection Levels,” <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/nlectc/250144.pdf> (accessed Oct. 18, 2024).

November 1, 2024

Aaron Gilbert  
Founder and Chief Executive Officer  
Citizen Armor  
1422 Calpac Avenue  
Spanish Fork, Utah 84660

Dear Mr. Gilbert,

In recent months, millions of children across America went back to school. School districts prepared their classrooms and parents took their children shopping for supplies. Sadly, this increasingly means purchasing products that promise to keep children safe from gun violence.<sup>1</sup> I write with concerns about the claims companies like yours have made regarding their allegedly bulletproof school supplies.

While it is tragic that school supplies that purport to protect our children from gun violence in the classroom are necessary, at least 139 instances of gunfire have occurred on K-12 school grounds so far in 2024 alone.<sup>2</sup> Eager to protect their children, parents are paying high prices, such as \$185 for a pencil case and \$149 for a “bulletproof backpack insert.”<sup>3</sup> And costs are even higher for school districts: desks marketed as bulletproof can cost up to ten times the price of a standard desk.<sup>4</sup>

Yet the manufacturers of these products frequently claim certifications that their products have not actually received.<sup>5</sup> Particularly worrying are false claims of certification by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, which neither tests nor

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<sup>1</sup> Emily Baumgaertner & Alex Kalman, “Bulletproofing America’s Classrooms,” *New York Times*, Sept. 18, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/09/18/science/bulletproofing-schools.html>.

<sup>2</sup> “Gunfire on School Grounds in the United States,” Everytown Research & Policy, last modified Sept. 4, 2024, <https://everytownresearch.org/maps/gunfire-on-school-grounds/>.

<sup>3</sup> “TuffyPacks 12” x 18” Level IIIA Bulletproof Backpack Insert,” TuffyPacks, available at <https://www.tuffypacks.com/products/tuffypacks-12-x-18-ballistic-shield-level-iiia-bulletproof-backpack-insert>; Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Dave Flessner, “First Line Furniture Creates Bullet-Proof Desks to Act as Shield Against Active Shooters,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, Dec. 1, 2019, <https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2019/nov/30/first-line-furniture-creates-bullet-proof-desks/>.

<sup>5</sup> Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

certifies school products of any kind.<sup>6</sup> These phony certifications help justify the steep prices for “bulletproof” products while giving parents a fraudulent and unearned sense of security.

Your company is among those that have made such claims. Citizen Armor claims its “Citizen Bulletproof Binder” has a “NIJ HG2 IIIA” armor level.<sup>7</sup> “IIIA” is one of the levels of protection certified—for body armor, not school supplies—by the NIJ.<sup>8</sup> This unsupported claim of U.S. government approval suggest that your company is interested in profit, not children’s safety. And false promises with expensive price tags risk diverting resources and attention of school districts and parents away from solutions that are proven to help keep kids safe.

I therefore write to ask for a written response to the following questions by no later than November 22, 2024:

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4. What, if any, testing is your claim of “IIIA” protection based upon?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
5. What, if any, testing does each individual alleged “IIIA” product receive before being shipped to consumers?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
6. What information is involved in the pricing of your alleged “IIIA” products?
  - a. What is the approximate markup of your alleged “IIIA” products?

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senate

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<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> “Citizen Bulletproof Binder,” Citizen Armor, <https://citizenarmor.com/products/citizen-bulletproof-binder?variant=38034456477851> (accessed Oct. 18, 2024).

<sup>8</sup> Justice Technology Information Center, “Understanding NIJ 0101.06 Armor Protection Levels,” <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/nlectc/250144.pdf> (accessed Oct. 18, 2024).

November 1, 2024

George C. Tunis, III  
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer  
Hardwire, LLC  
1000 Quinn Avenue  
Pocomoke City, Maryland 21851

Dear Mr. Tunis,

In recent months, millions of children across America went back to school. School districts prepared their classrooms and parents took their children shopping for supplies. Sadly, this increasingly means purchasing products that promise to keep children safe from gun violence.<sup>1</sup> I write with concerns about the claims companies like yours have made regarding their allegedly bulletproof school supplies.

While it is tragic that school supplies that purport to protect our children from gun violence in the classroom are necessary, at least 139 instances of gunfire have occurred on K-12 school grounds so far in 2024 alone.<sup>2</sup> Eager to protect their children, parents are paying high prices, such as \$185 for a pencil case and \$149 for a “bulletproof backpack insert.”<sup>3</sup> And costs are even higher for school districts: desks marketed as bulletproof can cost up to ten times the price of a standard desk.<sup>4</sup>

Yet the manufacturers of these products frequently claim certifications that their products have not actually received.<sup>5</sup> Particularly worrying are false claims of certification by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, which neither tests nor

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<sup>2</sup> “Gunfire on School Grounds in the United States,” Everytown Research & Policy, last modified Sept. 4, 2024, <https://everytownresearch.org/maps/gunfire-on-school-grounds/>.

<sup>3</sup> “TuffyPacks 12” x 18” Level IIIA Bulletproof Backpack Insert,” TuffyPacks, available at <https://www.tuffypacks.com/products/tuffypacks-12-x-18-ballistic-shield-level-iiia-bulletproof-backpack-insert>; Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Dave Flessner, “First Line Furniture Creates Bullet-Proof Desks to Act as Shield Against Active Shooters,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, Dec. 1, 2019, <https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2019/nov/30/first-line-furniture-creates-bullet-proof-desks/>.

<sup>5</sup> Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

certifies school products of any kind.<sup>6</sup> These phony certifications help justify the steep prices for “bulletproof” products while giving parents a fraudulent and unearned sense of security.

Your company is among those that have made such claims. Hardwire, LLC claims its “Bulletproof Clipboard Level 3A” offers protection at “NIJ Level 3A: stops handguns and shotguns.”<sup>7</sup> “IIIA” is one of the levels of protection certified—for body armor, not school supplies—by the NIJ.<sup>8</sup> This unsupported claim of U.S. government approval suggest that your company is interested in profit, not children’s safety. And false promises with expensive price tags risk diverting resources and attention of school districts and parents away from solutions that are proven to help keep kids safe.

I therefore write to ask for a written response to the following questions by no later than November 22, 2024:

1. Does the NIJ certify your alleged “IIIA” products?
2. Does the NIJ test your alleged “IIIA” products?
3. Are your alleged “IIIA” products listed on the NIJ’s Compliant Products List for Ballistic Resistant Body Armor?
4. What, if any, testing is your claim of “IIIA” protection based upon?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
5. What, if any, testing does each individual alleged “IIIA” product receive before being shipped to consumers?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
6. What information is involved in the pricing of your alleged “IIIA” products?
  - a. What is the approximate markup of your alleged “IIIA” products?

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senate

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<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> “Bulletproof Clipboard Level 3A,” Hardwire, <https://hardwirellc.com/products/bulletproof-clipboard-level-3a-1> (accessed Oct. 18, 2024).

<sup>8</sup> Justice Technology Information Center, “Understanding NIJ 0101.06 Armor Protection Levels,” <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/nlectc/250144.pdf> (accessed Oct. 18, 2024).



November 1, 2024

Mike de Geus  
Founder and Chief Operating Officer  
Leatherback Gear  
427 East 17th Street #F-246  
Costa Mesa, California 92627

Dear Mr. de Geus,

In recent months, millions of children across America went back to school. School districts prepared their classrooms and parents took their children shopping for supplies. Sadly, this increasingly means purchasing products that promise to keep children safe from gun violence.<sup>1</sup> I write with concerns about the claims companies like yours have made regarding their allegedly bulletproof school supplies.

While it is tragic that school supplies that purport to protect our children from gun violence in the classroom are necessary, at least 139 instances of gunfire have occurred on K-12 school grounds so far in 2024 alone.<sup>2</sup> Eager to protect their children, parents are paying high prices, such as \$185 for a pencil case and \$149 for a “bulletproof backpack insert.”<sup>3</sup> And costs are even higher for school districts: desks marketed as bulletproof can cost up to ten times the price of a standard desk.<sup>4</sup>

Yet the manufacturers of these products frequently claim certifications that their products have not actually received.<sup>5</sup> Particularly worrying are false claims of certification by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, which neither tests nor certifies school products of any kind.<sup>6</sup> These phony certifications help justify the steep prices for “bulletproof” products while giving parents a fraudulent and unearned sense of security.

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<sup>1</sup> Emily Baumgaertner & Alex Kalman, “Bulletproofing America’s Classrooms,” *New York Times*, Sept. 18, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/09/18/science/bulletproofing-schools.html>.

<sup>2</sup> “Gunfire on School Grounds in the United States,” Everytown Research & Policy, last modified Sept. 4, 2024, <https://everytownresearch.org/maps/gunfire-on-school-grounds/>.

<sup>3</sup> “Tuffypacks 12” x 18” Level IIIA Bulletproof Backpack Insert,” Tuffypacks, available at <https://www.tuffypacks.com/products/tuffypacks-12-x-18-ballistic-shield-level-iiia-bulletproof-backpack-insert>; Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Dave Flessner, “First Line Furniture Creates Bullet-Proof Desks to Act as Shield Against Active Shooters,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, Dec. 1, 2019, <https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2019/nov/30/first-line-furniture-creates-bullet-proof-desks/>.

<sup>5</sup> Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*



Your company is among those that have made such claims. Leatherback Gear’s “Tactical One,” “Civilian One,” and “Sport One” backpacks are sold with three claimed levels of protection: “Level IIIA,” “Level III,” and “Level IV.”<sup>7</sup> “IIIA,” “III,” and “IV” are three of the levels of protection certified—for body armor, not school supplies—by the NIJ.<sup>8</sup> This unsupported claim of U.S. government approval suggest that your company is interested in profit, not children’s safety. And false promises with expensive price tags risk diverting resources and attention of school districts and parents away from solutions that are proven to help keep kids safe.

I therefore write to ask for a written response to the following questions by no later than November 22, 2024:

1. Does the NIJ certify your alleged “IIIA,” “III,” and “IV” products?
2. Does the NIJ test your alleged “IIIA,” “III,” and “IV” products?
3. Are your alleged “IIIA,” “III,” and “IV” products listed on the NIJ’s Compliant Products List for Ballistic Resistant Body Armor?
4. What, if any, testing are your claims of “IIIA,” “III,” and “IV” protection based upon?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
5. What, if any, testing does each individual alleged “IIIA,” “III,” and “IV” product receive before being shipped to consumers?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
6. What information is involved in the pricing of your alleged “IIIA,” “III,” and “IV” products?
  - a. What is the approximate markup of your alleged “IIIA,” “III,” and “IV” products?

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senate

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<sup>7</sup> “Tactical One,” Leatherback Gear, <https://www.leatherbackgear.com/collections/backpacks/products/tactical-one> (accessed Oct. 29, 2024); “Civilian One,” Leatherback Gear, <https://www.leatherbackgear.com/collections/backpacks/products/civilian-one> (accessed Oct. 29, 2024); “Sport One,” Leatherback Gear, <https://www.leatherbackgear.com/collections/backpacks/products/sport-one> (accessed Oct. 29, 2024).

<sup>8</sup> Justice Technology Information Center, “Understanding NIJ 0101.06 Armor Protection Levels,” <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/nlectc/250144.pdf> (accessed Oct. 18, 2024).

November 1, 2024

Nancy Trotter  
Certified Registered Agent  
Armor Only LLC d/b/a Level-4 Armor  
324 Katie Lane  
Summerville, Georgia 30747

Dear Ms. Trotter,

In recent months, millions of children across America went back to school. School districts prepared their classrooms and parents took their children shopping for supplies. Sadly, this increasingly means purchasing products that promise to keep children safe from gun violence.<sup>1</sup> I write with concerns about the claims companies like yours have made regarding their allegedly bulletproof school supplies.

While it is tragic that school supplies that purport to protect our children from gun violence in the classroom are necessary, at least 139 instances of gunfire have occurred on K-12 school grounds so far in 2024 alone.<sup>2</sup> Eager to protect their children, parents are paying high prices, such as \$185 for a pencil case and \$149 for a “bulletproof backpack insert.”<sup>3</sup> And costs are even higher for school districts: desks marketed as bulletproof can cost up to ten times the price of a standard desk.<sup>4</sup>

Yet the manufacturers of these products frequently claim certifications that their products have not actually received.<sup>5</sup> Particularly worrying are false claims of certification by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, which neither tests nor

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<sup>1</sup> Emily Baumgaertner & Alex Kalman, “Bulletproofing America’s Classrooms,” *New York Times*, Sept. 18, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/09/18/science/bulletproofing-schools.html>.

<sup>2</sup> “Gunfire on School Grounds in the United States,” Everytown Research & Policy, last modified Sept. 4, 2024, <https://everytownresearch.org/maps/gunfire-on-school-grounds/>.

<sup>3</sup> “TuffyPacks 12” x 18” Level IIIA Bulletproof Backpack Insert,” TuffyPacks, available at <https://www.tuffypacks.com/products/tuffypacks-12-x-18-ballistic-shield-level-iiia-bulletproof-backpack-insert>; Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Dave Flessner, “First Line Furniture Creates Bullet-Proof Desks to Act as Shield Against Active Shooters,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, Dec. 1, 2019, <https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2019/nov/30/first-line-furniture-creates-bullet-proof-desks/>.

<sup>5</sup> Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

certifies school products of any kind.<sup>6</sup> These phony certifications help justify the steep prices for “bulletproof” products while giving parents a fraudulent and unearned sense of security.

Your company is among those that have made such claims. Level-4 Armor claims its “LEVEL IIIA Backpack Armor (UHMWPE)” has “Level IIIA” protection and “has been tested to meet or exceed NIJ 0101.06 requirements.”<sup>7</sup> “IIIA” is one of the levels of protection certified—for body armor, not school supplies—by the NIJ.<sup>8</sup> This unsupported claim of U.S. government approval suggest that your company is interested in profit, not children’s safety. And false promises with expensive price tags risk diverting resources and attention of school districts and parents away from solutions that are proven to help keep kids safe.

I therefore write to ask for a written response to the following questions by no later than November 22, 2024:

1. Does the NIJ certify your alleged “IIIA” products?
2. Does the NIJ test your alleged “IIIA” products?
3. Are your alleged “IIIA” products listed on the NIJ’s Compliant Products List for Ballistic Resistant Body Armor?
4. What, if any, testing is your claim of “IIIA” protection based upon?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
5. What, if any, testing does each individual alleged “IIIA” product receive before being shipped to consumers?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
6. What information is involved in the pricing of your alleged “IIIA” products?
  - a. What is the approximate markup of your alleged “IIIA” products?

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senate

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<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> “LEVEL IIIA Backpack Armor (UHMWPE),” Level-4 Armor, <https://level-4armor.com/products/level-iiia-lightweight-backpack-insert> (accessed Oct. 29, 2024).

<sup>8</sup> Justice Technology Information Center, “Understanding NIJ 0101.06 Armor Protection Levels,” <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/nlectc/250144.pdf> (accessed Oct. 18, 2024).

November 1, 2024

Frank Stewart  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Premier Body Armor  
1552 Union Road, Suite C  
Gastonia, North Carolina 28054

Dear Mr. Stewart,

In recent months, millions of children across America went back to school. School districts prepared their classrooms and parents took their children shopping for supplies. Sadly, this increasingly means purchasing products that promise to keep children safe from gun violence.<sup>1</sup> I write with concerns about the claims companies like yours have made regarding their allegedly bulletproof school supplies.

While it is tragic that school supplies that purport to protect our children from gun violence in the classroom are necessary, at least 139 instances of gunfire have occurred on K-12 school grounds so far in 2024 alone.<sup>2</sup> Eager to protect their children, parents are paying high prices, such as \$185 for a pencil case and \$149 for a “bulletproof backpack insert.”<sup>3</sup> And costs are even higher for school districts: desks marketed as bulletproof can cost up to ten times the price of a standard desk.<sup>4</sup>

Yet the manufacturers of these products frequently claim certifications that their products have not actually received.<sup>5</sup> Particularly worrying are false claims of certification by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, which neither tests nor

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<sup>1</sup> Emily Baumgaertner & Alex Kalman, “Bulletproofing America’s Classrooms,” *New York Times*, Sept. 18, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/09/18/science/bulletproofing-schools.html>.

<sup>2</sup> “Gunfire on School Grounds in the United States,” Everytown Research & Policy, last modified Sept. 4, 2024, <https://everytownresearch.org/maps/gunfire-on-school-grounds/>.

<sup>3</sup> “TuffyPacks 12” x 18” Level IIIA Bulletproof Backpack Insert,” TuffyPacks, available at <https://www.tuffypacks.com/products/tuffypacks-12-x-18-ballistic-shield-level-iiia-bulletproof-backpack-insert>; Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Dave Flessner, “First Line Furniture Creates Bullet-Proof Desks to Act as Shield Against Active Shooters,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, Dec. 1, 2019, <https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2019/nov/30/first-line-furniture-creates-bullet-proof-desks/>.

<sup>5</sup> Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

certifies school products of any kind.<sup>6</sup> These phony certifications help justify the steep prices for “bulletproof” products while giving parents a fraudulent and unearned sense of security.

Your company is among those that have made such claims. On your website, the “Premier Body Armor Level IIIA Ballistic 3-Ring Binder Cover” and “Premier Body Armor Level IIIA 3-Ring Pencil Pouch” are described as “[t]ested to meet the NIJ ballistic standards for Level IIIA.”<sup>7</sup> Your “Universal Fit Level III+ Rifle-Rated Backpack Insert” is described as “[t]ested to meet the NIJ 0101.06 ballistic standard.”<sup>8</sup> “IIIA” and “III+” are two of the levels of protection certified—for body armor, not school supplies—by the NIJ.<sup>9</sup> These unsupported claims of U.S. government approval suggest that your company is interested in profit, not children’s safety. And false promises with expensive price tags risk diverting resources and attention of school districts and parents away from solutions that are proven to help keep kids safe.

I therefore write to ask for a written response to the following questions by no later than November 22, 2024:

1. Does the NIJ certify your alleged “IIIA” binders or “III+” backpack inserts?
2. Does the NIJ test your alleged “IIIA” binders or “III+” backpack inserts?
3. Are your alleged “IIIA” binders or “III+” backpack inserts listed on the NIJ’s Compliant Products List for Ballistic Resistant Body Armor?
4. What, if any, testing are your claims of “IIIA” and “III+” protection for your binders and backpack inserts based upon?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
5. What, if any, testing does each individual alleged “IIIA” binder or “III+” backpack insert receive before being shipped to consumers?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
6. What information is involved in the pricing of your alleged “IIIA” binders and “III+” backpack inserts?

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<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> “Premier Body Armor Level IIIA Ballistic 3-Ring Binder Cover,” Premier Body Armor, <https://premierbodyarmor.com/products/ballistic-binder#features> (accessed Oct. 18, 2024); “Premier Body Armor Level IIIA 3-Ring Pencil Pouch,” Premier Body Armor, <https://premierbodyarmor.com/products/level-iiia-3-ring-pencil-pouch> (accessed Oct. 18, 2024).

<sup>8</sup> “Universal Fit Level III+ Rifle-Rated Backpack Insert,” Premier Body Armor, <https://premierbodyarmor.com/collections/bulletproof-backpack-inserts-all/products/10x15-stratis-level-iii-backpack-insert> (accessed Oct. 18, 2024).

<sup>9</sup> Justice Technology Information Center, “Understanding NIJ 0101.06 Armor Protection Levels,” <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/nlectc/250144.pdf> (accessed Oct. 18, 2024).

- a. What is the approximate markup of your alleged “IIIA” binders and “III+” backpack inserts?

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senate

November 1, 2024

Eli Eichenblatt  
Chief Executive Officer  
Ambitech, Inc. d/b/a RTS Tactical  
4045 Sheriden Avenue, Suite 118  
Miami, Florida 33140

Dear Mr. Eichenblatt,

In recent months, millions of children across America went back to school. School districts prepared their classrooms and parents took their children shopping for supplies. Sadly, this increasingly means purchasing products that promise to keep children safe from gun violence.<sup>1</sup> I write with concerns about the claims companies like yours have made regarding their allegedly bulletproof school supplies.

While it is tragic that school supplies that purport to protect our children from gun violence in the classroom are necessary, at least 139 instances of gunfire have occurred on K-12 school grounds so far in 2024 alone.<sup>2</sup> Eager to protect their children, parents are paying high prices, such as \$185 for a pencil case and \$149 for a “bulletproof backpack insert.”<sup>3</sup> And costs are even higher for school districts: desks marketed as bulletproof can cost up to ten times the price of a standard desk.<sup>4</sup>

Yet the manufacturers of these products frequently claim certifications that their products have not actually received.<sup>5</sup> Particularly worrying are false claims of certification by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, which neither tests nor certifies school products of any kind.<sup>6</sup> These phony certifications help justify the steep prices for “bulletproof” products while giving parents a fraudulent and unearned sense of security.

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<sup>1</sup> Emily Baumgaertner & Alex Kalman, “Bulletproofing America’s Classrooms,” *New York Times*, Sept. 18, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/09/18/science/bulletproofing-schools.html>.

<sup>2</sup> “Gunfire on School Grounds in the United States,” Everytown Research & Policy, last modified Sept. 4, 2024, <https://everytownresearch.org/maps/gunfire-on-school-grounds/>.

<sup>3</sup> “Tuffypacks 12” x 18” Level IIIA Bulletproof Backpack Insert,” Tuffypacks, available at <https://www.tuffypacks.com/products/tuffypacks-12-x-18-ballistic-shield-level-iiia-bulletproof-backpack-insert>; Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Dave Flessner, “First Line Furniture Creates Bullet-Proof Desks to Act as Shield Against Active Shooters,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, Dec. 1, 2019, <https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2019/nov/30/first-line-furniture-creates-bullet-proof-desks/>.

<sup>5</sup> Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*



Your company is among those that have made such claims. RTS Tactical claims its “RTS Tactical Commander IIIA Backpack Panel Insert – 10 X 12” has “NIJ Standard-0101.06 Level IIIA” protection, which “will protect against a variety of small arms fire, including rounds from a 9 mm, .44 Magnum, .357 Magnum, .357 SIG.”<sup>7</sup> “IIIA” is one of the levels of protection certified— for body armor, not school supplies—by the NIJ.<sup>8</sup> This unsupported claim of U.S. government approval suggest that your company is interested in profit, not children’s safety. And false promises with expensive price tags risk diverting resources and attention of school districts and parents away from solutions that are proven to help keep kids safe.

I therefore write to ask for a written response to the following questions by no later than November 22, 2024:

1. Does the NIJ certify your alleged “IIIA” products?
2. Does the NIJ test your alleged “IIIA” products?
3. Are your alleged “IIIA” products listed on the NIJ’s Compliant Products List for Ballistic Resistant Body Armor?
4. What, if any, testing is your claim of “IIIA” protection based upon?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
5. What, if any, testing does each individual alleged “IIIA” product receive before being shipped to consumers?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
6. What information is involved in the pricing of your alleged “IIIA” products?
  - a. What is the approximate markup of your alleged “IIIA” products?

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senate

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<sup>7</sup> “RTS Tactical Commander IIIA Backpack Panel Insert – 10 x 12,” RTC Tactical, <https://rtstactical.com/collections/level-iii-backpack-armor/products/rts-tactical-level-iiia-ex770-backpack-panel-inserts-10x12> (accessed Oct. 18, 2024).

<sup>8</sup> Justice Technology Information Center, “Understanding NIJ 0101.06 Armor Protection Levels,” <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/nlectc/250144.pdf> (accessed Oct. 18, 2024).

November 1, 2024

Nicholas Groate  
Chief Executive Officer  
Safe Life Defense  
8365 Cupertino Heights Way  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89178

Dear Mr. Groate,

In recent months, millions of children across America went back to school. School districts prepared their classrooms and parents took their children shopping for supplies. Sadly, this increasingly means purchasing products that promise to keep children safe from gun violence.<sup>1</sup> I write with concerns about the claims companies like yours have made regarding their allegedly bulletproof school supplies.

While it is tragic that school supplies that purport to protect our children from gun violence in the classroom are necessary, at least 139 instances of gunfire have occurred on K-12 school grounds so far in 2024 alone.<sup>2</sup> Eager to protect their children, parents are paying high prices, such as \$185 for a pencil case and \$149 for a “bulletproof backpack insert.”<sup>3</sup> And costs are even higher for school districts: desks marketed as bulletproof can cost up to ten times the price of a standard desk.<sup>4</sup>

Yet the manufacturers of these products frequently claim certifications that their products have not actually received.<sup>5</sup> Particularly worrying are false claims of certification by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, which neither tests nor certifies school products of any kind.<sup>6</sup> These phony certifications help justify the steep prices for “bulletproof” products while giving parents a fraudulent and unearned sense of security.

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<sup>1</sup> Emily Baumgaertner & Alex Kalman, “Bulletproofing America’s Classrooms,” *New York Times*, Sept. 18, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/09/18/science/bulletproofing-schools.html>.

<sup>2</sup> “Gunfire on School Grounds in the United States,” Everytown Research & Policy, last modified Sept. 4, 2024, <https://everytownresearch.org/maps/gunfire-on-school-grounds/>.

<sup>3</sup> “Tuffypacks 12” x 18” Level IIIA Bulletproof Backpack Insert,” Tuffypacks, available at <https://www.tuffypacks.com/products/tuffypacks-12-x-18-ballistic-shield-level-iiia-bulletproof-backpack-insert>; Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Dave Flessner, “First Line Furniture Creates Bullet-Proof Desks to Act as Shield Against Active Shooters,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, Dec. 1, 2019, <https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2019/nov/30/first-line-furniture-creates-bullet-proof-desks/>.

<sup>5</sup> Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

Your company is among those that have made such claims. Safe Life Defense claims its “Level IIIA+ Backpack Armor” offers “Level IIIA+” protection, including “[a]ll of the protection from level IIIa in addition to stabs up to 36j of force, tasers, and typically armor piercing handgun and shotgun ammunition.”<sup>7</sup> “IIIA” is one of the levels of protection certified—for body armor, not school supplies—by the NIJ.<sup>8</sup> This unsupported claim of U.S. government approval suggest that your company is interested in profit, not children’s safety. And false promises with expensive price tags risk diverting resources and attention of school districts and parents away from solutions that are proven to help keep kids safe.

I therefore write to ask for a written response to the following questions by no later than November 22, 2024:

1. Does the NIJ certify your alleged “IIIA+” products?
2. Does the NIJ test your alleged “IIIA+” products?
3. Are your alleged “IIIA+” products listed on the NIJ’s Compliant Products List for Ballistic Resistant Body Armor?
4. What, if any, testing is your claim of “IIIA+” protection based upon?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
5. What, if any, testing does each individual alleged “IIIA+” product receive before being shipped to consumers?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
6. What information is involved in the pricing of your alleged “IIIA+” products?
  - a. What is the approximate markup of your alleged “IIIA+” products?

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senate

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<sup>7</sup> “Level IIIA+ Backpack Armor,” Safe Life Defense, <https://safelifedefense.com/shop/level-iiia-backpack-armor/> (accessed Oct. 18, 2024).

<sup>8</sup> Justice Technology Information Center, “Understanding NIJ 0101.06 Armor Protection Levels,” <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/nlectc/250144.pdf> (accessed Oct. 18, 2024).

November 1, 2024

Dmytro Svyrydiuk  
Director  
UARM USA Corp.  
7209 Lancaster Pike, Suite 4-3035  
Hockessin, DE 19707

Dear Mr. Svyrydiuk,

In recent months, millions of children across America went back to school. School districts prepared their classrooms and parents took their children shopping for supplies. Sadly, this increasingly means purchasing products that promise to keep children safe from gun violence.<sup>1</sup> I write with concerns about the claims companies like yours have made regarding their allegedly bulletproof school supplies.

While it is tragic that school supplies that purport to protect our children from gun violence in the classroom are necessary, at least 139 instances of gunfire have occurred on K-12 school grounds so far in 2024 alone.<sup>2</sup> Eager to protect their children, parents are paying high prices, such as \$185 for a pencil case and \$149 for a “bulletproof backpack insert.”<sup>3</sup> And costs are even higher for school districts: desks marketed as bulletproof can cost up to ten times the price of a standard desk.<sup>4</sup>

Yet the manufacturers of these products frequently claim certifications that their products have not actually received.<sup>5</sup> Particularly worrying are false claims of certification by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, which neither tests nor certifies school products of any kind.<sup>6</sup> These phony certifications help justify the steep prices for “bulletproof” products while giving parents a fraudulent and unearned sense of security.

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<sup>1</sup> Emily Baumgaertner & Alex Kalman, “Bulletproofing America’s Classrooms,” *New York Times*, Sept. 18, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/09/18/science/bulletproofing-schools.html>.

<sup>2</sup> “Gunfire on School Grounds in the United States,” Everytown Research & Policy, last modified Sept. 4, 2024, <https://everytownresearch.org/maps/gunfire-on-school-grounds/>.

<sup>3</sup> “Tuffypacks 12” x 18” Level IIIA Bulletproof Backpack Insert,” Tuffypacks, available at <https://www.tuffypacks.com/products/tuffypacks-12-x-18-ballistic-shield-level-iiia-bulletproof-backpack-insert>; Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Dave Flessner, “First Line Furniture Creates Bullet-Proof Desks to Act as Shield Against Active Shooters,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, Dec. 1, 2019, <https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2019/nov/30/first-line-furniture-creates-bullet-proof-desks/>.

<sup>5</sup> Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

Your company is among those that have made such claims. UARM’s “BBSAP Backpack Ballistic Soft Armor Panel” is sold with three claimed levels of protection: “IIA,” “II,” and “IIIA”<sup>7</sup> “IIA,” “II,” and “IIIA” are three of the levels of protection certified—for body armor, not school supplies—by the NIJ.<sup>8</sup> This unsupported claim of U.S. government approval suggest that your company is interested in profit, not children’s safety. And false promises with expensive price tags risk diverting resources and attention of school districts and parents away from solutions that are proven to help keep kids safe.

I therefore write to ask for a written response to the following questions by no later than November 22, 2024:

1. Does the NIJ certify your alleged “IIA,” “II,” and “IIIA” products?
2. Does the NIJ test your alleged “IIA,” “II,” and “IIIA” products?
3. Are your alleged “IIA,” “II,” and “IIIA” products listed on the NIJ’s Compliant Products List for Ballistic Resistant Body Armor?
4. What, if any, testing are your claims of “IIA,” “II,” and “IIIA” protection based upon?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
5. What, if any, testing does each individual alleged “IIA,” “II,” and “IIIA” product receive before being shipped to consumers?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
6. What information is involved in the pricing of your alleged “IIA,” “II,” and “IIIA” products?
  - a. What is the approximate markup of your alleged “IIA,” “II,” and “IIIA” products?

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senate

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<sup>7</sup> “BBSAP Backpack Ballistic Soft Armor Panel,” UARM, <https://uarmprotection.com/product/backpack-ballistic-soft-armor-panel/> (accessed Oct. 31, 2024).

<sup>8</sup> Justice Technology Information Center, “Understanding NIJ 0101.06 Armor Protection Levels,” <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/nlectc/250144.pdf> (accessed Oct. 18, 2024).

November 1, 2024

Bernard Lathan  
Chief Executive Officer  
White Horse Research and Development, Inc. d/b/a White Horse Defense  
3565 Centre Circle  
Fort Mill, South Carolina 29715

Dear Mr. Lathan,

In recent months, millions of children across America went back to school. School districts prepared their classrooms and parents took their children shopping for supplies. Sadly, this increasingly means purchasing products that promise to keep children safe from gun violence.<sup>1</sup> I write with concerns about the claims companies like yours have made regarding their allegedly bulletproof school supplies.

While it is tragic that school supplies that purport to protect our children from gun violence in the classroom are necessary, at least 139 instances of gunfire have occurred on K-12 school grounds so far in 2024 alone.<sup>2</sup> Eager to protect their children, parents are paying high prices, such as \$185 for a pencil case and \$149 for a “bulletproof backpack insert.”<sup>3</sup> And costs are even higher for school districts: desks marketed as bulletproof can cost up to ten times the price of a standard desk.<sup>4</sup>

Yet the manufacturers of these products frequently claim certifications that their products have not actually received.<sup>5</sup> Particularly worrying are false claims of certification by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), an agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, which neither tests nor certifies school products of any kind.<sup>6</sup> These phony certifications help justify the steep prices for “bulletproof” products while giving parents a fraudulent and unearned sense of security.

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<sup>1</sup> Emily Baumgaertner & Alex Kalman, “Bulletproofing America’s Classrooms,” *New York Times*, Sept. 18, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2024/09/18/science/bulletproofing-schools.html>.

<sup>2</sup> “Gunfire on School Grounds in the United States,” Everytown Research & Policy, last modified Sept. 4, 2024, <https://everytownresearch.org/maps/gunfire-on-school-grounds/>.

<sup>3</sup> “Tuffypacks 12” x 18” Level IIIA Bulletproof Backpack Insert,” Tuffypacks, available at <https://www.tuffypacks.com/products/tuffypacks-12-x-18-ballistic-shield-level-iiia-bulletproof-backpack-insert>; Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Dave Flessner, “First Line Furniture Creates Bullet-Proof Desks to Act as Shield Against Active Shooters,” *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, Dec. 1, 2019, <https://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2019/nov/30/first-line-furniture-creates-bullet-proof-desks/>.

<sup>5</sup> Baumgaertner & Kalman, *supra* note 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

Your company is among those that have made such claims. White Horse Defense claims its “Bulletproof Backpack Insert - Level IIIA - Standard” has “Level IIIA ballistic protection.”<sup>7</sup> “IIIA” is one of the levels of protection certified—for body armor, not school supplies—by the NIJ.<sup>8</sup> This unsupported claim of U.S. government approval suggest that your company is interested in profit, not children’s safety. And false promises with expensive price tags risk diverting resources and attention of school districts and parents away from solutions that are proven to help keep kids safe.

I therefore write to ask for a written response to the following questions by no later than November 22, 2023:

1. Does the NIJ certify your alleged “IIIA” products?
2. Does the NIJ test your alleged “IIIA” products?
3. Are your alleged “IIIA” products listed on the NIJ’s Compliant Products List for Ballistic Resistant Body Armor?
4. What, if any, testing is your claim of “IIIA” protection based upon?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
5. What, if any, testing does each individual alleged “IIIA” product receive before being shipped to consumers?
  - a. In what lab was that testing conducted?
6. What information is involved in the pricing of your alleged “IIIA” products?
  - a. What is the approximate markup of your alleged “IIIA” products?

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senate

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<sup>7</sup> “Bulletproof Backpack Insert – Level IIIA - Standard,” White Horse Defense, <https://whitehorsedefense.com/collections/ballistic-inserts/products/bulletproof-backpack-insert-11x15-25-level-iiia-standard> (accessed Oct. 18, 2024).

<sup>8</sup> Justice Technology Information Center, “Understanding NIJ 0101.06 Armor Protection Levels,” <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/nlectc/250144.pdf> (accessed Oct. 18, 2024).