



May 23, 2022

Chairman Richard Durbin
Senate Judiciary Committee
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Ranking Member Charles Grassley
Senate Judiciary Committee
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley,

Since 2020, cities across America have experienced a resurgence of gun violence that we have not experienced in decades. With this resurgence, we are also experiencing a rise in domestic extremism. This month, domestic violent extremists in Buffalo, NY, Milwaukee, WI, and Laguna Woods, CA, took the lives of a dozen victims and left more wounded, but what is not captured is the invisible wounds of Americans across the country that are left with the uncertainty of if an everyday errand or family activity will end with gun violence. As mayors, and the co-chairs of Mayors Against Illegal Guns, a national bipartisan coalition of over a thousand current and former mayors, we are on the frontlines of battling all forms of gun violence, including domestic terrorism. We were elected to keep our communities safe. That includes developing a comprehensive gun violence prevention plan and that requires a coordinated strategy—which includes working with state and federal law enforcement partners. But the federal agency charged with enforcing federal gun laws and regulating the gun industry, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), has been operating without a Senate-confirmed director for almost a decade. On behalf of Mayors Against Illegal Guns, we write to express strong support for the confirmation of Steve Dettelbach to be Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

ATF is at the forefront of the fight against armed radicals, white supremacists, and those who prey on marginalized groups. ATF collaborates with key law enforcement partners to identify how violent domestic extremists and white supremacists obtain firearms, develops concrete strategies to disrupt their access, and provides guidance to state and local law enforcement on how to investigate potential violent extremists and what tools can be used to disarm them before they commit heinous acts of violence. That is why it is critical that the Senate confirms Dettelbach. With decades of experience under his belt in combating domestic extremism, Dettelbach is uniquely suited to lead ATF in this fight. From his time as U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio and as Chair of the Attorney General's Civil Rights Advisory Subcommittee, Dettelbach has helped lead the fight against extremists and white supremacists, and in doing so has worked hand-in-hand with the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division and law enforcement agencies including ATF. On day one, Dettelbach will be ready to lead the agency in the fight against domestic extremists and join us in our fight to end gun violence.

At a time when gun violence and crime are rising, ATF desperately needs strong leadership to ensure robust implementation and enforcement of our gun laws, to provide direction to the thousands of dedicated law enforcement officers within ATF, to fight for the resources the agency needs to be successful, and to lead ATF into the 21st Century. With gun violence on the rise, the agency needs a leader who will crack down on the illegal networks that supply guns to criminals, including the rogue gun dealers who are complicit in allowing straw purchasers to move guns away from the legal gun market. Dettelbach's record of success and leadership in fighting crime and violence make him ready to address these pressing issues as Director of ATF.

Dettelbach's nomination has received support from a group of bipartisan mayors and law enforcement officials from across the country. His nomination has earned the support of over a hundred mayors from the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the African American Mayors Association, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, Major County Sheriffs of America and countless law enforcement officials. We are asking the Senate to take swift action and confirm Steve Dettelbach as the director of ATF.

Sincerely,
Mayors Against Illegal Guns, Co-Chairs

Brandon Scott
Mayor of Baltimore, MD

Tim Kelly
Mayor of Chattanooga, TN

Quinton Lucas
Mayor of Kansas City, MO

Shawyn Patterson-Howard
Mayor of Mount Vernon, NY

Eric Adams
Mayor of New York City, NY

Regina Romero
Mayor of Tucson, AZ

Tishaura Jones
Mayor of St. Louis, MO

Jane Castor
Mayor of Tampa, FL

Stephen K. Benjamin
Former Mayor of Columbia, SC

Michael Tubbs
Former Mayor of Stockton, CA