

Businesses take a stand

NEW YORK (AP) — Kroger will no longer sell guns to anyone under 21 at the stores it owns, becoming the third major retailer in a week to put restrictions in place that are stronger than federal laws.

The moves by Dick's Sporting Goods and Walmart — and retribution on Delta by lawmakers — emphasizes the pressure companies are facing to take a stand.

The nation's largest grocery chain has sold guns from 44 of its Fred Meyer stores in the West, but said Thursday that since a mass shooting last month at a Florida high school that killed 17 people, it's become clear that gun retail outlets must go beyond what current U.S. laws requires.

"In response to the tragic events in Parkland and elsewhere, we've taken a hard look at our policies and procedures for firearm sales," Kroger Co. said in a release.

The change comes one day after Walmart and Dick's Sporting Goods, both prominent gun sellers, tightened their company policies, and also a day after students returned to Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, for the first time since the shooting there.

Companies like Dick's had already changed gun-sale policies in the wake of

the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Connecticut, but the Parkland shooting has opened a fissure between a portion of corporate America and organizations like the National Rifle Association.

MetLife, Hertz and Delta Air Lines and other major U.S. corporations have already cut ties with the National Rifle Association, and at some political risk. Georgia lawmakers passed a bill Thursday that effectively punishes Delta Air Lines for cutting ties with the NRA, following through on Republican vows to deny a tax break worth an estimated \$38 million for the company after it ended discounts for NRA members in the wake of the most recent school massacre.

One industry analyst said after the announcement from Dick's, and strong words from its CEO about the need for change, that other retailers that devote a small percentage of their business to hunting will probably follow suit.

"It is a risky game but you can't please everyone," said Joseph Feldman, a senior managing director at Telsey Advisory Group.

The announcements from Walmart and Dick's so far have drawn hundreds of thousands of responses on social media for and against the moves, from those who pledged to



Dick's Sporting Goods announced Wednesday it will no longer sell guns to anyone under 21. The new policy has brought cheers from gun control supporters and criticism from gun enthusiasts.

buy more from one company to campaigns urging people to thank the companies for their decisions to those who vowed never to buy from them again.

Penny Stalder, a Walmart customer Thursday in Atlanta, supports the company's decision and says people mature a lot between 18 and 21.

"I am a member of the

NRA, and I have a concealed carry license, I just don't see the need for young people. They can wait," she said. "There are other kinds of weapons that they can use to hunt or do whatever they want to do but they don't need military-style weapons certainly."

But Ryan Terlecki, outside a Walmart in

Milwaukee, said he didn't think the three years from 18 to 21 would make that much difference. "I guess they have their reasons, you know, but as far as I'm concerned the law is that we can carry guns and that's our right and I believe we should have that right."

Besides major chains, guns are also bought from

gun shows, local stores and from online stores.

"If large retailers, like Dick's, reduce their exposure to guns, it could impact gun manufacturers," says Maksim Soshkin, a senior analyst at IBISWorld. "Manufacturers could see a decrease in sales or have to find new avenues to sell their product."

Vanilla Bean Baking Company looks to add patio

BY **LISA HOBBS**
Reporter for the Southern Standard
(McMinnville, Tennessee)

The owners of The Vanilla Bean Baking Company hope they have a recipe for success when it comes to renovating their Main Street building.

Sally Roberson, with general contractor Todd Bates of Construction of Smithville, requested a Certificate of Appropriateness from members of the Historic Zoning Commission. Because the building is located in the historic district, a COA is required prior to exterior renovations.

Plans, said Bates, include creating a back entrance for customers, complete with a covered patio.

"What we would like to do is a 22 by 30 building in the back on the backside of the building toward the Farmers Market," said Roberson. "The plan is to do an asphalt walkway from the parking lot to this covered patio with tables and chairs underneath it. It will be an inviting path into the building."

The patio area will include



Sally Roberson, left, and Kayla Woodard are in the process of opening The Vanilla Bean Baking Company on East Main Street.

string lights, ceiling fans, electricity and free wi-fi for customers to use as they relax and enjoy the bakery's many offerings of cakes, cookies, muffins, pastries and coffees. It will be ADA accessible.

"I love it," said Historic Zoning Commission member Rachel Killebrew. "I'm so glad you're doing this. We've been trying to get businesses to establish back entrances. When people come to the Farmers Market, they are going to want come over there."

Roberson said, "That's what we're hoping for."

Bates outlined plans for the rest of the building which included replacing the front and back doors, new signage, hiding the trash bins with fencing, exterior lighting, front awning placement, façade improvements, and color choices.

While color choices are not regulated by Historic Zoning Commission guidelines, Roberson stated the color theme would be cream and black.

Commission members gave unanimous approval for the Certificate of Appropriateness for 224 E. Main Street.



Lisa Hobbs photos

Big changes are in store for the back of 224 East Main Street. The building's future as home of The Vanilla Bean Baking Company includes what will be an inviting outdoor space for its customers to relax and enjoy the bakery's cakes, cookies, muffins, pastries and coffees. Pictured is the outdoor area to be renovated.

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