

April 28, 2022

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin  
Chairman  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley  
Ranking Member  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Mr. Steven Dettelbach

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

We had the honor of representing the United States in the prosecution of Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols, the two men who were convicted of bombing the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. We respectfully submit this letter to support the nomination of Mr. Steven Dettelbach to be the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (the "ATF").

Mr. Dettelbach has an excellent reputation as an experienced prosecutor in the United States Department of Justice. In fact, he served as a federal prosecutor for more than two decades.

Mr. Dettelbach personally prosecuted several significant, complex cases involving violent extremists. For example, while serving as the United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio, Mr. Dettelbach successfully prosecuted the man who firebombed the courthouse in Mansfield, Ohio. That prosecution was based on evidence gathered by a team of ATF agents. Mr. Dettelbach also worked with a team of ATF agents and other law enforcement officers to prosecute the man who torched a mosque in Toledo, Ohio. So, Mr. Dettelbach has the direct professional experience that qualifies him to lead the ATF.

Mr. Dettelbach's experience also includes appointments to senior supervisory and leadership positions within the Justice Department. For example, he was appointed to lead the Civil Rights Subcommittee of the Attorney General's Advisory Committee. In that capacity, he helped to develop and implement training for federal law enforcement officers charged with investigating alleged violations of the Shepherd-Byrd Hate Crimes Act.

We have great respect for the women and men who serve our country by working in the ATF. We know from our own professional experience that these dedicated public servants risk their lives to protect all Americans. Although it has been 27 years since McVeigh and Nichols attempted to inspire a violent insurrection to overthrow the United States government, we remember vividly – and with great respect and enduring gratitude – the role that several ATF agents played in bringing these two domestic terrorists to justice. Indeed, it was an ATF agent who was instrumental in securing McVeigh’s arrest within days of the attack on the Murrah Building.

Unfortunately, we also know that domestic terrorism continues to be a major threat in our country. The ATF must continue to play an active role in protecting our Nation from the extraordinary threat posed by violent extremists. To fulfill this responsibility, it is imperative that the ATF be led by an experienced law enforcement officer who has been confirmed by the United States Senate.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to confirm Mr. Dettelbach to be the next Director of the ATF. We are confident that, working in concert with Attorney General Merrick Garland, who supervised the prosecution of the Oklahoma City bombing prosecutions, Mr. Dettelbach will lead the dedicated agents and staff of the ATF in helping to enforce federal laws and enhancing the safety of the American people.

Respectfully submitted,

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