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**N.J. seizes 13 'ghost gun' kits from couple traveling from Pa., police say**

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Police have seized more a dozen handgun kits they said were illegally driven from Pennsylvania into New Jersey, highlighting the spread of “ghost guns” across state lines amid a spike in shootings.

Two people now face multiple weapons charges and law enforcement leaders from both states demanded the federal government do more to limit the spread of the guns, which can be assembled at home.

Ghost guns are difficult to trace because by design they do not have serial numbers.

“We may never know how these weapons might have been used,” acting New Jersey Attorney General Andrew Bruck said Friday during a press conference at State Police Headquarters in Ewing. But “this case highlights again the danger of ghost guns.”

Firearms seized in the Garden State overall have been traced to Pennsylvania more than any other place, according to a State Police report.

Ghost guns specifically are legal in Pennsylvania but have been banned in New Jersey since 2018. The two states pledged last year to work more closely when dealing with gun crime.

“These have become the weapon of choice for criminals,” Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro said Friday.

Shapiro’s office has moved to limit the weapons in his state. So far this year, investigators have already seized 440 ghost guns just in Philadelphia, Shapiro said. Three years ago they recovered fewer than two dozen over the same period, he added.

Officials accused William R. Pillus of buying the 13 kits at a gun show in Allentown on Sept. 11.

The 23-year-old from Lincoln Park then allegedly drove across the river to a Home Depot in Totowa. He was stopped soon after, police said.

A search of both his vehicle and his home yielded the kits, a sizable amount of ammunition and an “AR-15 style semiautomatic rifle” without a serial number, officials said.

Pillus was indicted Monday and faces five gun charges, including second-degree unlawful possession of an assault firearm and third-degree purchasing firearm parts to manufacture untraceable firearms, according to authorities.

His 21-year-old girlfriend, Makenna Sweeney, of Boonton, was with him on the trip and faces a fourth-degree charge for possession of a large capacity ammunition magazine, officials said.

Pillus' lawyer did not immediately return a request for comment.