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Gunmakers were serious about relocating because of 'offensive' state gun-control laws

By Niraj Chokshi, Published: September 10 at 9:00 am [E-mail the writer](#)



A newly assembled AR-15 rifle at the Stag Arms company in New Britain, Conn., which is considering investing out-of-state after Connecticut passed gun-control measures this year. (Charles Krupa/AP)

It's not uncommon for businesses to promise consequences when state lawmakers consider measures they're unhappy with. Sometimes the companies are bluffing, but when it comes to gun control measures at least a few are following through with threats to invest elsewhere.

In May, Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley signed into law a set of gun-control measures. At the time, firearm-maker Beretta, which has a presence in the state, criticized the law as being unacceptable despite amendments it says it was able to secure. The law "went from being atrocious to simply being bad," Beretta [said in a statement](#) at the time. It was so offensive, in fact, that the company said it would consider making future investments out of state.

"Prior to introduction of this legislation, the three Beretta Holding companies located in Maryland were experiencing growth in revenues and jobs and had begun expansion plans in factory and other operations," the company said. "The idea now of investing additional funds in Maryland and thus rewarding a Government that has insulted our customers and our products is offensive to us so we will take steps to evaluate such investments in other States."

Maryland's law goes into effect in just a few weeks and Beretta seems to be holding true to its promise. Georgia's Upson County is developing incentive packages to attract a new Beretta plant that could house 400 employees, the Atlanta Business Chronicle [recently reported](#). Georgia and North Carolina are among the

seven states Beretta says it's considering expanding to.

Kahr Firearms Group of New York [told the Associated Press in early August](#) that a new gun-control measure there played a role in the decision to open an 80- to 100-employee plant in Pennsylvania instead of New York.

Connecticut gun manufacturers made similar threats when that state considered and passed gun-control measures this year. One of those companies, PTR Industries, recently announced plans to create a factory in South Carolina that it says would employ nearly 150 people. Another Connecticut gunmaker, Stag Arms, is considering opening a factory there that would employ more than 100 people, [according to reports](#).

In announcing PTR's relocation, state Rep. Alan Clemmons read from a concurrent resolution passed in the state that stated "prospects need not fear legislative or regulatory actions that would make them feel unwelcome."

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