



APSA
American Pediatric
Surgical Association
Saving Lifetimes

American Pediatric Surgical Association

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2021 – 2022 Board of Governors

April 26, 2022

Edward M. Barksdale, Jr., MD
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United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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Washington, D.C. 20510

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The Honorable Chuck Grassley
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Andrea A. Hayes-Jordan, MD
Governor

Re: Nomination of Steven Dettelbach Esq. to be Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Ellen M. Reynolds, MD
Governor

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Chairman Durbin, and Ranking Member Grassley:

Barbara A. Gaines, MD
Governor

Benedict C. Nwomeh, MD
Governor

As the professional organization representing pediatric surgeons, the American Pediatric Surgical Association (APSA), we write to support the nomination of Steven Dettelbach as the Director of Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF). The mission of the ATF is to protect the public from crimes involving firearms, which too often impact children. APSA surgeons speak to the importance of this mission from firsthand experience in the care of children who sustain firearm injuries.

Benjamin Zendejas-Mummert,
MD MS

APSA is committed to improving children's safety, including firearm injury prevention. It is imperative that effective leadership be secured for the Federal agency charged to enforce the laws that protect our patients and their families. Mr. Dettelbach is an individual who has the capability for such effective leadership. His prior work demonstrates that he can establish direction, alignment, and commitment to serve the mission of the ATF, who has functioned not just as a prosecutor but as an agent of positive change. Mr. Dettelbach combines a keen recognition of the obligations of his position with the ability to effectively engage stakeholders across diverse domains to pursue solutions. Firearms are now the leading cause of years of potential life lost (YPLL) in childhood, having overtaken motor vehicle crashes as the main cause of YPLL since 2017. With pediatric injuries and deaths due to alcohol and tobacco (vaping), and firearms eclipsing those from other mechanisms, it is concerning that ATF has had only one director confirmed by the U.S. Senate since 2006.

The American Pediatric Surgical Association is committed to building partnerships with agencies in government to address the needs of our patients and their families. As the number of opioid and gun related injuries and deaths climb in American children, we strongly believe that it is counterproductive to have a vacancy in the directors' position of the ATF. We feel that Steve Dettelbach, a federal prosecutor at Main Justice in the Civil Rights Division and in United States Attorneys' Offices for nearly 20 years, a counsel in the United States Senate Judiciary Committee and as a nominee for Ohio Attorney General in 2018, is well qualified to understand the realities that our patients face, and the consequences that illegal acts may have upon children. We believe that he has the ability to lead the organization charged with upholding the laws that are designed to mitigate injuries related to alcohol, tobacco and firearms. We feel that Mr. Dettelbach's significant professional experience and personal dedication to making this country a safer place for all Americans make him an excellent candidate to serve as ATF's eighth permanent director and a partner for pediatric injury prevention.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective in support of this important nomination. We urge you to swiftly confirm Steve Dettelbach to be the next Director of ATF.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. Barksdale Jr.", with a long horizontal line extending to the left and a small flourish at the end.

Edward Barksdale Jr. MD
President, American Pediatric Surgical Association