

**Paul Helmke**

**413 South Madison Street**

**Bloomington, IN 47403**

May 24, 2021

Committee on the Judiciary

United States Senate

Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: David Chipman / Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

Dear Senators:

I am very happy to support the nomination of David Chipman to head the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

David and I served together on the Firearms Committee for the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) for a number of years. Whether David was still working with the ATF, or in the private sector, or with groups interested in reducing gun violence, he played an active and productive role on the committee. His 25-year background at the ATF helped give his comments, observations and suggestions a great deal of credibility with the police chiefs and others from around the country interested in studying, responding to and reducing crimes involving firearms.

I got to know David best when I was still living and working in the DC area till the end of 2012 and I was able to attend in-person meetings with him and the other committee members, but I still appreciated his work and input while joining meetings by phone over the following six years. As I recall, his insights on the dangers posed by silencers, armor-piercing ammunition, and "ghost guns", as well as the procedures followed and challenges faced by the ATF were just some of his important contributions to the committee work and discussions.

I felt that David's advice and input was always well-reasoned, well-expressed, and based on direct real-world experience. He never demonstrated any partisan or ideological biases on any of the issues we discussed; his sole interest was in looking for realistic, constitutional and evidence-based ways to make things safer for the law enforcement community and the public at large.

My 30-plus years of involvement in public safety issues, as mayor of Fort Wayne, IN for 12 years (which included heading the crime and public safety committees for both the National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors before I served on the NLC Board of Directors and became President of the USCM), private sector work on law enforcement interoperability issues after 9/11, a five-year term as President & CEO of the Brady Campaign and Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence in DC, service on the Board of the National Police Foundation as well as the IACP Firearms Committee, and now as a professor teaching classes in law and public affairs at Indiana University's O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs, have made me very aware of the importance of the ATF and their need for an experienced, dedicated and hard-working Director.

My years in partisan politics - I was elected to my three-terms as mayor on the Republican ticket, served as the head of the national Republican Mayors and Local Officials group (which made me an ex officio member of the Republican National Committee), and was the Republican nominee for U.S. Senate in Indiana in 1998 – make me very aware of the importance of having someone as head of ATF who can work in a nonpartisan matter with elected and appointed governmental and law enforcement officials at all levels to seek bipartisan solutions to the problems of gun violence in our nation.

I am very confident that David Chipman would provide ATF with this experienced, dedicated, and nonpartisan leadership on these public safety issues that are vital to all of our communities. I urge you to support his nomination to be the new Director of the ATF.

If you would like any further information from me, please feel free to contact me at [wpaulhelmke@gmail.com](mailto:wpaulhelmke@gmail.com) or by phone at 260-466-5066 (cell).

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

/s/

Paul Helmke