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ALBUQUERQUE – Expressing extreme concern about the role “bump stocks” played in the recent Las Vegas, Nevada tragedy, Attorney General Hector Balderas joined a bipartisan letter to Congressional leaders urging them to close a loophole in current federal gun laws Oct. 31.

The bipartisan letter includes support from a broad group of attorneys general from U.S. states and territories. The letter notes that bump stock devices – a plastic or metal piece attached to a firearm’s stock designed to increase the ability to fire like a fully automatic weapon – may be used to evade the machinegun laws that are currently in place.

It has been widely reported that the Las Vegas gunman, Stephen Paddock, modified otherwise lawful semi-automatic rifles with “bump stocks” to kill 58 innocent people and injure hundreds more. The attorneys general urge Congress to evaluate whether bump stocks should be regulated like machineguns in order to protect residents from the dangers posed by unrestricted fully automatic weapons.

Since 1986, when Congress enacted the Firearm Owners Protection Act to amend the Gun Control Act of 1968, fully automatic weapons and “machineguns” have been restricted, making it unlawful for civilians to possess a machinegun unless the firearm was acquired prior to the Act’s effective date.

According to the letter, bump stocks can “mimic fully automatic machinegun fire and therefore lead to disastrous consequences in the wrong hands.” The attorneys general also state that Congress “should carefully consider whether bump stocks have created a loophole in the

machinegun laws” when considering any news laws.

Joining Attorney General Balderas in the letter are the attorneys general from Alabama, Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, North Dakota, Northern Mariana Islands, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, Virgin Islands, Virginia, and Wisconsin.