



The Public Advocate
for the City of New York

Letitia James – *Public Advocate*

1 CENTRE STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10007
TEL 212 669 7200
FAX 212 669 4701
WWW.PUBADVOCATE.NYC.GOV

June 15, 2016

Kelly S. King, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
Branch Banking & Trust Company
200 W. 2nd Street
Winston-Salem, NC 27101

Dear Mr. King:

Early Sunday morning, a shooter murdered forty-nine people celebrating Pride Month at Pulse, a nightclub in Orlando, Florida. News reports indicate that the shooter had with him an AR-style Sig Sauer MCX assault rifle and a Glock 9 mm handgun. The reports that have emerged indicate that this mass shooting was a hate crime directed at LGBTQ people.

I am writing to you because the institution that you head has facilitated financing to the manufacturer of the assault rifle that the Orlando shooter is reported to have used inside the club. Today, I ask that you cease all business relations with Sig Sauer and all other manufacturers of firearms.

Bloomberg data indicates that your bank was a lender on a financing deal with Sig Sauer Inc. (the U.S. subsidiary of Sig Sauer GmbH and L&O Sig Sauer Verwaltungs-GmbH). Specifically, on December 11, 2015, your bank entered into an agreement to be one of a consortium of lenders to Sig Sauer for an unsecured revolving loan facility of \$55 million, and two unsecured term loans of \$53 million and \$70 million – resulting in the company's receipt of a total \$178 million in financing.

The Sig Sauer assault rifle used by the Orlando shooter was an AR 15 type rifle. As has been covered extensively in the news media, the AR 15 rifle is an adaptation of a military assault rifle. It has become the “gold standard for mass murder of innocent civilians,” in the words of the lawyer representing victims of the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School. AR 15

rifles were used by the shooters at Sandy Hook, Aurora, San Bernardino, and Roseburg, Oregon. It was developed to kill people efficiently and easily.

Your decision to provide financing to Sig Sauer, and to collect payment in return, has consequences. The decision to transact business with the gun industry raises concerns regarding the risk analysis and decision making processes employed by your firm. At a time when many Americans express outrage at the behavior of big banks in underwriting bad practices, I urge you to re-consider your role as a financier of companies that manufacture weapons that are used by mass murderers.

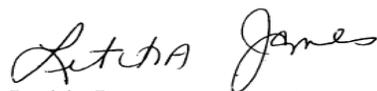
Today, I ask that you undertake the following steps:

- (1) Review your agreements with Sig Sauer Inc. and consider terminating the agreement;
- (2) Publicly disclose the amount and justification for all fees and interest income received in connection with your institution's lending activities with Sig Sauer Inc.;
- (3) Donate all fees and interest income received in connection with your institution's lending activities with Sig Sauer Inc. to organizations working to end gun violence;
- (4) Review your other business dealings with firearm manufacturers and terminate those dealings as soon as possible, donate all fees and interest income received from those dealings to organizations working to end gun violence; and
- (5) Publicly pledge that your institution will not engage in business dealings of any variety with manufacturers of firearms.

You have the opportunity to be a voice of leadership and to work towards a safer and more just society. I urge you to renounce those profits that you have received by dint of your financing of manufacturers of firearms.

Please contact my office by June 21, 2016 to discuss this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Letitia James". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Letitia James

Public Advocate for the City of New York