

Questions for the Record from Senator Lee for Robert Cekada

1. **At your confirmation, you said you will “review all ATF policies, procedures, and regulations to ensure that none of those infringe upon the Second Amendment unnecessarily”. Please explain this response.**

Response: If confirmed, my foremost priority will be to ensure ATF supports President Trump’s mandate to make America safer by remaining relentlessly focused on violent crime. The Second Amendment is not “infringed” by laws that are based on our historical tradition of regulating firearms, that necessary for public safety and that are narrowly tailored to that purpose. For example, federal law prohibits carrying firearms into the Capitol and aboard commercial aircraft to prevent assassinations and hijackings, respectively. As Director, I will review ATF’s regulations in accordance with the President’s Executive Order on the Second Amendment. Although Congress has determined some regulation of firearms to be necessary, I will ensure that ATF minimizes any burdens we place on American citizens who are lawfully exercising their Second Amendment rights.

2. **Just this past year, a federal court described the ATF as attempting to fit a square peg into a round hole by overclassifying certain firearms that plainly did not meet the statutory criteria for regulation under the NFA. Can you commit that ATF will abide by the plain text of the statute and will respect innovative efforts to design firearms that fall outside the burdensome NFA regime? Can you also commit that ATF will work diligently to classify new designs in a timely manner?**

Response: ATF’s authority is defined by Congress through the National Firearms Act and the Gun Control Act; the agency implements and enforces those statutes as written. ATF has faced understandable criticism for its lack of consistency in classifying firearms and devices. During my tenure as Deputy Director, we have instituted several reforms related to firearm classifications. For example, all significant firearm and device classifications are first made by our firearms enforcement officers in the Firearms and Ammunition Technology Division and then reviewed by our Office of Chief Counsel. The attorneys assigned to review these classifications are experts in firearms law and have extensive professional experience with firearms. I have also restarted the Firearm Classification Board so that ATF leadership review new types of firearms that raise novel legal issues.

We are also working to classify firearms in a timely manner. Unfortunately, the fall shutdown impacted firearm classifications. ATF employees have been working diligently to clear the backlog. The addition of supervisory review, including the Firearm Classification Board, may also delay some difficult classifications. While ATF understands the importance of prompt classifications, the agency is committed to accuracy, consistency, and stability in its classification process.

3. **The ATF's 2023 rule on pistol stabilizing braces was widely criticized as an arbitrary reclassification. Fortunately, that Rule was enjoined, and has now been**

vacated, by the courts. Under your leadership will you ensure that the ATF respects the Second Amendment’s protection for common-use arms like braced pistols?

Response: The stabilizing brace rule was issued prior to my tenure as Deputy Director and has since been vacated by the courts. ATF is bound by judicial decisions, and we will comply fully with the rulings that set aside that regulation.

If confirmed as Director, I commit to ensuring fairness and transparency in ATF’s regulatory enforcement and to protecting Americans’ Second Amendment rights while also prioritizing public safety.

ATF is one of the smallest federal law enforcement agencies relative to its nationwide responsibilities, and our focus must remain on targeting violent crime and ensuring public safety within the clear limits that Congress and the Constitution establish. I am committed to ensuring that ATF’s policies and rulemakings are grounded in statutory authority, legally sound, and consistent with constitutional protections. As Director I will continue to work with the Attorney General to review our regulations and assess whether they are consistent with the Second Amendment, in accordance with President Trump’s Executive Order, Protecting Second Amendment Rights.

- 4. Previously the ATF’s “Frame or Receiver Rule,” redefined virtually all items known as “80% frames and receivers” into firearms. This has raised serious Second Amendment concerns. Would you support scaling back the serialization and other requirements that adversely impacted this popular DIY hobby?**

Response: ATF recognizes that it is lawful for a citizen to make his or her own firearm for personal use. The 2022 “Frame or Receiver” rule treated certain readily convertible kits (which included all the parts and components necessary to assemble a complete weapon) and mostly complete frames and receivers as already being firearms under the Gun Control Act, which triggered background check and serialization requirements for federally licensed dealers. However, not all incomplete frames or receivers are firearms under Federal law. The Supreme Court’s 2025 decision upheld that at least some applications of the rule are valid, and ATF is obligated to implement the law consistent with that decision.

If confirmed, my responsibility is to ensure that ATF’s regulatory framework reflects congressional intent, complies with judicial rulings, and remains focused on addressing criminal misuse—not burdening lawful conduct. Individuals remain free to purchase and assemble DIY kits. Kits that are nearly complete can be transferred under the same rules as other firearms. Individuals are also free to build firearms from materials that are not nearly assembled firearms. Raw materials are not regulated under the Gun Control Act. We will continue to evaluate our policies to ensure they are legally sound, transparent, and properly aligned with public safety.

Questions for the Record
United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary
Nominations Hearing

February 4, 2026
Questions of
Senator Ted Cruz
For
Robert Cekada

I. Directions

Please provide a wholly contained answer to each question. A question's answer should not cross-reference answers provided in other questions.

If a question asks for a yes or no answer, please provide a yes or no answer first and then provide subsequent explanation. If the answer to a yes or no question is sometimes yes and sometimes no, please state such first and then describe the circumstances giving rise to each answer.

If a question asks for a choice between two options, please begin by stating which option applies, or both, or neither, followed by any subsequent explanation.

If you disagree with the premise of a question, please answer the question as-written and then articulate both the premise about which you disagree and the basis for that disagreement.

If you lack a basis for knowing the answer to a question, please first describe what efforts you have taken to ascertain an answer to the question and then provide your tentative answer as a consequence of its reasonable investigation. If even a tentative answer is impossible at this time, please state why such an answer is impossible and what efforts you, if confirmed, or the administration or the Department, intend to take to provide an answer in the future. Please further give an estimate as to when the Committee will receive that answer.

To the extent that an answer depends on an ambiguity in the question asked, please state the ambiguity you perceive in the question, and provide multiple answers which articulate each possible reasonable interpretation of the question in light of the ambiguity.

II. Questions

- 1. In 2021, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) revealed to Congressman Michael Cloud that it has 920,664,765 records of guns and gun owners in a digital, searchable registry. ATF has refused to respond to Representative Cloud's request for an updated record request now for over a year. It is suspected that there are now over a billion records in ATF's database, even though Congress has banned gun registries under 18 U.S.C. § 926(a). Last Congress, former ATF Director Dettelbach then informed Congress that such a**

compilation of records does not amount to a registry because ATF pays Adobe Acrobat extra money to remove search-by-name functionality. Do you believe that ATF is in possession of an illegal gun registry? How do you plan to address this matter and do you intend to respond to Congressman Cloud's inquiry?

Response: ATF does not have an illegal firearm registry. Federal law, including 18 U.S.C. § 926(a), expressly prohibits the establishment of a national firearms registry, and ATF operates within that statutory limitation.

ATF maintains firearm transaction records in accordance with federal recordkeeping requirements enacted by Congress. When federally licensed firearms dealers discontinue business, their required records are transferred to ATF's Out-of-Business Records Center, where they are preserved consistent with statutory and appropriations restrictions. ATF takes great care to ensure these records are not searchable by name. These records are maintained to support lawful firearm trace requests in criminal investigations and are not organized as a comprehensive registry of firearms or firearm owners.

With respect to Congressman Cloud's inquiry, ATF will make every effort to provide a prompt and complete response to his request, consistent with applicable law and the protection of sensitive law enforcement information.

ATF understands the privacy concerns about this information. Consistent with the President's Executive Order on the Second Amendment, ATF is also undertaking a review of how long firearm transaction records should be maintained.

2. **Up until recently, gun dealers were required to keep certain records of firearms transactions for twenty years. President Biden, however, changed ATF regulations to require firearm transaction records be kept permanently—effectively creating a registry of every gun sold since 2002 and onward. However, the national time-to-crime is less than ten years, and ATF reports very few traces implicate firearm records older than twenty years. Do you support President Biden's permanent gun record keeping scheme? What will you do to ensure gun owner privacy?**

Response: The permanent record-retention rule was adopted prior to my tenure as Deputy Director. My responsibility is to ensure that ATF's current practices remain consistent with the statutes enacted by Congress and with constitutional protections. Further, in accordance with the President's Executive Order, Protecting Second Amendment Rights, ATF has been working with the Department to conduct a thorough review of existing regulations to assess whether they infringe on Second Amendment rights. As part of this review, we are examining the law enforcement value of older firearm transaction records. The results of that review should be forthcoming shortly.

Senate Judiciary Committee Hearing
“Nominations”
Wednesday, February 4, 2026
Questions for the Record for Robert Cedaka

QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR BLACKBURN

1. **The proliferation of illicit vape products has become a critical national security and public safety threat. These products—many of which are manufactured in China and smuggled into the United States—not only target our youth but also generate billions of dollars in revenue for criminal networks, including Mexican drug cartels designated as foreign terrorist organizations. The Department of Treasury has documented that cartels are actively involved in sophisticated money laundering operations to traffic illicit products into the interior of the United States, and these same networks that move fentanyl across our borders are now being used to smuggle counterfeit and unauthorized vape products. On September 10, 2025, Attorney General Bondi stated that “Chinese companies are making billions of dollars off of these products” that are “targeting children, young adults, college students and even members of our military.” The September 2025 enforcement action resulted in the seizure of over 600,000 illicit vaping units and demonstrated ATF’s critical role in combating this threat.**
- a. **Mr. Cedaka, if confirmed as Director, how would you prioritize ATF’s enforcement against illicit vape products that are funding cartel operations and terrorist organizations?**

Response: Illegal vapes threaten the health and safety of our communities, particularly our children. If confirmed as Director, you have my commitment that ATF will continue working with our law enforcement partners to keep these dangerous vapes off our streets. ATF’s jurisdiction in this area comes from the Prevent All Cigarette Trafficking (PACT) Act, which now includes Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), such as vapes. ATF is an integral member of the Multi-Agency Task Force to Curb the Distribution and Sale of Illegal E-Cigarettes¹ and uses all of the civil and criminal tools at our disposal to hold unlawful distributors accountable. ATF has partnered with FDA and the Fraud Section of the Criminal Division in developing multiple criminal prosecutions of vape distributors accused of violating the PACT Act.

- b. **What strategies would you implement to disrupt the financial networks and money laundering schemes that enable cartels to profit from illicit vape trafficking?**

Response: ATF combats the illegal distribution of illicit vaping products by maintaining and distributing a List of Unregistered or Non-Compliant Delivery Sellers to state attorney generals, common carriers, and any other party involved in enforcing Federal Tobacco laws. This list is an incredibly effective tool that has resulted in multiple

¹ U.S. Food & Drug Admin., *Justice Department and FDA Announce Federal Multi-Agency Task Force to Curb the Distribution and Sale of Illegal E-Cigarettes* (June 10, 2024), <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/justice-department-and-fda-announce-federal-multi-agency-task-force-curb-distribution-and-sale>.

companies reforming their business activities to comply with state law and has prevented millions of dollars in tax evasion at the state and local levels. ATF places delivery sellers on the non-compliance list if the tobacco/ENDS seller fails to: (1) register with ATF or the tobacco tax administrator(s) of the jurisdiction(s) into which ENDS/tobacco products are shipped to, or advertised in; (2) properly report delivery sales to the tobacco tax administrator(s); (3) properly mark tobacco/ENDS shipments to consumers; (4) follow age verification restrictions and regulations; or (5) follow any other aspect of the PACT Act.

- c. **How would you enhance ATF's coordination with Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN), DEA, and other agencies to track and dismantle the financial infrastructure supporting these criminal enterprises?**

Response: As mentioned above, ATF is an integral member of the Multi-Agency Task Force to Curb the Distribution and Sale of Illegal E-Cigarettes² using all of the civil and criminal tools at our disposal to hold unlawful distributors accountable. ATF is committed to working with all our Federal agency partners to combat these criminal enterprises.

² Id.

Senator Dick Durbin
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee
Written Questions for Robert Cekada
Nominee to be Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives
February 11, 2026

1. I am concerned that the Justice Department’s current emphasis on immigration enforcement has resulted in the reassignment of ATF employees—weakening investigations into and prosecution of gun trafficking, straw purchasing, and other gun crimes. Reassigning special agents to immigration enforcement hinders ATF’s ability to effectively focus on its mission of confronting violent crime driven by the illegal use of firearms, explosives, and acts of arson. Already, shifts in resources have reportedly led to a decline in the number of firearms cases referred to the Justice Department from ATF.

a. Please clarify what percentage of the ATF workforce has been redirected to immigration-related enforcement since the beginning of the second Trump Administration.

Response: Since January 2025, an average of 75-100 agents per day have been assigned to Title 8 immigration enforcement per day. Since the hearing, that number has decreased.

b. How many total ATF employees have been reassigned—fully or in part—to immigration enforcement since the beginning of the second Trump Administration?

Response: Since January 2025, an average of 75-100 agents per day have been assigned to Title 8 immigration enforcement per day. Since the hearing, that number has decreased.

c. If confirmed, how will you ensure that ATF’s workforce is focused on its mission?

Response: If confirmed, I’ll recommit to carrying out our primary mission to protect the public from violent crime. Under my leadership, ATF will continue to prioritize firearms related violent crime, criminal bombings, and acts of arson. I’ll ensure we continue our focus on violent repeat offenders, serial shooters, and gang members. As is relates to Title 8 enforcement, I’ve implemented an enforcement strategy that prioritizes investigations involving illegal sources of crime guns (NICS denials of illegal aliens), prohibited persons in possession of firearms (e.g. illegal aliens in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(5)), use of firearms to commit violent crimes or armed drug trafficking (in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 924(c)), and other investigations focused on organized crime, street gangs, and Transnational Criminal Organizations. These priorities are consistent with ATF’s

primary mission and ensure ATF's workforce is focused on impactful investigations to keep America safe.

2. I have long opposed the Tiahrt Amendments, which, among other things, prohibit ATF from disclosing firearm trace data to anyone outside of law enforcement agencies, and limit how local and state law enforcement can use such information. This data, which tracks where crime guns are found and sold, is critical to investigating firearms trafficking. The International Association of Chiefs of Police, on whose board you sit, has previously advocated for eliminating restrictions on local and state law enforcement's ability to access firearm trace data.

a. Will you work with Congress to eliminate or significantly reform the Tiahrt Amendments so that local and state law enforcement have full access to firearm trace data?

Response: ATF takes seriously its obligation to comply with all laws enacted by Congress, including the Tiahrt restriction on the disclosure of trace data. ATF's longstanding policy has been to provide total access to trace results to the law enforcement agency that has jurisdiction with respect to the trace request, but to safeguard those results from third parties. Congress' appropriations restriction (known as the "Tiahrt Amendment") codified this longstanding policy by ATF.

While I would want to review any proposed legislation before providing a position, if confirmed as Director, I can commit to working with the Department's Office of Legislative Affairs and any Member of Congress and their staff to provide technical assistance.

b. Do you support the use of firearm trace data for academic research to find solutions and strategies to combat gun violence?

Response: Firearm trace data is a critical investigative tool used to identify trafficking patterns, disrupt criminal networks, and support violent crime investigations. The use of that data outside of law enforcement is governed by statutory restrictions enacted by Congress, including limitations on public disclosure.

3. Early last year, the Justice Department rescinded the Zero Tolerance Policy that prioritized the revocation of licenses held by gun dealers who had committed serious violations, such as falsifying business records or selling a gun without a background check. That policy was successful in reducing the number of dangerous weapons on our streets. In FY 2024, more licenses were revoked than in any year going back two decades. Additionally, critical gun safety regulations like the Engaged in the Business and pistol brace rules are under review for potential reversal.

a. The purpose of Zero Tolerance was to rein in lawbreaking gun dealers. Do you agree with the underlying goals of that policy?

Response: ATF ended the Enhanced Regulatory Enforcement Policy and established a new Administrative Action Policy, which emphasizes firearm traceability and public safety and deemphasizes immaterial paperwork errors. FFLs are our first line of defense in the fight against firearms trafficking.

- b. Given the Administration’s reversal in policy, how will you ensure that ATF continues holding gun dealers accountable for preventing their inventory from ending up in the hands of dangerous individuals and being used to commit crimes?**

Response: Recognizing that FFLs are the first line of defense, ATF’s important job of regulating these licensees and holding them accountable must be balanced with the need to work collaboratively with them to disrupt trafficking networks. That is why ATF implemented a new Administrative Action Policy which emphasizes firearm traceability, serious willful violations, and public safety, and deemphasizes immaterial paperwork errors. In FY 2025, 89 licenses were revoked for willful violations of the Gun Control Act. ATF has many tools to facilitate compliance, including dealer education, administrative warnings, license revocation, and criminal enforcement. The magnitude of the consequences depends on the severity of the breach. Those who deliberately violate federal firearm laws face license revocation and can be referred to criminal prosecution. Those whose violations are less serious often face administrative warnings. Minor accidental violations are usually resolved informally, including through education. The work our IOIs are doing is incredibly important in keeping America safe and has a direct effect on our ability to target gun violence.

- c. It is important that ATF’s work continues to protect public safety. As Director, how would you prioritize the investigation of firearms cases and reduction of gun crime?**

Response: As a law enforcement officer, my sole focus is keeping the American people safe. I have spent my entire career getting criminals off the street and making sure the communities I have served are safer at the end of my shift. As the Director of ATF, my focus will remain the same. I will ensure that ATF supports the work of President Trump and this Administration to make this country safer by continuing to target violent criminals and dismantling the dangerous firearms trafficking networks that arm the criminals, gang members, drug cartels, illegal aliens, and terrorist organizations that fuel this violence.

Our nation is seeing a surge in bold, high-profile criminal activities driven by transnational criminal organizations interested in advancing their criminal enterprises. Acts of violence have shattered families and threatened the safety of communities and law enforcement officials throughout the country. That is why ATF is focused on identifying, disrupting, and dismantling cross-border firearms trafficking. In addition to our own trafficking investigations, ATF has partnered

with the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI to support the Homeland Security Task Forces (HSTFs) this Administration has stood up across the nation. Working with our Federal law enforcement partners, ATF is at the forefront of protecting the homeland from evolving threats presented by transnational organized crime.

d. Are there any firearm regulations that you believe should not be weakened under any circumstances?

Response: I believe in accountability for those who misuse firearms and violent criminals who murder innocent citizens. Since becoming Deputy Director, I have instructed my team to take a look at the existing regulations to determine whether they serve the purpose for which they were intended—to reduce and prevent violent crime while permitting law-abiding citizens to exercise their Second Amendment rights. That review is ongoing, and it would be premature for me to comment.

e. A former ATF official stated that the Bureau did not revoke a single gun dealer’s license in the first quarter of 2025 and projected that there would be a decrease in revocations overall.

In FY 2024, there were 24,208 firearms cases initiated by ATF, 7,432 recommended for prosecution, and 4,126 convicted cases. In FY25, how many firearms cases were initiated, recommended for prosecution, and ultimately resulted in convictions?

Response: Since January 20, 2025, ATF has seized 36,277 illegal crime guns and 2,317,999 rounds of ammunition from prohibited persons, gang members, and suppliers for transnational criminal organizations. 4,359 of these seized firearms were bound for Mexico, where they would have been used by violent drug cartels and gangs. 648,975 rounds of the seized ammunition were bound for Mexico, which averages to over 1,600 rounds per day.¹

4. In January 2025, House Republicans introduced legislation to abolish ATF. Do you oppose abolishing the ATF?

Response: ATF protects America’s communities by confronting violent crime driven by the illegal use of firearms, explosives, and acts of arson, and its role in public safety is imperative. Our Special Agents concentrate on identifying and dismantling illegal firearms traffickers who fuel violence by arming prohibited persons, gang members, drug cartels, illegal aliens, and terrorist organizations. Our crime gun intelligence tools make it easier for law enforcement officers across the nation to identify and apprehend violent criminals. Our Industry Operations Investigators work with federal firearms licensees (FFLs) to identify gun traffickers and straw purchasers. During my tenure as Deputy

¹ Press Release, USDOJ. *ATF Seizes Thousands of Illegal Firearms Bound for Cartels in Mexico* (Feb. 18, 2026). Available at: <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/atf-seizes-thousands-illegal-firearms-bound-cartels-mexico>.

Director of ATF, ATF has entered a new era of reform rooted in transparency and accountability, and we have renewed our focus on rebuilding trust with FFLs, gun owners, and the public by prioritizing public safety and collaboration. I fully understand the responsibility of the Agency to uphold the Constitution, including the protection of rights guaranteed by the Second Amendment, while simultaneously fighting violent crime using the statutes on the books.

5. Do you support efforts to repeal the National Firearms Act?

Response: If confirmed, my job as Director of ATF will be to enforce the laws that Congress has enacted. Under my leadership, ATF will remain committed to implementing and enforcing those statutes as written. Furthermore, the Department is currently defending the constitutionality of the National Firearms Act. However, it is ultimately up to the courts to interpret these laws, and up to Congress to amend or repeal these laws if they see fit.

6. Community violence intervention (CVI) programs aim to reduce gun violence and other crimes using evidence-based strategies.

a. What role do community violence intervention programs play in combatting violent crime at the local level?

Response: Many communities utilize CVI programs at the local level, which employ multi-pronged, evidence-based strategies to engage individuals and groups, which is intended to prevent and disrupt cycles of violence, including gun violence.

b. How can ATF contribute to such efforts to prevent gun crime?

Response: ATF partners with the private sector, academia, and local, state, and other federal law enforcement organizations to provide a variety of community outreach programs as part of its strategic approach to reducing violent crimes. Our combined efforts incorporate educational, community-oriented, and policy-driven activities to help keep our communities safe. ATF Task Forces also target those most at risk for committing future acts of violence.

c. In 2025, the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs (OJP) cut over \$800 million in grants that support violence prevention, public safety, and victim's services. These cuts ultimately leave communities more vulnerable to gun violence. I am concerned that ATF and other law enforcement agencies may not have adequate resources to fill the gap and continue reducing crime.

How will this cut in funding impact the agency, and what is your plan to adjust to the reduction?

Response: While I am aware that other components of the Department administer grants to state and local law enforcement, generally, I am not familiar with the impact of those changes. ATF does not administer grant programs, nor does ATF receive grant funding.

d. What additional resources, if any, do you believe are needed to enhance ATF's ability to carry out its mission properly?

Response: ATF's FY26 enacted budget saw a \$40 million decrease from the FY 2025 enacted level. While I am grateful for this funding level compared to the FY 2025 House mark, it will continue the approximate 33% compounded reduction in operational funding -- \$8 to \$15 million in cuts layered on top of a \$50 million cut for FY 2026 pay raises, \$48 million in FY 2025 and \$100 million in FY 2024 reductions. These consecutive cuts compound across years, eroding core enforcement operations and markedly constraining ATF's ability to support state and local law-enforcement partners.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to adequately address the resources needed by ATF.

7. In 2023, the most recent year for which data is available, over 17,000 firearms recovered in Mexico and submitted to ATF for tracing were sourced to the United States. The majority of these firearms were traced to a U.S. retail purchaser. According to Everytown for Gun Safety, in many circumstances these guns are obtained through thefts from individuals or FFLs, private sales between unlicensed individuals, or FFLs selling guns directly to traffickers or to straw purchasers.

a. If confirmed, how will you identify and hold accountable dealers who routinely and irresponsibly turn a blind eye to straw purchases, a common practice drug cartels use to traffic guns?

Response: ATF is focused on stopping firearms trafficking to Mexico that arms the cartels, foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs), and transnational criminal organizations (TCOs). Under this administration, there has been a significant nationwide surge in law enforcement—preventing thousands of firearms from diversion and seizing substantial quantities of ammunition, firearm parts, and explosives. Since January 20, 2025, ATF has seized 36,277 illegal crime guns and 2,317,999 rounds of ammunition from prohibited persons, gang members, and suppliers for transnational criminal organizations. 4,359 of these seized firearms were bound for Mexico, where they would have been used by violent drug cartels and gangs. 648,975 rounds of the seized ammunition were bound for Mexico, which averages to over 1,600 rounds per day.² This Administration was also the first to pursue material support of terrorism charges against those providing weapons to the cartels.

² Press Release, USDOJ. *ATF Seizes Thousands of Illegal Firearms Bound for Cartels in Mexico* (Feb. 18, 2026). Available at: <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/atf-seizes-thousands-illegal-firearms-bound-cartels-mexico>.

In FY 2025, 89 licenses were revoked for willful violations of the Gun Control Act. The work our IOIs are doing is incredibly important in keeping America safe and has a direct effect on our ability to target gun violence.

ATF also works closely with our federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial partners through violent crime task forces, Crime Gun Intelligence Centers (CGIC), and the National Firearms Trafficking Center (NFTC) to identify and dismantle trafficking networks. Trace information from the National Tracing Center (NTC) also helps ATF agents identify straw purchasers, firearm traffickers, and illegal gun dealers.

b. Will you commit to holding these dealers accountable for aiding and abetting drug cartels?

Response: An essential part of ATF's mission is ensuring that FFLs comply with applicable federal laws and regulations, particularly the Gun Control Act of 1968 (GCA) and its implementing regulations. As previously stated, FFLs are one of the first lines of defense against gun crime and are often a source of critical enforcement information that helps law enforcement identify straw purchasers and disrupt illegal firearms trafficking schemes. Accordingly, ATF's Industry Operations Investigators (IOIs) work closely with new and existing licensees to make sure their businesses comply with applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations designed to protect the public from the criminal use of firearms. The Administration has pursued material support of terrorism charges, which are the heaviest criminal counts ever delivered for such conduct. The Administration, including ATF, takes arming Mexican drug cartels extremely seriously. If confirmed, I am committed to holding bad actors accountable and enforcing the laws as Congress has enacted and the courts have interpreted.

c. What concrete steps will you take as Director to tackle the source of gun trafficking rings and schemes, both through our nation's southern border and beyond?

Response: ATF's ability to keep America safe relies heavily on our expertise in developing and utilizing crime gun intelligence tools. These tools help our Special Agents and law enforcement partners identify, disrupt, and dismantle the root causes of gun crime across the country. Using NIBIN, firearms tracing, and touch DNA analysis, ATF can identify shooters and the illegal firearms traffickers and provide our law enforcement partners with the investigative tools necessary to arrest and prosecute violent criminals.

Our nation is seeing a surge in bold, high-profile criminal activities driven by transnational criminal organizations interested in advancing their criminal enterprises. Acts of violence have shattered families and threatened the safety of the communities and law enforcement officials throughout the country. That is

why ATF is focused on identifying, disrupting, and dismantling cross-border firearms trafficking. In addition to our own trafficking investigations, ATF has also partnered with the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI to support the Homeland Security Task Forces (HSTFs) this Administration has stood up across the nation. Working with our Federal law enforcement partners, ATF is at the forefront of protecting the homeland from evolving threats presented by transnational organized crime.

ATF continues to work with Mexican authorities to increase information sharing. This includes expanding tracing and ballistics information. I am committed to fostering those relationships with our Mexican partners.

Additionally, ATF will continue to work closely with our federal, state, local, and tribal partners through violent crime task forces, Crime Gun Intelligence Centers (CGIC), and the National Firearms Trafficking Center (NFTC) to identify and dismantle trafficking networks.

8. During your time in the ATF's Miami Field Division, you served as the Resident Agent in Charge of the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Task Force North.

a. Please describe your work with HIDTA and the benefits of the program.

Response: I worked with HIDTA as the Resident Agent in Charge (RAC) of HIDTA North, and as the Special Agent in Charge of the Miami Field Division.

As the RAC of HIDTA North, I ensured that my group protected the communities we served by focusing on violent street gangs, firearms traffickers, violent drug trafficking organizations, home invasion crews, armed robbery crews, and commercial robbery crews.

Due to the success of the HIDTA program, in 1990, the South Florida HIDTA (SFL HIDTA) program was established to disrupt the market for illegal drugs. The SFL HIDTA provided federal, state, and local law enforcement entities participating in the HIDTA program with coordinated financial resources, investigative support, and intelligence analysis that was used to dismantle and disrupt drug trafficking, money laundering, and armed violent criminal organizations. The SFL HIDTA was particularly focused on drug trafficking organizations and systems that also had harmful effects throughout the United States.

The SFL HIDTA fostered investigative cooperation amongst its law enforcement partners by developing strong relationships, built on mutual trust between local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies. South Florida law enforcement jointly developed strategies to target the region's drug, firearm, and related violence threats to public safety.

In September 2021, as the Special Agent in Charge of the Miami Field Division, I established the SFL HIDTA Crime Gun Intelligence Center (CGIC) to provide Tactical Intelligence Support to all HIDTA participating agencies. Specifically, the SFL HIDTA CGIC provides investigative de-confliction for all SFL HIDTA partnering agencies, serving as a one-stop shop for crime gun related analysis, which includes:

- DNA swabbing;
- Fingerprint preservation;
- Firearms tracing via e-Trace;
- Crime gun test firing;
- NIBIN BrassTrax Acquisition; and
- Investigative lead development and dissemination.

b. Did you support cutting HIDTA's budget?

Response: I was not involved in any discussion surrounding HIDTA's budget.

9. Ghost guns pose a unique threat to public safety because they are homemade weapons lacking serial numbers, making them untraceable. In March 2025, the Supreme Court upheld an ATF rule regulating ghost guns, finding the regulation consistent with the Gun Control Act. The rule required licensed gun sellers to add serial numbers to firearm kits and unfinished frames/receivers, conduct background checks, and verify that buyers are at least 21 years old.

a. Do you agree that ghost guns pose a serious threat to the public?

Response: Privately made firearms (i.e., ghost guns) represent a growing share of firearms recovered in violent crime investigations, including shootings and homicides. From ATF's perspective, any firearm illegally diverted into criminal markets, whether commercially or privately made, poses a threat to public safety.

b. If you are confirmed as Director, what would ATF's role be in addressing the manufacture and distribution of ghost guns?

Response: From ATF's perspective, we are mostly concerned about the illegal diversion of firearms into criminal markets, whether those firearms are commercially manufactured or privately made. This country has a robust tradition of individuals making firearms. Federal law allows individuals to make a firearm for personal use. However, under the GCA, any person engaged in the business of manufacturing firearms must have a federal firearms license and comply with the serialization and recordkeeping requirements of the GCA. Further, it remains unlawful for prohibited persons to possess firearms in or affecting commerce.

10. In recent years, the U.S. Surgeon General has deemed gun violence a public health crisis. Public health crises can be described as significant, widespread threats to communities that disrupt daily life and require collective action.

In your opinion, does gun violence fit that description?

Response: As a career law enforcement officer, I recognize the toll that gun violence has on our communities. I am committed to working with state and local partners to address that violence.

11. It has been four years since Congress passed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA). The law closed the boyfriend loophole, supported state red flag laws, and led to historic investments in CVI programs and school safety initiatives. The law made gun trafficking and firearm straw purchasing federal crimes and enhanced background checks for buyers under the age of 21.

a. How will you work to ensure that ATF builds on the successes of BSCA and the progress it represents in reducing gun violence and holding criminals accountable for gun-related crimes?

Response: The BSCA reflects Congress's determination to strengthen enforcement tools and invest in violence prevention. If confirmed, my responsibility will be to ensure that ATF fully and faithfully implements the statutes Congress has enacted. That includes enforcing the federal prohibitions on firearms trafficking and straw purchasing, supporting enhanced background check requirements consistent with the law, and coordinating with federal, state, and local partners to ensure effective implementation.

ATF's mission is focused on targeting violent criminals and dismantling firearms trafficking networks. The BSCA's trafficking and straw purchasing provisions provide additional clarity and prosecutorial tools to hold offenders accountable. We will continue to prioritize these cases, work closely with U.S. Attorneys' Offices, and leverage ATF's tracing, forensic, and intelligence capabilities to support investigations consistent with congressional intent.

b. Do you support BSCA's provisions that crack down on straw purchasing, expand background checks, support state red flag laws, and provide significant funding to support victims of gun violence?

Response: If confirmed as Director, my focus will remain on ensuring that ATF uses the tools Congress has provided to reduce violent crime, disrupt illegal firearms trafficking, and hold offenders accountable—while respecting constitutional protections and the limits of our authority.

The BSCA provisions addressing straw purchasing and firearms trafficking give law enforcement clearer authority to prosecute conduct that has long fueled violent crime. ATF enforces those provisions as written.

With respect to enhanced background checks, the Gun Control Act (GCA) already prohibits certain individuals – including felons, domestic abusers, and illegal aliens – from possessing firearms. To help ensure that those individuals cannot purchase firearms, the GCA requires FFLs to conduct background checks. These checks are an important tool to help prevent violent criminals from purchasing firearms.

ATF's role is generally limited to the authorities and responsibilities assigned to the agency under statute. As such, because Congress has not enacted a federal red flag law, current red flag laws exist and are enforced at only the state level. Funding decisions related to victim services, red flag laws, and community violence intervention are matters for Congress and the Department of Justice; ATF will administer any assigned responsibilities in accordance with statutory direction.

12. You reposted then-Acting ATF Director Kash Patel's March 24, 2025, social media post which characterized CNN as "fake news" for reporting that FBI leadership intended to reassign up to 1,000 ATF agents to the FBI to assist with border-related criminal enforcement.

a. Why did you repost Patel's social media post?

Response: ATF employees across the country were deeply concerned by CNN reports suggesting that up to 1,000 ATF agents would be reassigned to the FBI. These reports understandably created uncertainty within the workforce and raised questions about the Bureau's ability to continue carrying out its public safety mission. Upon learning of these reports, I contacted then-FBI Deputy Director Bongino and then Acting ATF FBI Director Patel to seek clarification. Both advised me that the reporting was inaccurate and confirmed no such reassignment was planned. Acting Director Patel also informed me that he would publicly address the issue to correct the record. I reposted Acting Director Patel's March 24, 2025, post to ensure that ATF personnel received accurate information directly from Department leadership, to alleviate unnecessary concern from the workforce, and to reinforce confidence in our personnel that ATF would continue to fulfill its essential law enforcement responsibilities without disruption.

b. Do you believe that CNN is "fake news"?

Response: My effort to "like" this post was not meant to be a comment, either positive or negative, on CNN as an institution.

13. In June 2025, ATF ended its longstanding Demand 2 Program, which would require ATF to notify and monitor firearms dealers whose guns frequently were found at crime scenes.

a. Did you support ATF's decision to terminate the program? Why or why not?

Response: The Demand Letter 2 Program has been paused. This pause, triggered, in part, by efforts of advocacy groups to mischaracterize the Demand Letter program and evade Tiahrt disclosure restrictions on firearm related data. This pause is allowing ATF to evaluate the program effectiveness from reporting mandates to tracing results.

b. The announcement to end the program was made by the firearm industry trade association, the NSSF, rather than ATF. Why did a non-governmental organization announce the end of this program, not the Bureau?

Response: ATF notified all FFLs enrolled in the program that quarterly report submissions were no longer required until further notice.

c. Approximately five percent of gun dealers sell approximately 90 percent of guns recovered from crime.

To what do you attribute that statistic?

Response: Any number of factors, including geography, sales volume, secondary market transfers by an original lawful purchaser, theft from an individual, and the level of sophistication of firearm traffickers, may influence this statistic. For example, Federal Firearms Licensees (FFLs) located in, or in proximity to, large, densely populated, urban areas typically sell or transfer a larger number of firearms, which, statistically, leads to an increased volume of traces.³ The fact that a firearm is traced back to a particular FFL, in isolation, is not indicative of a FFL engaging in illegal activity.

d. What role can ATF play in disrupting this supply chain?

Response: ATF's mission is to protect Americans from violent crime, specifically gun crime. We succeed by focusing our resources on the most dangerous offenders and the most significant sources of illegal firearms. Our efforts are intelligence-driven and collaborative. ATF works closely with our federal, state, local, and tribal partners through violent crime task forces, Crime Gun Intelligence Centers (CGIC), and the National Firearms Trafficking Center (NFTC) to identify repeat shooters, disrupt firearms trafficking networks, and trace crime guns to their sources. These efforts allow law enforcement to connect

³ See ATF, *National Firearms Commerce and Trafficking Assessment (NFCTA) Vol. II, Pt. III* (Jan. 2023), <https://www.atf.gov/firearms/docs/report/nfcta-volume-ii-part-iii-crime-guns-recovered-and-traced-us/download>.

firearms to violent crimes, identify patterns of trafficking, and intervene earlier to prevent future violence.

FFLs are our first line of defense in the fight against firearms trafficking. ATF balances the important job of regulating these licensees and working with them to disrupt trafficking networks, including by raising awareness among FFLs that their businesses may be susceptible to trafficking schemes as a possible result of the factors listed above. ATF routinely hosts firearms seminars to discuss the obligations of FFLs under the law and to respond to FFL questions and concerns. ATF also partners with the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) on the “Don’t Lie for the Other Guy” program, which is a multimedia campaign to help ATF to better educate America’s firearms retailers on how to detect would-be straw purchasers. The program also raises public awareness that it is a serious crime to buy a firearm for a prohibited person or for someone who does not otherwise want his or her name associated with the transaction.

14. In November 2024, I chaired a Judiciary Committee hearing on how conversion devices are amplifying the gun violence epidemic at which we examined how the proliferation of Glock switches, auto sears, bump stocks, and pistol braces are making our communities less safe. During your nomination hearing, you specifically mentioned drop-in auto-sears which convert firearms to shoot fully automatically.

a. Do you believe machinegun conversion devices and similar devices that make firearms more lethal are a threat to public safety?

Response: Machinegun conversion devices (MCDs) appear frequently in violent crime investigations. MCDs are classified as machineguns under federal firearms laws and can be made rapidly and covertly with inexpensive equipment.

b. Do you believe the use of 3D-printers and/or 3D-printing technology to create machineguns or parts intended to convert weapons into machineguns are a threat to public safety?

Response: Machinegun conversion devices can create public safety risk, regardless of whether they are 3D printed. Nevertheless, manufacturing technology is rapidly changing. ATF undertakes significant research to stay current on how these changes impact public safety.

15. While federal law requires FFLs to report the theft or loss of a firearm from the licensee’s inventory or collection, it does not require FFLs to securely store their inventories or implement anti-theft measures to protect their inventories against theft and loss. I am the lead sponsor of the SECURE Firearm Storage Act, which would reduce gun violence and prevent “smash and grab” gun store burglaries by enhancing security requirements for FFLs.

- a. **Do you believe FFLs should be required to do each of the following? If not, please explain why you believe such a measure is not necessary.**
- i. **Securely store their inventories after business hours.**
 - ii. **Store their paper records of firearms transactions in a secure location for ease of assistance with crime gun tracing.**
 - iii. **Implement any other anti-theft measures to better ensure their firearms do not end up being used in crimes.**

Response: With recent ATF data showing that FFL burglaries remain a meaningful source of firearms diverted into criminal markets, I can assure you that ATF takes this issue seriously. As part of ATF's effort to address this evolving risk, ATF emphasizes early detection, rapid investigation, enhanced prevention measures, and industry cooperation. For example, ATF partners with the firearms industry through the prevention initiative known as Operation Secure Store. The program provides security education, risk assessments, tactical guidance on strengthening storefront and storage security, and encourages voluntary adoption of better protective practices by retailers. While I can't comment on proposed legislation, I can commit to working with the Department and your staff to provide technical assistance.

Nomination of Robert Cekada
Nominee to be Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
Questions for the Record
Submitted February 11, 2026

QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR WHITEHOUSE

Please answer each question and sub-question individually and as specifically as possible.

- 1. How many ATF personnel whose responsibilities include assisting with the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) or National Tracing Center services were reassigned to assist with enforcement of immigration laws in 2025?**

Response: No personnel were reassigned from FOD/the NIBIN program office or the National Tracing Center (NTC) Division to assist with enforcement of immigration laws in 2025.

- a. On average, how many hours per day did such personnel spend on assisting with enforcement of immigration laws in 2025?**

Response: Please see the answer to Question 1.

- b. Please describe in as much detail what kind of assistance with enforcing immigration laws such personnel provided.**

Response: Please see the answer to Question 1.

- 2. How many law enforcement agencies utilized NIBIN in 2025?**

Response: While the latest numbers have not yet been reported for 2025, if confirmed, I will provide your office with an update when those figures are released.

- a. How many NIBIN acquisitions and leads were generated in 2025?**

Please see answer to Question 2.

- b. What steps is ATF taking to increase the number of agencies using NIBIN?**

ATF examines NIBIN data, firearms trace data, compliance with NIBIN standards, and crime trend data to identify geographic areas that are underserved by NIBIN and targets those areas for placement of NIBIN equipment to increase participation in the NIBIN program. ATF maintains a Crime Gun Intelligence Governing Board comprised of executive level law enforcement leaders from across the country which, in part, advocates for increased adoption of NIBIN by highlighting/demonstration their successful implementation in combating violent crime within their respective jurisdictions. ATF leadership in the field divisions regularly interact with partner law

enforcement agencies extolling the value of NIBIN and advocating for agencies to begin utilizing NIBIN.

ATF also leverages its partnerships in key stakeholder organizations like the International Chiefs of Police, Major County Sheriffs Association, and Major City Chiefs Association to increase awareness and participation in NIBIN. In addition, ATF works closely with the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and makes recommendations on locations that would benefit from BJA grant money to enhance their use of NIBIN.

c. What steps is ATF taking to increase the accuracy and effectiveness of NIBIN?

NIBIN is a highly accurate and proven investigative intelligence tool that can identify leads that were not previously available, link ballistic evidence from multiple crime scenes together that were committed with the same firearm, and link ballistic evidence from a crime scene to a recovered firearm. Every lead generated by the NNCTC is identified by a trained correlation specialist. The lead is peer reviewed by a second correlation specialist and then technically reviewed again by a firearms examiner. If the firearms examiner concurs, the lead is sent out. For no leads, the initial correlation specialist and a peer reviewer concur before the no lead is sent out.

All correlation specialists and firearms examiners must meet continuous training and certification requirements. The accuracy of the correlation specialists is monitored to ensure the highest degree of accuracy. ATF checks every acquisition that comes to the NNCTC for correlation to ensure that it has been acquired correctly. ATF sends surveys to the NNCTC partner agencies semi-annual to assess accuracy. The NNCTC is accredited by the ANSI National Accreditation Board as fulfilling the requirements for ISO/IEC 17202:2012 Accreditation Requirements for Inspection (2023) in the field of Forensic Inspection.

ATF is also exploring technological advancements such as the application of artificial intelligence (AI) to the correlation process to improve the efficiency of NIBIN.

Improving the efficiencies of NIBIN will enable ATF to provide faster service and allow additional law enforcement agencies to become part of the NNCTC, which will better assist law enforcement in identifying serial shooters and, when coupled with firearms tracing, the sources of crime guns that are used in violent acts. If proven viable, the use of AI may also allow for additional vendors equipment to contribute ballistic images into NIBIN, which would increase the number of law enforcement agencies contributing. ATF is also working to migrate NIBIN to a cloud environment, which will eliminate the need for physical servers while enabling faster, more expansive correlation searches. Additionally, it would provide greater capabilities for international correlation requests.

ATF is streamlining the process by which agencies can share data with NIBIN and tracing, reducing duplicative effort by both ATF and partner agencies and ensuring

interoperability between ATF's systems to maximize the impact of crime gun intelligence.

3. How many law enforcement agencies utilized ATF's crime gun-tracing services in 2025?

Response: While the latest numbers have not yet been reported for 2025, if confirmed, I will provide your office with an update when those figures are released.

a. What steps is ATF taking to increase the number of agencies using these services?

Response: ATF continues to promote the value of comprehensive firearms tracing via eTrace as a key component of its Crime Gun Intelligence strategy for reducing violent crime and protecting the public. The NTC also continues to expand the utilization of eTrace DIRECT, which is an API service enabling automated real-time trace request submission and results retrieval between a law enforcement agency's case/records management system and ATF's Firearms Tracing System.

b. What steps is ATF taking to increase the accuracy and effectiveness of these services?

Response: The NTC is currently undertaking a Comprehensive Crime Gun Tracing Modernization effort, which seeks to replace disparate and antiquated systems with a single, integrated, web-enabled application to streamline and automate the firearms tracing lifecycle, to include intake, validation, processing, workflow routing, and reporting. This modernization effort will streamline operations, reduce manual workloads, improve turnaround times, and provide enhanced actionable intelligence to law enforcement in its fight against violent crime, gun trafficking, and the illicit drug trade.

**Senate Judiciary Committee
Hearing on
Nominations
February 4, 2026
Questions for the Record
Senator Amy Klobuchar**

For Robert Cekada, to be Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

1. **Last summer Melissa Hortman and her husband Mark were assassinated. Then, a mass shooter attacked Annunciation Catholic Church in Minneapolis in the middle of Mass. Two children were killed. Twenty-one more people were injured, including 18 children.**

- a. **What do you think can be done to better prevent gun violence?**

Response: The biggest impact that we can have is to hold people accountable when they misuse firearms. The overwhelming majority of violent crime is committed by a small segment of the population. ATF succeeds by focusing our resources on the most dangerous offenders and the most significant sources of illegal firearms. Our efforts are intelligence-driven and collaborative. ATF works closely with our federal, state, local, and tribal partners through violent crime task forces, Crime Gun Intelligence Centers (CGIC), and the National Firearms Trafficking Center (NFTC) to identify repeat shooters, disrupt firearms trafficking networks, and trace crime guns to their sources. These efforts allow law enforcement to connect firearms to violent crimes, identify patterns of trafficking, and intervene earlier to prevent future violence.

If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize intelligence-driven enforcement, strong partnerships with state and local law enforcement, and focused use of ATF's unique authorities and expertise.

- b. **How will the ATF under your leadership specifically work to prevent acts of political violence like we saw in Minnesota?**

Response: ATF focuses on violent crime, whether or not it is politically motivated. ATF will continue to carry out its vital mission to protect America's communities by confronting violent crime, driven by the illegal use of firearms, explosives, and acts of arson.

2. **I am concerned that some of the administration's actions are undermining our ability to address gun violence. The President closed the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention and the administration's most recent budget proposal called for a 25 percent reduction in the ATF's budget.**

- a. **If you are required to make significant budget cuts, which operational capabilities would you prioritize?**

Response: ATF is one of the smallest federal law enforcement agencies relative to its nationwide responsibilities, and our resources must be aligned with the areas that have the greatest public safety impact. Preserving front-line special agent capacity, investigative intelligence, and firearm tracing and laboratory infrastructure would be essential to maintaining effectiveness under constrained funding.

If required to implement significant budget reductions, I would prioritize ATF's core violent crime mission. That includes firearm trafficking investigations, enforcement against prohibited persons and repeat violent offenders, explosives and arson response capabilities, and the National Tracing Center and forensic laboratory functions that directly support criminal investigations.

b. What effect would these proposed budget cuts have on ATF programs that support state and local law enforcement such as the task force programs?

Response: Task forces are force multipliers that combine federal authority with state and local expertise to target violent crime and firearms trafficking. My priority would be to preserve as much direct support to state and local law enforcement as possible, while ensuring ATF remains focused on its statutory mission and the most serious public safety threats.

3. I led the effort to close the boyfriend loophole and prevent dating partners convicted of domestic violence from buying or owning a gun. I now lead legislation to prevent convicted stalkers from buying or owning firearms.

a. How can we better ensure convicted domestic abusers do not have access to guns?

Response: I share your concern for victims of domestic violence. Since passage of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA), ATF has been working closely with the U.S. Attorneys' Offices across the country to ensure that prosecutors and our Special Agents are trained on the amendments made by the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act.

Often, domestic violence is first reported to local law enforcement. This is why our relationship with our state and local partners is so important. When we work closely with them, our agents can identify when federal laws have been broken, and present federal options for prosecution. This can lead to more timely prosecutions and stricter sentences for these violent offenders.

4. For years I have been very concerned about illegal gun conversion devices, particularly Glock auto-sears, which can convert semi-automatic guns into fully automatic weapons. I have introduced legislation to require federal and state law enforcement to crack down on these dangerous devices.

a. How do you believe the ATF and other law enforcement agencies can better address the proliferation of illegal gun conversion devices?

Response: The Gun Control Act generally makes it unlawful for any person to possess machinegun conversion devices (MCDs). To counteract the rapid increase of MCDs and other emerging technologies, ATF established an Emerging Threats Center (ETC) to conduct and coordinate multi-jurisdictional investigations, undercover operations, and other intelligence-driven investigative functions related to the unlawful use of emerging technologies which pose a potential threat to public safety. ATF's ETC also provides investigative direction and assistance to disrupt and dismantle criminal activity conducted through internet-based platforms.

Through these investigations, ATF has found that MCDs sold online by foreign companies are mass produced and sold at lower prices. Chinese companies frequently advertise MCDs on various websites whose domain names change frequently, encrypted apps (e.g., Telegram and Whats App), and via online marketplaces, like Alibaba, eBay, and DHgate. Although some of these vendors, like eBay, have mechanisms in place to allow ATF to report items being sold in violation of U.S. law, many do not. However, even if an online vendor's policies and practices expressly prohibit the sale of MCDs, Chinese and other foreign-based companies utilize deceptive marketing practices, such as selling the MCDs as "dog tags" or "toy car kits" to avoid detection.

While ATF monitors and conducts proactive enforcement against foreign-based websites advertising the sale of firearms that are regulated by the Gun Control Act and National Firearms Act, including MCDs, given that ATF's jurisdiction is limited to reducing violent crime and firearm trafficking investigations related to U.S.-sourced firearms, ATF frequently works with Homeland Security Investigations, Customs and Border Protection, and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service to investigate those entities and individuals located in foreign countries who illegally import MCDs into the United States. To that end, ATF and its law enforcement partners, including CBP and the Massachusetts State Police, led an investigation that resulted in the seizure of more than 350 internet domains that were allegedly used for the illegal importation of MCDs and silencers from China.¹ More recently ATF and its law enforcement partners in the Homeland Security Task Force (HSTF) seized two internet domains and two cryptocurrency accounts that were allegedly used for the illegal importation of MCDs from China.² During the course of the investigation, the HSTF seized 3,093 MCDs 282 firearms; 124 silencers; and over 12,000 rounds of ammunition.³

ATF is committed to continuing its work with our federal, state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement partners to curb the proliferation of MCDs that are trafficked from both domestic and international sources. For example, ATF examines and

¹ See USAO – District of MA, *Federal Authorities Seize Over 350 Website Domains Used to Import Illegal Switches and Silencers from China*, Sept. 11, 2024, available at <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ma/pr/federal-authorities-seize-over-350-website-domains-used-import-illegal-switches-and>

² Press Release, USAO-MA, *Federal Authorities Seize Two Website Domains Used to Import Illegal Machine Gun Conversion Devices and Silencers from China* (January 13, 2026), available at: <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ma/pr/federal-authorities-seize-two-website-domains-used-import-illegal-machine-gun-conversion>.

³ Id.

classifies MCDs submitted for review by state and local law enforcement agencies. ATF also provides expert assistance and training to ensure that law enforcement on the front lines can identify and seize MCDs, some of which are quite small and difficult to detect. ATF has issued technical bulletins about the development, use, and identification of MCDs and made such technical bulletins available to our law enforcement partners. As part of these efforts, ATF has worked with federal, state, and local partners to launch initiatives focused on enhancing enforcement efforts to seize MCDs and hold offenders accountable.

**Nomination of Robert Cekada to be Director of the
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
Questions for the Record
Submitted February 11, 2026**

QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR COONS

- 1. Do you believe that the Senate Judiciary Committee has a responsibility to evaluate executive nominees to the best of its ability, including by asking questions on the record to make each nominee's unique background and viewpoint clear to the American people?**

Response: Yes, I believe that the Senate Judiciary Committee has a responsibility to evaluate executive nominees to the best of its ability, including by asking questions on the record to make each nominee's unique background and viewpoint clear to the American people.

- 2. Do you believe that you, as the nominee to serve as the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, have a responsibility to the American people to give full and complete answers to the Committee's questions to the best of your ability and in good faith?**

Response: Yes, I believe that I have a responsibility to the American people to give full and complete answers to the Committee's questions to the best of my ability and in good faith.

- 3. Do you believe you fulfilled this responsibility with the answers you have provided to my questions for the record?**

Response: Yes, I believe that I have.

- a. Did you receive assistance from staff in the White House, the Department of Justice, or any other organization in writing your responses to these questions? If so, from whom did you receive assistance and what was the nature of the assistance you received?**

Response: While I believe these answers to be my own, and representative of my own knowledge, experience, and viewpoints, throughout the nominations process, like most candidates who have gone through this process, I have had support and assistance from various trusted friends, peers, and colleagues along the way.

- 4. At any point during the process that led to your nomination, did you have any discussions with anyone—including but not limited to individuals at the White House, at the Justice Department, or at outside groups—about your loyalty to President Trump? If so, please elaborate.**

Response: No, I did not have any discussions with anyone pertaining to my loyalty to President Trump.

- 5. If President Trump asked you to do something you judged to be illegal or unethical, would you resign? Please answer yes or no and explain what, specifically, you would do if put in this situation.**

Response: The question poses a hypothetical, which I do not believe would occur. If confirmed, I will always follow the law, as well as uphold my oath to support and defend the Constitution.

As a dedicated law enforcement officer, my oath is to the Constitution and the laws of the United States, and I would be obligated to ensure that any directive I carry out is lawful and consistent with that oath. My responsibility is to uphold the rule of law, maintain the integrity of the office, and ensure that my actions remain consistent with my legal and ethical obligations as a federal law enforcement officer. If I were placed in a position where I was directed to take action that was clearly unlawful and inconsistent with my oath, and the issue could not be resolved through appropriate legal and institutional channels, I would not carry out such an action and would take any necessary steps, to include resigning from my position as the Director, in order to remain faithful to my oath and to the Constitution.

- a. If you would not resign even if President Trump asked you to do something you judged to be illegal or unethical, is there any circumstance that would cause you to resign?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 5.

- 6. If Attorney General Bondi or another superior at the DOJ asked you to do something you judged to be illegal or unethical, would you resign? Please answer yes or no and explain what, specifically, you would do if put in this situation.**

Response: The question poses a hypothetical, which I do not believe would occur. If confirmed, I will always follow the law, as well as uphold my oath to support and defend the Constitution.

As a dedicated law enforcement officer, my oath is to the Constitution and the laws of the United States, and I would be obligated to ensure that any directive I carry out is lawful and consistent with that oath. My responsibility is to uphold the rule of law, maintain the integrity of the office, and ensure that my actions remain consistent with my legal and ethical obligations as a federal law enforcement officer. If I were placed in a position where I was directed to take action that was clearly unlawful and inconsistent with my oath, and the issue could not be resolved through appropriate legal and institutional channels, I would not carry out such an action and would take any necessary steps, to include resignation from my position as the Director, in order to remain faithful to my oath and to the Constitution.

- b. If you would not resign even if Attorney General Bondi or another superior at the DOJ asked you to do something you judged to be illegal or unethical, is there any circumstance that would cause you to resign?**

Response: Please see my response to Question 7.

- 7. As the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), when is it appropriate to refuse to follow a directive from the President?**

Response: The President is the head of the executive branch. As part of the executive branch, ATF is accountable to presidential directive. I will carry out all lawful directives.

As a federal law enforcement officer, and if confirmed, as Director of ATF, my oath is to the Constitution and the laws of the United States. If I were presented with a directive that raised legal or ethical concerns, I would seek immediate guidance from the Attorney General or other appropriate Department legal counsel and ATF's Office of Chief Counsel, to ensure a full and proper legal review. I will not carry out any directive that I believe to be unlawful or unethical. My responsibility is to uphold the rule of law, maintain the integrity of the office, and ensure that my actions remain consistent with my legal and ethical obligations as a federal law enforcement officer.

As a federal law enforcement officer, and if confirmed, as Director of ATF, my oath is to the Constitution and the laws of the United States.

- 8. If confirmed, what procedures would you put in place to avoid politicization of ATF and ensure consultation with career staff?**

Response: If confirmed, I would remain a sworn federal law enforcement officer, working alongside the same dedicated career professionals I have served with for more than two decades. I have deep respect for the expertise, professionalism, and institutional knowledge of the ATF career workforce. I am committed to ensuring their voices are heard and that their judgment informs my decision making at every level. To ensure I safeguard ATF's integrity and to avoid politicization, all operational decisions will be grounded in the law, established policies, and the facts of each case. I will not allow external pressures or political considerations to affect those decisions. I will maintain regular engagement with senior leadership, including assistant directors, special agents in charge, and subject matter experts, to foster an environment where employees are encouraged to provide candid and professional feedback and advice. I will also reinforce ATF's long-standing adherence to Department ethics standards, the rule of law, and merit system principles. My priority is to preserve ATF's reputation as a professional, nonpartisan law enforcement agency focused solely on its mission of reducing violent crime attributed to the illegal use of firearms, explosives, and acts of arson.

I also recognize, however, that the President is the head of the executive branch. As the head of the executive branch, he has the right to direct policy. I will follow the Administration's policy directions.

9. When it comes to conducting yourself ethically in your profession, who do you see as a role model?

Response: Generations of police officers, detectives, and federal agents who have faithfully upheld their oaths, protected the public, and conducted themselves with honor are my role models. Their examples continue to guide my conduct and serve as a constant reminder of the responsibility carried by those who serve in positions of public trust. These law enforcement professionals consistently demonstrate unwavering integrity, professionalism, and fidelity to the Constitution and the communities we serve. They consistently prioritize the rule of law above any personal or institutional interest. They reinforce the principle that our authority as law enforcement officers is derived from the public's trust.

10. As a general matter, what is your approach to balancing ATF's responsibilities across the realms of firearms, explosives, arson, and alcohol and tobacco?

Response: Throughout my nearly 34 years in law enforcement, my mission has been clear: protect the American people by targeting violent criminals and holding offenders accountable under the law. If confirmed as Director, my approach to balancing ATF's responsibilities across firearms, explosives, arson, and alcohol and tobacco enforcement will be grounded in that same principle—public safety, guided by statute and the Constitution.

ATF's core mission is public safety. We target violent criminals, disrupt firearms trafficking networks that arm gangs and cartels, investigate bombings and arsons, and enforce the laws governing regulated industries. These responsibilities are not competing priorities; they are interconnected components of the same mission. Firearms trafficking cases often intersect with organized crime, explosives violations, and arson investigations. Effective enforcement requires coordination across all mission areas.

At the same time, ATF is one of the smallest federal law enforcement agencies relative to its nationwide jurisdiction and expanding workload. In addition to criminal investigations, ATF is responsible for industry oversight, compliance inspections, licensing reviews, and forensic laboratory services that support federal, state, and local partners. Balancing these responsibilities requires disciplined prioritization, data-driven resource allocation, and strong support for the special agents, Industry Operations Investigators, forensic scientists, and professional staff who carry out this work.

11. Given that the majority of guns that are used in crimes have been obtained illegally, what changes, if any, would you make to ATF's current strategies for targeting the diversion of legally purchased guns?

Response: ATF's ability to keep America safe relies heavily on our expertise in developing and utilizing crime gun intelligence tools. These tools help our Special Agents and law enforcement partners identify, disrupt, and dismantle the root causes of gun crime across the country. Using NIBIN, firearms tracing, and touch DNA analysis, ATF can identify shooters and the illegal firearms traffickers and provide our law enforcement partners with the investigative tools necessary to arrest and prosecute violent criminals.

Our nation is seeing a surge in bold, high-profile criminal activities driven by transnational criminal organizations interested in advancing their criminal enterprises. Acts of violence have shattered families and threatened the safety of the communities and law enforcement officials throughout the country. That is why ATF is focused on identifying, disrupting, and dismantling cross-border firearms trafficking. In addition to our own trafficking investigations, ATF has partnered with the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI to support the Homeland Security Task Forces (HSTFs) this Administration has stood up across the nation. Working with our Federal law enforcement partners, ATF is at the forefront of protecting the homeland from evolving threats presented by transnational organized crime.

ATF has also renewed its focus on rebuilding trust with federal firearms licensees (FFLs), gun owners, and the public by prioritizing public safety and collaboration. FFLs are one of the first lines of defense against gun crime and are often a source of critical enforcement information that helps law enforcement identify straw purchasers and disrupt illegal firearms trafficking schemes. Accordingly, ATF's Industry Operations Investigators (IOIs) work closely with new and existing licensees to make sure their businesses comply with applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations designed to protect the public from the criminal use of firearms. If confirmed, I am committed to holding bad actors accountable, and under this administration, ATF has already revoked the licenses of dealers who were complicit in trafficking.

Additionally, ATF will continue to work closely with our federal, state, local, and tribal partners through violent crime task forces, Crime Gun Intelligence Centers (CGIC), and the National Firearms Trafficking Center (NFTC) to identify and dismantle trafficking networks. If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize data-driven enforcement, strong partnerships with state and local law enforcement, and focused use of ATF's unique authorities and expertise to target the diversion of legally purchased guns. At the same time, if confirmed, I will ensure that ATF carries out its mission in a fair, lawful, and transparent manner, respecting the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding Americans, while holding firearms traffickers and violent criminals fully accountable.

- 12. At your Senate Judiciary Committee nomination hearing, you told Chairman Grassley that one of your priorities if confirmed as Director would be to "follow President Trump's Second Amendment Executive Order to review all ATF policies, procedures, and regulations to ensure that none of those infringe upon the Second Amendment unnecessarily."**

- a. **If you are confirmed, what criteria will you use to identify ATF policies, procedures, and regulations that may infringe upon the Second Amendment unnecessarily?**

Response: ATF is committed to protecting the constitutional rights of law-abiding Americans, including those guaranteed by the Second Amendment. The Bureau does not target lawful firearm ownership or commerce. Rather, ATF focuses its enforcement efforts on individuals and criminal organizations that illegally use firearms to commit violent crime. By holding offenders accountable to the fullest extent of the law, ATF promotes public safety while preserving the lawful exercise of Second Amendment rights.

ATF works to reduce violent crime involving the criminal illegal use of firearms through an integrated criminal and regulatory enforcement approach. Criminal investigations prioritize armed violent offenders, career criminals, narco-terrorists, violent gangs, and domestic and international firearms traffickers. To prevent the diversion of firearms from legal to illegal markets, ATF Industry Operations Investigators conduct license qualification and compliance inspections and partner with the firearms industry through outreach and training. Regulatory enforcement also supports compliance with applicable federal, state, and local firearm laws.

If confirmed as Director, I commit to ensuring fairness and transparency in ATF's regulatory enforcement, to following the procedures laid out in the Administrative Procedure Act, and to protecting Americans' Second Amendment rights while also prioritizing public safety.

- 13. Shortly after you became Deputy Director, in June 2025 you approved two ATF rulings with deregulatory effects. ATF Ruling 2025-1 reversed a ban on the importation of certain firearm barrels. ATF Ruling 2025-2 removed restrictions on the importation of training rounds typically used for firearms training and recreational purposes.**

- a. **How were the ATF policies at issue in ATF Ruling 2025-1 and ATF Ruling 2025-2 identified for reconsideration?**

Response: The importation of firearm barrels and training ammunition have long been topics of concern expressed by the firearms industry and general public. The policies addressed in ATF Ruling 2025-1 and ATF Ruling 2025-2 were identified for reconsideration pursuant to President Trump's Executive Order directing the Department of Justice to review existing firearms-related regulations and policies for consistency with statutory text and the Second Amendment. In carrying out that directive, ATF undertook a legal and policy review of prior import determinations to ensure they were grounded in the governing statutes enacted by Congress. The reconsideration reflected our obligation to faithfully interpret and apply the law, consistent with constitutional protections and public safety.

b. What was the process for revising these ATF policies?

Response: The process for revising these policies involved review by ATF’s Office of Chief Counsel, subject-matter experts within the Firearms and Ammunition Technology Division and the Firearms and Explosives Imports Branch, and senior career leadership. The rulings were evaluated to ensure consistency with statutory text, prior regulatory interpretations, and applicable Department of Justice guidance. Final determinations were issued through formal ATF rulings to provide clarity and transparency to regulated industry members and the public.

c. What influence, if any, did stakeholders outside of ATF—including DOJ, the White House, or outside organizations—have in these decisions?

Response: It is well-known that the importation of firearm barrels and training ammunition have long been topics of concern expressed by the firearms industry and general public. The policies addressed in ATF Ruling 2025-1 and ATF Ruling 2025-2 were identified for reconsideration pursuant to President Trump’s Executive Order directing the Department of Justice to review existing firearms-related regulations and policies for consistency with statutory text and the Second Amendment. These decisions were made within ATF and the Department of Justice through standard internal coordination. While the Executive Order directed a review, the substance of the rulings was based on ATF’s standard legal analysis and application of the governing statutes.

14. On June 22, 2024, you were a panelist for an event called “Preventing and Reducing Gun Violence” at the 92nd Annual Meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. The panel “focus[ed] on both enforcement and prevention strategies that cities can use to prevent and reduce gun violence and how federal partners can help them in this effort.” My home community of Wilmington, Delaware is working to reduce gun violence, and I want to identify ways that the federal government can help state and local law enforcement confront this challenge.

a. What enforcement and prevention strategies can cities use to prevent and reduce gun violence, and how can federal partners such as ATF help them in this effort?

Response: NIBIN is vital to violent crime reduction strategies because it enables investigators to match ballistic evidence across cases. Crime guns are often used in multiple crimes, and NIBIN can link the firearms from multiple crime scenes, allowing law enforcement to more quickly disrupt shooting cycles. In addition to the more than 400 NIBIN sites that are located throughout the country, ATF has two NIBIN National Correlation and Training Centers (NNCTCs) - one in Huntsville, AL and the other in Wichita, KS. These centers, with their cutting-edge technology and centralized intelligence-sharing capabilities, enable ATF to

disrupt firearms trafficking networks and reduce gun violence across the country by providing ballistics analysis and correlation to federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement within 24-48 hours. Since their inception, the NNCTCs have provided correlation services to over 5,800 law enforcement agencies across the country.

ATF leadership in the field divisions regularly interact with partner law enforcement agencies extolling the value of NIBIN and advocating for agencies to begin utilizing NIBIN. ATF also leverages its partnerships in organizations like the International Chiefs of Police, Major County Sheriffs Association, and Major City Chiefs Association to increase awareness and participation in NIBIN. In addition, ATF works closely with the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) and makes recommendations on locations that would benefit from BJA grant money to enhance their use of NIBIN. Increasing the number of local law enforcement agencies that contribute to NIBIN would better enable ATF, its federal, state, local, and tribal partners to disrupt firearms trafficking networks and reduce gun violence.

Moreover, to help ensure that prohibited persons –including felons, domestic abusers, and illegal aliens – cannot purchase firearms, the Gun Control Act (GCA) requires Federal Firearms Licensees (FFLs) to conduct background checks. These checks are an important tool to help prevent violent criminals from purchasing firearms. However, the background checks are only as good as the information put into the system. States and local governments should report their information to help prevent and reduce gun violence.

b. Do you agree that it would help state and local law enforcement to know when a prohibited person tried to buy a gun?

Response: Yes, as noted above, background checks are only as good as the information put into the system. State and local governments should report their information. Whether at Virginia Tech or Sutherland Springs, we've seen multiple mass shootings from a person who purchased a firearm at a dealer and should have been denied by NICS—but NICS lacked the relevant information from a federal or state agency. Under the NICS Denial Notification Act of 2022, the FBI is required to notify state, local, or tribal law enforcement within 24 hours when a prohibited individual fails a background check.

c. What additional actions do you think the Justice Department should take to address gun violence?

Response: The biggest effect on violent crime occurs when individuals who engage in violence and misuse firearms are held accountable. The Department of Justice, in this Administration, has been willing to pursue individuals who use firearms for unlawful purposes.

This Administration is taking a whole of government approach to addressing gun violence – including through the issuance of Executive Order 14159, which established the Homeland Security Task Forces. ATF is committed to being the most trusted and collaborative partner in public safety. The men and women of ATF continuously show up for our local, state, and federal law enforcement partners, working shoulder-to-shoulder, providing our resources and unique investigative tools to help them target violent crime in their communities. When they call, we answer. No single law enforcement agency can do this job alone and we pride ourselves on ensuring that no agency has a better partner than ATF. Continued investments in ATF will enable it to strengthen these partnerships, modernize its systems – including NIBIN and the National Tracing Center – and expedite licensing for lawful firearms owners.

Questions for the Record for Robert Cekada
Submitted by Senator Richard Blumenthal
February 11, 2026

1. In your time at ATF, have you seen an increase in the number of ghost gun recoveries?

a. Do you agree that ghost guns undermine ATF’s ability to enforce firearms regulations and keep our communities safe? If so, please describe their impact on ATF’s ability to fulfill its mission.

Response: Privately made firearms (PMFs) represent a growing share of firearms recovered in violent crime investigations, including shootings and homicide. ATF has seen firearm traffickers increasingly use firearm buy-build-shoot kits and 3-D printed frames, receivers, and machine-gun conversion devices (MCDs) due to their low cost and rapid production. From ATF’s perspective, we are mostly concerned about the illegal diversion of firearms into criminal markets, whether those firearms are commercially manufactured or privately made.

b. If confirmed, will you work to implement regulations to subject ghost guns to the same rules and safeguards that are applied to traditionally manufactured firearms?

Response: The prior Administration already took this regulatory action via the frame and receiver rule.

2. In April 2025, Attorney General Bondi repealed ATF’s Enhanced Regulatory Enforcement Policy—also called the “zero tolerance” policy—under which ATF would revoke the licenses of firearm dealers the first time such dealer willfully violated one of five federal firearms laws. Those violations included 18 U.S.C. §§ 922(d), 922(t), 923(g)(1)(A), 923(g)(1)(B), and 923(g)(7)

a. When is it appropriate for a federal firearms license holder (FFL) who violates the above statutes to have its license revoked?

Response: The revised administrative action policy focuses on willful violations that have a direct impact on public safety. FFLs will face immediate revocation proceedings when they willfully violate the Gun Control Act in a manner dangerous to public safety. For example, ATF continues to aggressively revoke FFLs who engage in the diversion of firearms to criminal markets, such as arming the cartels. The revised administrative action policy also approves of immediate revocation for knowingly transferring a firearm to a prohibited person, falsifying records, or refusing to comply with the Brady background check requirements.

b. When is it appropriate for an FFL who violates the above statutes to face criminal penalties?

Response: Criminal referrals depend on the severity of the misconduct, including whether the FFL acted with criminal intent. Criminal penalties for FFLs are most common when licensees knowingly arm criminals. ATF takes diversions of firearms to the criminal markets seriously.

c. If confirmed, will you work toward reinstating the Enhanced Regulatory Enforcement Policy at ATF?

Response: In compliance with the Executive Order on Second Amendment Rights, ATF revoked the Enhanced Regulatory Enforcement Policy in May 2025 and replaced it with ATF's Federal Firearms Administrative Action Policy and Procedures.¹ The Administrative Action Policy emphasizes firearm traceability and public safety and deemphasizes immaterial paperwork errors.

If confirmed, I will not reinstitute the Enhanced Regulatory Enforcement Policy. That policy did not increase public safety, and it caused significant damage to ATF, including its ability to conduct criminal investigations.

If confirmed as Director, I commit to ensuring fairness and transparency in ATF's regulatory enforcement and to protecting Americans' Second Amendment rights while also prioritizing public safety.

3. If confirmed, will you commit to providing this Committee, on an annual basis, the following information:

a. The total number of ATF's FFL compliance inspections, categorized by the type of FFL;

Response: Yes. As I stated in my testimony, I commit to being transparent, responsive, and forthright with this Committee as we work together to protect the American people.

b. The total number of violations cited during ATF's FFL compliance inspections, categorized by the type of violation;

Response: Yes.

c. The total number of administrative actions taken by ATF for FFL compliance violations, including the total number of initial and final notices of revocation issued and the total number of criminal prosecutions brought against FFLs;

Response: Yes.

¹ U.S. Dep't of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives, *ATF O 5370.1H: Federal Firearms Administrative Action Policy and Procedures* (May 6, 2025), <https://www.atf.gov/media/22596/download>.

- d. The number of registered weapons regulated under the National Firearms Act of 1934 (NFA) that were used in crime or recovered at crime scenes, categorized by type of weapon; and

Response: ATF’s National Tracing Center does not query the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record (NFRTR) database in furtherance of a trace request as it contains tax privileged information. The firearms tracing process relies solely on records that are required to be maintained pursuant to the Gun Control Act of 1968. Therefore, we are unable to provide information as to whether NFA weapons that were used in crimes and traced were registered or unregistered.

- e. The number of unregistered weapons regulated under the NFA that were used in crime or recovered at crime scenes, categorized by type of weapon.

Response: Please see answer to Question 3d.

4. Please provide the information described in question 3 for years 2015-2025, disaggregated by year.

The numbers below reflect information from 2024. While the latest numbers have not yet been reported for 2025, if confirmed, I will provide your office with an update when those figures are released.

- a. The total number of ATF’s FFL compliance inspections, categorized by the type of FFL:

Total FFL Compliance Inspections by FFL Type and Calendar Year Closed, 2015-2024											
FFL Type	CALENDAR YEAR CLOSED										Total FFL Compliance Inspections
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
Type 01 Dealer in Firearms	5,138	5,931	6,497	7,216	9,638	3,131	4,258	4,700	5,801	5,571	57,881
Type 02 Pawnbroker in Firearms	1,147	1,250	1,404	1,707	1,808	590	672	839	987	1,179	11,583
Type 03 Collector of Curios and Relics	80	52	49	33	10	2	6	7	7	6	252
Type 06 Manufacturer of Ammunition for Firearms	118	129	137	102	143	72	132	70	112	92	1,107
Type 07 Manufacturer of Firearms	1,959	2,134	2,336	1,796	1,958	851	1,858	1,486	1,866	2,045	18,289
Type 08 Importer of Firearms	210	226	235	161	173	85	155	104	179	187	1,715
Type 09 Dealer in Destructive Devices	8	9	14	13	12	4	17	13	6	15	111
Type 10 Importer of Destructive Devices	63	70	67	61	69	17	50	51	45	66	559
Type 11 Manufacturer of Destructive Devices	50	51	28	40	32	16	29	22	26	29	323
Total	8,773	9,852	10,767	11,129	13,843	4,768	7,177	7,292	9,029	9,190	91,820

- b. The total number of violations cited during ATF’s FFL compliance inspections, categorized by the type of violation.

Response:

Total Number of Violations Cited During FFL Compliance Inspections by Calendar Year, 2015-2024

Calendar Year Closed	Total Violations Cited
2015	12,623
2016	14,435
2017	15,882
2018	16,093
2019	20,134
2020	7,870
2021	7,997
2022	10,323
2023	12,931
2024	12,768
Total	131,056

Top Ten Violations Cited - Calendar Year 2015

Violation Description	Violation Cited Total	
27 CFR 478.124(c)(1)	Failure to obtain a completed ATF F 4473	1,591
27 CFR 478.125(e)	Failure to maintain an accurate/complete/timely acquisition and disposition record	1,541
27 CFR 478.21(a)	Failure to complete forms as prescribed	1,502
27 CFR 478.124(c)(3)(iv)	Failure to record NICS contact information on an ATF F 4473	1,241
27 CFR 478.124(c)(3)(i)	Failure to verify or record Identification document on ATF F 4473	1,076
27 CFR 478.124(c)(5)	Failure by transferor to sign and/or date an ATF F 4473	1,007
27 CFR 478.126a	Failure to report multiple sales or other dispositions of pistols and revolvers	946
27 CFR 478.124(c)(4)	Failure to record firearm information on an ATF F 4473	596
27 CFR 478.102(a)	Failure to complete a NICS/POC background check	400
27 CFR 478.99(c)	Unlawful sale or delivery of a firearm to a prohibited person	350

Top Ten Violations Cited - Calendar Year 2016

Violation Description	Violation Cited Total	
27 CFR 478.124(c)(1)	Failure to obtain a completed ATF F 4473	1,857
27 CFR 478.21(a)	Failure to complete forms as prescribed	1,690
27 CFR 478.125(e)	Failure to maintain an accurate/complete/timely acquisition and disposition record	1,675
27 CFR 478.124(c)(3)(iv)	Failure to record NICS contact information on an ATF F 4473	1,427
27 CFR 478.124(c)(3)(i)	Failure to verify or record Identification document on ATF F 4473	1,208
27 CFR 478.124(c)(5)	Failure by transferor to sign and/or date an ATF F 4473	1,181
27 CFR 478.126a	Failure to report multiple sales or other dispositions of pistols and revolvers	1,046
27 CFR 478.124(c)(4)	Failure to record firearm information on an ATF F 4473	664
27 CFR 478.102(a)	Failure to complete a NICS/POC background check	450
27 CFR 478.99(c)	Unlawful sale or delivery of a firearm to a prohibited person	346

Top Ten Violations Cited - Calendar Year 2017

Violation Description	Violation Cited Total	
27 CFR 478.124(c)(1)	Failure to obtain a completed ATF F 4473	2,076
27 CFR 478.21(a)	Failure to complete forms as prescribed	1,976
27 CFR 478.125(e)	Failure to maintain an accurate/complete/timely acquisition and disposition record	1,767
27 CFR 478.124(c)(3)(iv)	Failure to record NICS contact information on an ATF F 4473	1,564
27 CFR 478.124(c)(5)	Failure by transferor to sign and/or date an ATF F 4473	1,336
27 CFR 478.124(c)(3)(i)	Failure to verify or record Identification document on ATF F 4473	1,305
27 CFR 478.126a	Failure to report multiple sales or other dispositions of pistols and revolvers	1,026
27 CFR 478.124(c)(4)	Failure to record firearm information on an ATF F 4473	824
27 CFR 478.102(a)	Failure to complete a NICS/POC background check	489
27 CFR 478.123(a)	Failure to maintain an accurate/complete/timely manufacture or acquisition record	351

Top Ten Violations Cited - Calendar Year 2018		
Violation Description		Violation Cited Total
27 CFR 478.124(c)(1)	Failure to obtain a completed ATF F 4473	2,180
27 CFR 478.21(a)	Failure to complete forms as prescribed	1,997
27 CFR 478.125(e)	Failure to maintain an accurate/complete/timely acquisition and disposition record	1,926
27 CFR 478.124(c)(3)(iv)	Failure to record NICS contact information on an ATF F 4473	1,615
27 CFR 478.124(c)(5)	Failure by transferor to sign and/or date an ATF F 4473	1,358
27 CFR 478.124(c)(3)(i)	Failure to verify or record Identification document on ATF F 4473	1,336
27 CFR 478.126a	Failure to report multiple sales or other dispositions of pistols and revolvers	1,067
27 CFR 478.124(c)(4)	Failure to record firearm information on an ATF F 4473	829
27 CFR 478.102(a)	Failure to complete a NICS/POC background check	454
27 CFR 478.123(a)	Failure to maintain an accurate/complete/timely manufacture or acquisition record	295

Top Ten Violations Cited - Calendar Year 2019		
Violation Description		Violation Cited Total
27 CFR 478.124(c)(1)	Failure to obtain a completed ATF F 4473	3,079
27 CFR 478.125(e)	Failure to maintain an accurate/complete/timely acquisition and disposition record	2,520
27 CFR 478.21(a)	Failure to complete forms as prescribed	2,352
27 CFR 478.124(c)(3)(iv)	Failure to record NICS contact information on an ATF F 4473	1,978
27 CFR 478.124(c)(5)	Failure by transferor to sign and/or date an ATF F 4473	1,767
27 CFR 478.124(c)(3)(i)	Failure to verify or record Identification document on ATF F 4473	1,566
27 CFR 478.126a	Failure to report multiple sales or other dispositions of pistols and revolvers	1,421
27 CFR 478.124(c)(4)	Failure to record firearm information on an ATF F 4473	1,080
27 CFR 478.102(a)	Failure to complete a NICS/POC background check	415
27 CFR 478.123(a)	Failure to maintain an accurate/complete/timely manufacture or acquisition record	378

Top Ten Violations Cited - Calendar Year 2020		
Violation Description		Violation Cited Total
27 CFR 478.124(c)(1)	Failure to obtain a completed ATF F 4473	1,074
27 CFR 478.21(a)	Failure to complete forms as prescribed	923
27 CFR 478.125(e)	Failure to maintain an accurate/complete/timely acquisition and disposition record	824
27 CFR 478.124(c)(3)(iv)	Failure to record NICS contact information on an ATF F 4473	767
27 CFR 478.124(c)(5)	Failure by transferor to sign and/or date an ATF F 4473	632
27 CFR 478.124(c)(3)(i)	Failure to verify or record Identification document on ATF F 4473	616
27 CFR 478.126a	Failure to report multiple sales or other dispositions of pistols and revolvers	558
27 CFR 478.124(c)(4)	Failure to record firearm information on an ATF F 4473	428
27 CFR 478.102(a)	Failure to complete a NICS/POC background check	178
27 CFR 478.123(a)	Failure to maintain an accurate/complete/timely manufacture or acquisition record	161

Top Ten Violations Cited - Calendar Year 2021		
Violation Description		Violation Cited Total
27 CFR 478.21(a)	Failure to complete forms as prescribed	1,093
27 CFR 478.124(c)(1)	Failure to obtain a completed ATF F 4473	1,009
27 CFR 478.124(c)(3)(iv)	Failure to record NICS contact information on an ATF F 4473	825
27 CFR 478.125(e)	Failure to maintain an accurate/complete/timely acquisition and disposition record	724
27 CFR 478.124(c)(5)	Failure by transferor to sign and/or date an ATF F 4473	721
27 CFR 478.124(c)(3)(i)	Failure to verify or record Identification document on ATF F 4473	617
27 CFR 478.126a	Failure to report multiple sales or other dispositions of pistols and revolvers	559
27 CFR 478.124(c)(4)	Failure to record firearm information on an ATF F 4473	402
27 CFR 478.123(a)	Failure to maintain an accurate/complete/timely manufacture or acquisition record	195
27 CFR 478.123(b)	Failure to maintain an accurate/complete/timely manufacture or acquisition record	156

Top Ten Violations Cited - Calendar Year 2022		
Violation Description		Violation Cited Total
27 CFR 478.21(a)	Failure to complete forms as prescribed	1,496
27 CFR 478.124(c)(1)	Failure to obtain a completed ATF F 4473	1,259
27 CFR 478.124(c)(3)(iv)	Failure to record NICS contact information on an ATF F 4473	1,090
27 CFR 478.125(e)	Failure to maintain an accurate/complete/timely acquisition and disposition record	1,069
27 CFR 478.124(c)(5)	Failure by transferor to sign and/or date an ATF F 4473	930
27 CFR 478.124(c)(3)(i)	Failure to verify or record Identification document on ATF F 4473	869
27 CFR 478.126a	Failure to report multiple sales or other dispositions of pistols and revolvers	750
27 CFR 478.124(c)(4)	Failure to record firearm information on an ATF F 4473	491
27 CFR 478.123(a)	Failure to maintain an accurate/complete/timely manufacture or acquisition record	226
27 CFR 478.123(b)	Failure to maintain an accurate/complete/timely manufacture or acquisition record	191

Top Ten Violations Cited - Calendar Year 2023		
Violation Description		Violation Cited Total
27 CFR 478.21(a)	Failure to complete forms as prescribed	1,807
27 CFR 478.124(c)(1)	Failure to obtain a completed ATF F 4473	1,584
27 CFR 478.124(c)(3)(iv)	Failure to record NICS contact information on an ATF F 4473	1,329
27 CFR 478.125(e)	Failure to maintain an accurate/complete/timely acquisition and disposition record	1,261
27 CFR 478.124(c)(5)	Failure by transferor to sign and/or date an ATF F 4473	1,185
27 CFR 478.124(c)(3)(i)	Failure to verify or record Identification document on ATF F 4473	1,044
27 CFR 478.126a	Failure to report multiple sales or other dispositions of pistols and revolvers	881
27 CFR 478.124(c)(4)	Failure to record firearm information on an ATF F 4473	616
27 CFR 478.123(b)	Failure to maintain an accurate/complete/timely manufacture or acquisition record	322
27 CFR 478.123(a)	Failure to maintain an accurate/complete/timely manufacture or acquisition record	302

Top Ten Violations Cited - Calendar Year 2024		
Violation Description		Violation Cited Total
27 CFR 478.21(a)	Failure to complete forms as prescribed	1,882
27 CFR 478.124(c)(1)	Failure to obtain a completed ATF F 4473	1,591
27 CFR 478.124(c)(3)(iv)	Failure to record NICS contact information on an ATF F 4473	1,393
27 CFR 478.125(e)	Failure to maintain an accurate/complete/timely acquisition and disposition record	1,341
27 CFR 478.124(c)(5)	Failure by transferor to sign and/or date an ATF F 4473	1,110
27 CFR 478.124(c)(3)(i)	Failure to verify or record Identification document on ATF F 4473	997
27 CFR 478.126a	Failure to report multiple sales or other dispositions of pistols and revolvers	813
27 CFR 478.124(c)(4)	Failure to record firearm information on an ATF F 4473	590
27 CFR 478.123(b)	Failure to maintain an accurate/complete/timely manufacture or acquisition record	338
27 CFR 478.123(a)	Failure to maintain an accurate/complete/timely manufacture or acquisition record	306

- c. The total number of administrative actions taken by ATF for FFL compliance violations, including the total number of initial and final notices of revocation issued and the total number of criminal prosecutions brought against FFLs;**

Response:

Total FFL Compliance Inspections by FFL Type and Calendar Year Closed, 2015-2024											
FFL Type	CALENDAR YEAR CLOSED										Total FFL Compliance Inspections
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
Resolved-ASWarningConference	375	441	337	313	327	168	133	90	181	179	2,544
Resolved-DIOWarningConference	70	88	72	60	83	37	30	30	26	55	551
Resolved-Discontinued	1,238	1,230	1,434	1,409	1,803	750	875	1,097	1,399	1,362	12,597
Resolved-Other	819	986	947	974	80	3	-	-	-	-	3,809
Resolved-NotRevoked	2	7	6	16	7	15	3	92	172	189	509
Resolved-NoViolations	3,941	4,488	4,888	4,834	7,069	2,349	4,560	3,896	4,827	4,886	45,738
Resolved-Revoked	48	40	37	51	43	33	43	113	181	183	772
Resolved-Unspecified	-	-	54	359	127	-	-	-	-	-	540
Resolved-ViolationsOnly	1,183	1,315	1,683	2,002	2,711	885	1,026	1,358	1,546	1,651	15,360
Resolved-WarningLetter	1,097	1,257	1,309	1,111	1,593	528	507	616	697	685	9,400
Total	8,773	9,852	10,767	11,129	13,843	4,768	7,177	7,292	9,029	9,190	91,820

d. Final Notices of Revocation by Calendar Year

Response:

Final Notice of Revocation by Calendar Year, 2015-2024	
Year	Number of Final Notices Issued
2015	48
2016	40
2017	37
2018	51
2019	43
2020	33
2021	43
2022	113
2023	181
2024	183
Total	772

e. The total number of criminal prosecutions brought against FFLs

Response: Please note that it is relatively uncommon for an FFL (the business) to be charged, what is far more common is for an individual on the license – a Responsible Person (RP) to be charged. With that in mind, the data provided relates to individuals that were listed as RPs on the license for the FFL and who were subsequently charged with offenses for violations relating to their firearm business. If confirmed, I look forward to working to provide you with the most recent figures.

5. If confirmed, will you commit to enforcing the NFA?

Response: Yes. I am committed to enforcing the law as written and as interpreted by the courts.

a. Will you commit to doing so with respect to short-barreled rifles?

Response: I am committed to enforcing the law as written and as interpreted by the courts.

b. Will you commit to doing so with respect to short-barreled shotguns?

Response: I am committed to enforcing the law as written and as interpreted by the courts.

c. Will you commit to doing so with respect to silencers?

Response: I am committed to enforcing the law as written and as interpreted by the courts.

6. Approximately 4.6 million children live in households with at least one unlocked and loaded firearm. Each day, eight children and teens are unintentionally injured or killed due to an unlocked or unsupervised gun in the home. In 2024, there were 360 unintentional shootings by children resulting in 136 deaths and 231 injuries.

a. Do you believe firearms should be stored securely, preventing unauthorized access by minors and others? If not, please explain why not.

Response: The statistics regarding children and unsecured firearms are truly heartbreaking. In my 34 years in law enforcement, I have seen the tragic results of when firearms are used irresponsibly. The Constitution secures to every American the right to keep and bear arms. Americans have the duty to exercise their rights responsibly. One way to do that is to make sure that unattended loaded firearms are securely locked away from unauthorized persons.

While there are currently no federal laws mandating how lawful gun owners must store their firearms or making it a crime to leave guns accessible to minors, there are many products on the market that make it difficult for children to access firearms while still allowing gun owners to access them quickly if needed for self-defense. For example, my home state of Florida removed sales taxes on firearm safety devices to make them more affordable. Firearm safety training is also an essential component, for both adults and children. Children should be taught that firearms are not toys and that firearms must be handled with respect.

If confirmed, I can commit to work with the Department and any Congressional member and their staff to provide technical assistance, should they wish to propose new legislation.

7. One of ATF's missions is to prevent trafficking of firearms and their diversion to the illegal market.

a. Where do firearms traffickers acquire their firearms? Is it, in whole or part, from licensed dealers?

Response: ATF uses Crime Gun Intelligence (CGI) to identify the sources of illegal firearms. ATF's CGI strategy rests on three pillars: eTrace (electronic access to ATF's firearm tracing center), National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN), and DNA evidence from spent shell casings and firearms.

Firearms traffickers are known to acquire their firearms from a number of sources, including from friends or relatives, thefts, private sales, and straw buyers (i.e., individuals who buy guns from licensed dealers and transfer them to prohibited persons).

Firearms trafficking from the United States to Mexico remains one avenue by which cartels acquire firearms. Operation Southbound is Department's primary initiative and showing sustained increases in investigations and seizures since 2020.

During 2025, enforcement activity reflected a significant nationwide surge—preventing thousands of firearms from diversion and seizing substantial quantities of ammunition, firearm parts, and explosives. For example, ATF revoked the licenses of 89 dealers who were complicit in the trafficking through willful violations and made approximately 2,300 firearm referrals for criminal enforcement submitted as a result of firearm inspections in 2025. Moreover, between January 20, 2025, and January 20, 2026, ATF initiated nearly 26,000 violent crime cases. Of these, approximately 4,200 were specifically firearms trafficking cases with approximately 1,300 involving firearms trafficking to Mexico. ATF agents arrested approximately 6,780 criminals, seized approximately 35,000 firearms, and approximately 2,250,000 rounds of ammunition. Of the seized firearms, approximately 20,900 were seized in domestic firearms trafficking cases and 4,300 firearms were interdicted as they were being trafficked to Mexico and into the hands of cartels.

ATF serves as a force multiplier to federal, state, and local law enforcement and is at the forefront of protecting our country from threats posed by transnational criminal organizations. ATF's involvement in the HSTFs has significantly enhanced investigations and prosecutions into the trafficking and criminal possession of firearms by transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) and foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs). Working in collaboration with our law enforcement partners, ATF has degraded the capacity of these TCOs and FTOs by taking illegal firearms off the streets and increasing public safety.

Additionally, in 2024, ATF established the National Firearms Trafficking Center (NFTC) to provide ATF, and our law enforcement partners a unified investigative and intelligence forum providing comprehensive, coordinated, and effective intelligence, additional resources and strategies to identify, disrupt, and dismantle illegal firearms trafficking. The NFTC provides unique capabilities by combining and operationalizing premier Crime Gun Intelligence tools with expert illegal

firearms trafficking analysis to generate timely and actionable intelligence. The NFTC enhances firearms trafficking intelligence through collaboration and operational focus, with the NFTC acting as a central hub and deconfliction center responsible for the national coordination of firearms trafficking investigations.

b. Where do unlicensed dealers acquire their firearms? Is it, in whole or part, from licensed dealers?

Response: Unlicensed dealers acquire their firearms from the same sources. Many unlicensed dealers heavily purchase from legitimate sources, but with the intent to resell.

c. Where do straw purchasers acquire their firearms? Is it, in whole or part, from licensed dealers?

Response: Straw purchasers, by definition, unlawfully purchase firearms from licensed dealers on behalf of prohibited individuals. Because the background check system makes it difficult for prohibited individuals to purchase firearms directly, they frequently resort to using straw purchasers to acquire firearms from licensed dealers.

d. If confirmed, how will you prevent diversion of firearms from the legal to the illegal market? What resources will you need to do so?

Response: FFLs are our first line of defense against firearms trafficking. ATF must balance the important job of regulating these licensees and working collaboratively with them to disrupt trafficking networks. That is why ATF is using a new Administrative Action Policy, which emphasizes firearm traceability and public safety and deemphasizes immaterial paperwork errors. As part of this effort, I have been focused on rebuilding trust and partnership with FFLs, while being clear that any willful violators of the Gun Control Act remain subject to revocation.

Additionally, ATF works closely with our federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial partners through violent crime task forces, Crime Gun Intelligence Centers (CGIC), and the National Firearms Trafficking Center (NFTC) to identify and dismantle trafficking networks. If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize data-driven enforcement, strong partnerships with state and local law enforcement, and focused use of ATF's unique authorities and expertise. At the same time, I will ensure that ATF carries out its mission in a fair, lawful, and transparent manner, respecting the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding Americans, while holding violent criminals fully accountable.

ATF's FY26 enacted budget saw a \$40 million decrease from the FY 2025 enacted level. While I am grateful for this funding level compared to the FY 2025 House mark, it will continue the approximate 33% compounded reduction in

operational funding -- \$8 to \$15 million in cuts layered on top of a \$50 million cut for FY 2026 pay raises, \$48 million in FY 2025 and \$100 million in FY 2024 reductions. These consecutive cuts compound across years, eroding core enforcement operations and markedly constraining ATF's ability to support state and local law-enforcement partners.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to adequately address the resources needed by ATF.

8. If confirmed, will you cooperate fully with congressional oversight, including but not limited to requests for documents and data and participation in hearings?

Response: Yes. Oversight is vital to maintaining public trust. I commit to being transparent, responsive, and forthright as we work together to protect the American people.

9. If confirmed, will you commit to maintaining robust internal controls and oversight mechanisms to prevent misconduct?

Response: Yes, if confirmed, I will ensure that ATF holds its personnel to the highest ethical standard.

a. If confirmed, will you protect federal employees who report misconduct or raise legitimate concerns about decisions undertaken by your office?

Response: Yes, if confirmed I will protect federal employees who report misconduct or raise legitimate concerns about decisions undertaken by your office.

10. If confirmed, will you commit to filing complete and accurate financial disclosure reports that include all required information about your financial interests and activities?

Response: Yes, if confirmed, I commit to filing complete and accurate financial disclosure reports that include all required information about my financial interests and activities.

11. Were you in Washington, D.C. on January 6, 2021?

Response: No.

a. Were you inside the U.S. Capitol or on the U.S. Capitol grounds on January 6, 2021?

Response: No.

Senator Mazie K. Hirono
Senate Judiciary Committee

Nomination Hearing
Questions for the Record for Robert J. Cekada

1. As you know, Section 922(d) is the federal statute that makes it a crime for any person “to sell or otherwise dispose of” a firearm to anyone “knowing or having reasonable cause to believe” the buyer is a prohibited person. Prohibited persons include felons, domestic abusers, among others.

a. Do you believe that ATF has a responsibility to ensure that dealers do not sell guns to prohibited persons in violation of Section 922(d)?

Response: Yes. Section 922(d) makes it unlawful to sell or otherwise dispose of a firearm to a person knowing or having reasonable cause to believe that the individual is prohibited under federal law. ATF has a responsibility to ensure that federal firearms licensees understand and comply with that statutory requirement. Preventing prohibited persons, such as convicted felons or domestic abusers, from obtaining firearms is central to protecting public safety and enforcing the law as Congress has written it.

b. Do you believe that ATF has a responsibility to hold dealers who sell or otherwise dispose of guns to prohibited persons in violation of Section 922(d) accountable through prosecution and license revocation?

Response: When there is evidence that a dealer has willfully violated federal law, including by transferring a firearm to a prohibited person in violation of Section 922(d), ATF has a responsibility to pursue appropriate enforcement action. That may include investigation and referral for criminal prosecution where warranted; as well as administrative action upon a willful violation of the Gun Control Act, including license revocation, consistent with statutory standards and due process.

c. What steps should dealers take to ascertain whether a purchaser is prohibited or not?

Response: Federal firearms licensees are required to follow the procedures set forth in the Gun Control Act and implementing regulations. This includes verifying the identity of the purchaser, obtaining a completed ATF Form 4473, and conducting a background check through the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). Dealers must also be attentive to circumstances that may give rise to “reasonable cause to believe” a transfer would be unlawful, including indicators of straw purchasing or false statements.

2. **How many ATF agents in the Seattle Field Division, which covers Hawaii, have been diverted this year to work on immigration enforcement, and what percentage is that of the total number of agents in the Field Division?**

Response: On January 20, 2025, President Trump issued an Executive Order stating that “enforcing our Nation’s immigration laws is critically important to the national security and public safety of the United States.” This Administration has been committed to doing so. The number of agents in a particular field division is considered a personnel matter, which as a matter of longstanding Department policy, we would not disclose.

3. **It has been widely reported that ICE and CBP personnel are stopping people on the streets in communities throughout Minnesota demanding identification or paperwork showing citizenship and have been detaining those who cannot immediately provide it. According to reports, many U.S. citizens and legal residents have been stopped and detained in this way.**

- a. **Have ATF personnel been involved in any of these stops or detentions in Minnesota or anywhere else?**

Response: ATF has been granted Title 8 authorities. ATF has exercised this authority by focusing its efforts on identifying illegal firearms traffickers who fuel violence by arming prohibited persons, gang members, drug cartels, illegal aliens, and terrorist organizations.

- b. **What guidance and safeguards would you put in place as Director, so that ATF personnel do not participate in any actions that violate constitutional rights or use inappropriate force?**

Response: As the Director of ATF, I will affirm the agency’s responsibility to uphold the Constitution in full, including the protection of rights guaranteed by the Second Amendment, while simultaneously fighting violent crime using the statutes on the books. Additionally, as to use of force, during my tenure as Deputy Director, I have broadened the scope of administrative use of force reviews at ATF. These reviews are now conducted for every incident involving any use of force, regardless of whether it is deadly, to determine whether that use of force was reasonable.

4. **In June 2025, the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the gun industry’s trade association, announced that ATF would end the Demand Letter 2 Program. As you know, Demand Letter 2 has existed since 2000. ATF issued Demand Letter 2 — under 18 U.S.C. § 923(g)(5) — to Federal Firearms Licensees (FFLs) that had a certain number of crime guns traced back to them in a calendar year with a time-to-crime of 3 years or less. FFLs who received Demand Letter 2 were required to submit limited information to ATF about the number of used firearms they had acquired every quarter to help with crime gun tracing. Between 2000-2021, ATF used this information to trace over 190,000 firearms.**

a. Can you confirm whether the Demand Letter 2 Program ended in June 2025?

Response: The Demand Letter 2 Program has been paused. In the interim, all FFLs enrolled in the program were notified that quarterly report submissions were no longer required until further notice.

b. Who made the decision to end the program and do you support that decision? Why or why not?

Response: In June of 2025, ATF paused the program. This pause, triggered, in part, by efforts of advocacy groups to mischaracterize the Demand Letter program and evade Tiahrt disclosure restrictions on firearm related data, is allowing ATF to evaluate the program effectiveness from reporting mandates to tracing results.

**Nomination of Robert Cekada to be the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco,
Firearms, and Explosives
Questions for the Record
Submitted February 11, 2026**

QUESTIONS FROM SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

1. Just days after his inauguration, President Donald Trump authorized Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) agents to conduct arrests of immigrants without permanent legal status.

a. Please describe the process by which ATF agents are assigned or detailed to participate in immigration enforcement actions.

Response: Agents are assigned or detailed to work with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on immigration enforcement actions based upon a variety of factors. Those factors include mission requirements set forth by the U.S. Department of Justice (Department), requests by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) subcomponents including U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and available ATF resources within a specific ATF division or office.

b. How are the ATF agents that have been assigned or detailed to participate in immigration enforcement actions chosen?

Response: Factors that are taken into consideration in the selection of ATF Special Agents to conduct Title 8 immigration enforcement operations include ATF agent experience (e.g. completion of ATF On-the-Job Training), office priorities (e.g. investigative and/or judicial obligations related to prior/ongoing ATF investigations) and availability (e.g. approved annual, sick, or military leave and/or training).

i. Is reassignment voluntary or involuntary?

Response: Reassignment can be voluntary, directed as needed, or a combination of both.

c. Since January 2025, how many ATF agents have been assigned to the Department of Homeland Security to conduct immigration enforcement?

Response: Since January 2025, an average of 75-100 agents per day have assigned to Title 8 immigration enforcement per day. Since the hearing, that number has decreased.

- i. **What percentage of these agents volunteered to be reassigned to participate in immigration enforcement?**

Response: ATF does not track mission volunteer requests as it relates to Title 8 immigration enforcement efforts or any other enforcement mission.

- ii. **For how long are the ATF agents reassigned?**

Response: ATF agents who may be assigned to work with DHS to perform Title 8 immigration enforcement operations vary based upon mission needs and availability. There is no set requirement or standard timeframe. ATF Special Agents may be assigned to work Title 8 immigration enforcements that cover periods that range from as little as minutes or hours, to longer periods that may occur over days or weeks.

- iii. **How many ATF agents are currently assigned to DHS?**

Response: Since January 2025, an average of 75-100 agents per day have assigned to Title 8 immigration enforcement per day. Since the hearing, that number has decreased.

- d. **How many ATF agents were employed by the ATF in 2024? How many ATF agents are currently employed by the ATF?**

Response: These are considered personnel matters, which as a matter of longstanding Department policy, we would not disclose.

- i. **In 2025, did any ATF agents receive an offer from the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to resign while allowing them to remain on the payroll through September 30, 2025? If so, which category of agents received the offer?**

Response: All ATF employees were eligible to participate in the Deferred Resignation Program.

- ii. **How many ATF employees accepted the DOGE offer?**

Response: These are considered personnel matters, which as a matter of longstanding Department policy, we would not disclose.

- iii. **How many ATF employees have left agency since January 2025? Please specify how many were terminated, retired, or voluntarily resigned.**

Response: These are considered personnel matters, which as a matter of longstanding Department policy, we would not disclose.

2. **It has been the ATF’s standard practice to periodically publish data on the number of dealer inspections and trafficking investigations the agency has opened or completed. Since the agency first came under the direction of Kash Patel, and subsequently under your leadership as Acting Director, this information has not been published.**

a. **Since January 2025:**

- i. **How many inspections of Federal Firearm License (FFL) holders has the ATF conducted? How many inspections were conducted in 2024?**

Response: In FY 2024, IOIs conducted nearly 9,700 firearm compliance inspections; just over 8,800 firearm application inspections; and approximately 875 explosive compliance inspections.¹

While the latest numbers have not yet been reported for 2025, if confirmed, I will provide your office with an update when those figures are released.

- ii. **How many gun trafficking investigations has the ATF initiated? How many investigations were initiated in 2024?**

Response: Since January 20, 2025, ATF has seized 36,277 illegal crime guns and 2,317,999 rounds of ammunition from prohibited persons, gang members, and suppliers for transnational criminal organizations. 4,359 of these seized firearms were bound for Mexico, where they would have been used by violent drug cartels and gangs. 648,975 rounds of the seized ammunition were bound for Mexico, which averages to over 1,600 rounds per day.²

In FY 2024, ATF initiated approximately 24,200 violent crime cases.³

- iii. **How many referrals has ATF made to the Department of Justice for prosecution since January 2025? How many referrals did it make in 2024?**

¹ See: <https://www.atf.gov/resource-center/fact-sheet/facts-and-figures-fiscal-year-2024>

² Press Release, USDOJ. *ATF Seizes Thousands of Illegal Firearms Bound for Cartels in Mexico* (Feb. 18, 2026). Available at: <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/atf-seizes-thousands-illegal-firearms-bound-cartels-mexico>

³ See: <https://www.atf.gov/resource-center/fact-sheet/facts-and-figures-fiscal-year-2024>.

Response: While the latest numbers have not yet been reported for 2025, if confirmed, I will provide your office with an update when those figures are released.

- b. If confirmed, do you commit to publishing data on the number of dealer inspections and trafficking investigations the agency has opened or completed?**

Response: Yes, if confirmed, I will commit to publishing that data. As I stated in my testimony, I commit to being transparent, responsive, and forthright with this Committee as we work together to protect the American people.

- 3. One of ATF's primary duties is to conduct inspections of the roughly 78,000 FFL holders in the country. The ATF's previous "zero tolerance" policy revoked the license of gun dealers who willfully violated federal crimes. Earlier this year, the President rescinded ATF's zero-tolerance policy and gun dealers who willfully break the law are now allowed to continue selling guns. Additionally, the President encouraged gun dealers whose licenses had been revoked for violating the law to re-apply.**

- a. Should gun dealers who willfully violate federal law be permitted to retain their FFL?**

Response: The revised Administrative Action Policy focuses on willful violations that have a direct impact on public safety. FFLs will face immediate revocation proceedings when they willfully violate the Gun Control Act in a manner dangerous to public safety.

- b. Should gun dealers who sell guns to prohibited persons like convicted felons be allowed to continue selling?**

Response: ATF continues to revoke FFLs from those who engage in the diversion of firearms to criminal markets, such as arming the cartels. The revised Administrative Action Policy also approves of immediate revocation for knowingly transferring a firearm to a prohibited person.

- c. Should gun dealers who do not conduct background checks before they sell guns be allowed to continue selling?**

Response: The Administrative Action Policy authorizes revocation of FFLs for those who refuse to comply with the Brady Act. ATF is also exploring policy changes that will encourage electronic recordkeeping, with the goal of having FFLs use software that would prevent accidental errors, including preventing the transfer of a firearm when the background check was incomplete.

- d. **Should these gun dealers face consequences? What consequences should they face?**

Response: Recognizing that FFLs are the first line of defense, ATF's important job of regulating these licensees and holding them accountable must be balanced with the need to work collaboratively with them to disrupt trafficking networks. That is why ATF implemented a new Administrative Action Policy which emphasizes firearm traceability, serious willful violations, and public safety, and deemphasizes immaterial paperwork errors. In FY 2025, 89 licenses were revoked for willful violations of the Gun Control Act. ATF has many tools to facilitate compliance, including dealer education, administrative warnings, license revocation, and criminal enforcement. The magnitude of the consequences depends on the severity of the breach. Those who deliberately violate federal firearm laws face license revocation and can be referred to criminal prosecution. Those whose violations are less serious often face administrative warnings. Minor accidental violations are usually resolved informally, including through education. The work our IOIs are doing is incredibly important in keeping America safe and has a direct effect on our ability to target gun violence.

- e. **How many FFLs has ATF revoked since January 2025? How many FFLs did it revoke in 2024?**

Response: In FY 2024, 195 licenses were revoked. While the latest numbers have not yet been reported for 2025, if confirmed, I will provide your office with an update when those figures are released.

- f. **If confirmed, how will you hold FFL holders accountable for violating federal firearm laws?**

Response: If confirmed, I will continue to emphasize intelligence-driven enforcement, strong partnerships with state and local law enforcement, and focused use of ATF's unique authorities and expertise. At the same time, I will ensure that ATF carries out its mission in a fair, lawful, and transparent manner, respecting the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding Americans, while holding firearms traffickers, violent criminals, and FFLs who commit willful violations of the law fully accountable. My leadership will be focused entirely on a commitment to fair, impartial, and vigorous enforcement of all federal laws and regulations. FFLs are our first line of defense in combatting firearms trafficking. ATF needs to balance the important job of regulating these licensees and working with them to disrupt trafficking networks. That is why ATF is using a new Administrative Action Policy, which emphasizes firearm traceability and public safety and deemphasizes immaterial paperwork errors.

- g. **If confirmed, do you commit to routinely share ATF's FFL compliance inspection reports, trace data, and other crime-fighting information with state and local law enforcement, and facilitate data sharing across states?**

Response: ATF does routinely share crime-fighting information with state and local law enforcement partners. However, it does not routinely share FFL compliance inspection results with these partners. Current law allows ATF to share trace data with law enforcement partners solely for legitimate investigative purposes and prohibits it from further public disclosure.⁴

4. During your nomination hearing, you referred to ATF as a “small” agency.

- a. How many special agents are currently employed by ATF? How many special agents were employed at the end of 2024?**

Response: These are considered personnel matters, which as a matter of longstanding Department policy, we would not disclose.

- b. How many Industry Operations Investigators are currently employed by ATF? How many Industry Operations Investigators were employed at the end of 2024?**

Response: These are considered personnel matters, which as a matter of longstanding Department policy, we would not disclose.

5. In 2022, the ATF recovered over 16,000 firearms in Mexico that were traced back to the United States.⁵ The majority of these guns were traced to one retail purchaser within the U.S.

- a. What is your position on the sale of guns by U.S. dealers that end up in Mexico?**

Response: ATF has been focused on stopping firearms trafficking to Mexico that arms the cartels, foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs), and transnational criminal organizations (TCOs). Firearms trafficking from the United States to Mexico remains one avenue by which cartels acquire firearms. Operation Southbound is DOJ’s primary initiative and showing sustained increases in investigations and seizures since 2020.

Since January 20, 2025, ATF has seized 36,277 illegal crime guns and 2,317,999 rounds of ammunition from prohibited persons, gang members, and suppliers for transnational criminal organizations. 4,359 of these seized firearms were bound for Mexico, where they would have been used by violent drug cartels and gangs.

⁴ Public Law 108-447, 118 Stat. 2859-2860 (commonly known as the “Tiahrt Amendment”).

⁵ See ATF, *Firearms Trace Data: Mexico - 2017-2022*, at www.atf.gov/resource-center/firearms-trace-data-mexico-2017-2022.

648,975 rounds of the seized ammunition were bound for Mexico, which averages to over 1,600 rounds per day.⁶

ATF's involvement in the Homeland Security Task Forces (HSTFs) has significantly enhanced investigations and prosecutions into the trafficking and criminal possession of firearms by TCOs and FTOs. Working in collaboration with our law enforcement partners, ATF has degraded the capacity of these TCOs and FTOs by taking illegal firearms off the streets and tracing the illegal firearms to the point where they departed the legal commerce stream to identify the traffickers, thereby increasing public safety.

b. What can the federal government better do to tackle the source of gun trafficking rings through our nation's southern border?

Response: Our nation is seeing a surge in bold, high-profile criminal activities driven by transnational criminal organizations interested in advancing their criminal enterprises. Acts of violence have shattered families and threatened the safety of the communities and law enforcement officials throughout the country. That is why ATF is focused on identifying, disrupting, and dismantling cross-border firearms trafficking. In addition to our own trafficking investigations, ATF has partnered with the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI to support the Homeland Security Task Forces (HSTFs) this Administration has stood up across the nation. Working with our Federal law enforcement partners, ATF is at the forefront of protecting the homeland from evolving threats presented by transnational organized crime.

ATF's mission is to protect Americans from violent crime, specifically gun crime. It is a big mission, and we are a small agency, but we succeed by focusing our resources on the most dangerous offenders and the most significant sources of illegal firearms. Our efforts are intelligence-driven and collaborative. ATF works closely with our federal, state, local, and tribal partners through violent crime task forces, Crime Gun Intelligence Centers (CGIC), and the National Firearms Trafficking Center (NFTC) to identify repeat shooters, disrupt firearms trafficking networks, and trace crime guns to their sources. These efforts allow law enforcement to connect firearms to violent crimes, identify patterns of trafficking, and intervene earlier to prevent future violence.

While ATF has made tremendous progress in stemming the flow of firearms to Mexico, the United States could take additional steps to inspect outbound traffic for firearms and Mexico could do more to inspect inbound traffic. We should also increase our data sharing with Mexican authorities. Criminal prosecution plays a role, too. This Administration has leveled the first charges of material support of terrorism for attempting to illegally export firearms to the cartels. That will act as a major deterrent. And while federal prosecution resources are understandably

⁶ Press Release, USDOJ. *ATF Seizes Thousands of Illegal Firearms Bound for Cartels in Mexico* (Feb. 18, 2026). Available at: <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/atf-seizes-thousands-illegal-firearms-bound-cartels-mexico>.

limited, more aggressive action could be taken against straw purchasers, particularly using the new straw purchasing and trafficking offenses created by the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act.

6. In addition to alcohol, tobacco, and firearms, ATF is the primary regulator of the commercial explosives industry. It has been more than two decades since the last comprehensive review of ATF's regulations for commercial explosives occurred, leaving regulations outdated compared to advances in the commercial explosives industry in areas like electronic recordkeeping and classifications of materials.

a. If confirmed, what is your plan to review ATF's regulations for commercial explosives? Will you modernize these outdated regulations?

Response: ATF recognizes there have been advances in the commercial explosives industry and during my tenure at ATF, we have developed and maintained positive working partnerships with both the explosives industry and governmental entities that regulate other aspects of explosives. If confirmed, I am dedicated to furthering these partnerships that will enable us to effectively update our explosives regulations. The agency has already begun a comprehensive review of the agency's explosives regulations. This review will enable us to publish regulations that will best reflect modern-day practices while still meeting our public safety mission.

Questions for the Record from Senator Alex Padilla
Senate Judiciary Committee
Nominations Hearing
Wednesday, February 4th, 2026

Questions for Robert Cekada, to be Director, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives:

Statutory requirements including 18 U.S.C. §§ 922(t), 923(g)(1)(A), 923(g)(1)(B), and 923(g)(7), among others, govern federal firearms regulations.

- 1. What do you believe is ATF's role in ensuring that FFLs are in compliance with 18 U.S.C. §§ 922(t), 923(g)(1)(A), 923(g)(1)(B), and 923(g)(7), including how ATF determines whether an FFL is in compliance with 18 U.S.C. §§ 922(t), 923(g)(1)(A), 923(g)(1)(B), and 923(g)(7)?**

Response: ATF's role is to faithfully and effectively enforce the laws passed by Congress and signed by the President, and to respect the rulings of the courts. ATF's core mission is public safety: targeting violent criminals, disrupting firearms trafficking networks that arm gangs and cartels, investigating bombings and arsons, and supporting our partners with world-class forensic and intelligence capabilities. In addition, ATF conducts periodic inspections of federal firearms licensees to ensure that they are complying with applicable statutory requirements.

- 2. Do you agree that violations of 18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(1)(A) for unlicensed dealing, manufacturing, or importing should be prosecuted and that violators should be held accountable?**

Response: Yes, and ATF is doing exactly that. ATF's role is to faithfully and effectively enforce the laws passed by Congress and signed by the President, and to respect the rulings of the courts.

- a. When is it appropriate for FFLs that violate the above stated statutory requirements to face accountability i.e. license revocation, and/or criminal penalties?**

Response: The revised administrative action policy focuses on willful violations that have a direct impact on public safety. FFLs will face immediate revocation proceedings when they willfully violate the Gun Control Act in a manner dangerous to public safety. For example, ATF continues to aggressively revoke FFLs from those who engage in the diversion of firearms to criminal markets, such as arming the cartels. The revised administrative action policy also approves of immediate revocation for knowingly transferring a firearm to a prohibited person, falsifying records, or refusing to comply with the Brady background check requirements. ATF also refers for

prosecution cases that involve criminal intent, such as the intentional diversion of firearms to prohibited persons and drug cartel members

- 3. If confirmed, will you commit to providing this Committee, on an annual basis, with a list of FFL inspections resulting in a violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 922(d), 922(t), 923(g)(1)(A), 923(g)(1)(B), and 923(g)(7), or their implementing regulations?**

Response: Yes. As I stated in my testimony, I commit to being transparent, responsive, and forthright with this Committee as we work together to protect the American people.

Questions for the Record

Robert Cekada – Nominee to be Director for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)

Sen. Adam Schiff (CA)

- 1. You stated during your testimony that you're hoping ATF will hire around 800 new agents. On April 7, the ATF repealed its Enhanced Regulatory Enforcement Policy for Federal Firearms Licensees (FFLs) and agents are now reportedly doing far fewer inspections of FFLs. Since agents are no longer doing inspections of FFLs, how does the bureau plan to use the approximately 800 new agents you hope the ATF will hire?**

Response: ATF Special Agents do not conduct FFL inspections; inspections are conducted by ATF IOIs.

The additional special agents I discussed would be deployed to strengthen enforcement against violent offenders and illegal firearms trafficking networks. ATF Special Agents investigate straw purchasing, firearms trafficking, prohibited persons unlawfully in possession of firearms, and organized criminal enterprises that drive gun violence in our communities. These cases are resource-intensive and often require close coordination with state and local law enforcement through task forces and Crime Gun Intelligence Centers.

- 2. You also testified that only around 100 ATF agents are engaged in immigration enforcement on any given day. What do you anticipate that number will be after hiring 800 new agents?**

Response: Since January 2025, an average of 75-100 agents per day have been assigned to Title 8 immigration enforcement per day. Since the hearing, that number has decreased.

- 3. 18 U.S.C. § 922(o) makes it a crime for civilians to possess machine guns or for machine guns to be transferred to civilians. Federal law, under 26 U.S.C. § 5845(b), defines “machine gun” to also include “any part designed and intended solely and exclusively, or combination of parts designed and intended, for use in converting a weapon into a machinegun.” During your testimony, you spoke of one such part, describing “drop-in auto sears which convert firearms to shoot fully automatically.”**

- a. Do you believe civilian possession of machine guns or machine gun conversion devices, auto sears, or switches is a threat to public safety?**

Response: Legal ownership of machineguns is strictly regulated under the NFA, and there is not a high correlation between legal owners of machineguns and crime. The Gun Control Act generally prohibits the possession of machineguns made or manufactured after May 19, 1986.¹ ATF is committed to enforcing

¹ 18 U.S.C. § 922(o).

section 922(o). Moreover, ATF has observed an increasing use of machinegun conversion devices (MCDs) in violent crime investigations, and we are committed to curbing the illegal use of such devices.

- b. Do you believe civilian manufacturing (including through the use of a 3D printer and/or 3D-printing technology) of machine guns, machine gun conversion devices, auto sears, or switches, is a threat to public safety?**

Response: Generally, section 922(o) makes it unlawful to make machineguns or machinegun conversion devices. The diversion of machineguns into criminal markets, whether those firearms are commercially manufactured or privately made, poses a threat to public safety.

- 4. During your testimony, you described how “some of these [machine gun parts] are printed here in the United States on a printer that can be purchased for a few hundred dollars.” Given the widespread accessibility of these printers to bad actors, should 3D-printer manufacturers and sellers take steps to ensure that such parts cannot be printed on or with their devices?**

- a. If so, please describe these steps.**

Response: Firearm manufacturing is undergoing profound change. Personal CNC machines and 3D printers create new possibilities for individuals to build firearms at home for legitimate purposes. While it is lawful for an individual to make their own firearm, it is unlawful to make MCDs. However, it also creates new possibilities for individuals to build firearms and MCDs for criminal purposes.

ATF has seen an increasing number of criminals – especially firearm traffickers – using MCDs to commit violent crime, and I believe that working with industry partners, such as 3D printer manufacturers, is vital to curbing the proliferation of such devices.

- b. If not, why shouldn’t they, and what is your proposed alternative to address accessibility concerns?**

Response: Please see the above answer.

- 5. You also stated that other machine gun parts “are being brought into the United States through China.”**

- a. Please describe the steps the ATF and its federal law enforcement partners are taking to identify and disrupt foreign suppliers and U.S. based intermediaries to ensure that such parts are not being illegally imported into the United States through foreign countries.**

Response: To counteract the rapid increase of MCDs and other emerging technologies, ATF established an Emerging Threats Center (ETC) to conduct and coordinate multi-jurisdictional investigations, undercover operations, and other intelligence-driven investigative functions related to the unlawful use of emerging technologies which pose a potential threat to public safety. ATF's ETC also provides investigative direction and assistance to disrupt and dismantle criminal activity conducted through internet-based platforms.

Through these investigations, ATF has found that MCDs sold online by foreign companies are mass produced and sold at lower prices. Chinese companies frequently advertise MCDs on various websites whose domain names change frequently, encrypted apps (e.g., Telegram and Whats App), and via online marketplaces, like Alibaba, eBay, and DHgate. Although some of these vendors, like eBay, have mechanisms in place to allow ATF to report items being sold in violation of U.S. law, many do not. However, even if an online vendor's policies and practices expressly prohibit the sale of MCDs, Chinese and other foreign-based companies utilize deceptive marketing practices, such as selling the MCDs as "dog tags" or "toy car kits" to avoid detection.

While ATF monitors and conducts proactive enforcement against foreign-based websites advertising the sale of firearms that are regulated by the Gun Control Act and National Firearms Act, including MCDs, given that ATF's jurisdiction is limited to reducing violent crime and firearm trafficking investigations related to U.S.-sourced firearms, ATF frequently works with Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) to investigate those entities and individuals located in foreign countries who illegally import MCDs into the United States. To that end, ATF and its law enforcement partners, including CBP and the Massachusetts State Police, led an investigation that resulted in the seizure of more than 350 internet domains that were allegedly used for the illegal importation of MCDs and silencers from China.² More recently ATF and its law enforcement partners in the Homeland Security Task Force (HSTF) seized two internet domains and two cryptocurrency accounts that were allegedly used for the illegal importation of MCDs from China.³ During the course of the investigation, the HSTF seized 3,093 MCDs 282 firearms; 124 silencers; and over 12,000 rounds of ammunition.

ATF is committed to continuing its work with our federal, state, and local law enforcement partners to curb the proliferation of MCDs that are trafficked from both domestic and international sources. For example, ATF examines and classifies MCDs submitted for review by state and local law enforcement agencies. ATF also provides expert assistance and training to ensure that law

² See USAO – District of MA, *Federal Authorities Seize Over 350 Website Domains Used to Import Illegal Switches and Silencers from China*, Sept. 11, 2024, available at <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ma/pr/federal-authorities-seize-over-350-website-domains-used-import-illegal-switches-and>.

³ Press Release, USAO-MA, *Federal Authorities Seize Two Website Domains Used to Import Illegal Machine Gun Conversion Devices and Silencers from China* (January 13, 2026), available at: <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ma/pr/federal-authorities-seize-two-website-domains-used-import-illegal-machine-gun-conversion>.

enforcement on the front lines can identify and seize MCDs, some of which are quite small and difficult to detect. ATF has issued technical bulletins about the development, use, and identification of MCDs and made such technical bulletins available to our law enforcement partners. As part of these efforts, ATF has worked with federal, state, and local partners to launch initiatives focused on enhancing enforcement efforts to seize MCDs and hold offenders accountable.

6. In January, the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Massachusetts announced the seizure of two internet domains and two cryptocurrency accounts that were allegedly used for the illegal importation of machine gun conversion devices from China. The press release published by the U.S. Attorney’s Office noted, “[B]eginning in 2023 and continuing through 2025, federal authorities began targeting multiple websites, businesses and individuals selling, offering for sale, importing and exporting machinegun conversion devices.”

- a. What was the ATF’s role in the investigation?

Response: This investigation was led by Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) as part of the Homeland Security Task Force (HSTF) in Boston, of which ATF is a member. Although ATF was not involved in this particular case, ATF remains an integral member of the task force and is actively assisting in a number of other HSTF investigations both in Boston and around the country.

- b. Was this part of a broader ATF enforcement initiative or priority targeting the online sale or importation of machine gun conversion devices?

Response: This case is part of the HSTF initiative established by Executive Order 14159, Protecting the American People Against Invasion. HSTFs have a mission to identify and target transnational criminal organizations engaged in various criminal conspiracies involving a myriad of federal violations, such as firearms trafficking, both within the United States and throughout the world.

- c. Is there any ongoing effort of the ATF to target similar websites, businesses, and individuals? If so, please describe the scope and nature of these efforts.

Response: Every day, ATF supports the work of President Trump and this Administration to make this country safer by continuing to target violent criminals, an increasing number of which are using MCDs to commit crime. Under President Trump’s and Attorney Pam Bondi’s leadership, ATF has shutdown numerous MCD trafficking operations. For instance, in June 2025, as part of ATF’s “Operation Shutdown” initiative, ATF’s Dallas Field Division and law enforcement partners shutdown multiple social media-based MCD sellers,

arresting 76 individuals and seizing 147 MCDs, 287 firearms, and 23+ kilograms of drugs.⁴

d. If not, please explain why these efforts are not ongoing.

Response: Please see the above answer.

7. During your testimony, you stated, “ATF is focused on identifying [the] sources” of these 3D-printed machine gun parts. You further stated, “We use all the tools we have to try to identify who is manufacturing these 3D-printed firearms.”

a. Please specify the tools you use to identify 3D-printed firearms.

Response: 3-D printed privately made firearms (PMFs) represent a growing share of firearms recovered in violent crime investigations. ATF uses crime gun intelligence (CGI), largely through the use of ATF’s 27 Crime Gun Intelligence Centers (CGICs) and its ETC, to curb the criminal use of such weapons.

b. Please identify known sources of crime guns and describe the nature and scope of ATF’s efforts to identify the sources of illegal firearms.

Response: ATF uses CGI to identify the sources of illegal firearms. ATF’s CGI strategy rests on three pillars: eTrace (electronic access to ATF’s firearm tracing center), National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN), and DNA evidence from spent shell casings and firearms.

Firearms traffickers are known to acquire their firearms from a number of sources, including from friends or relatives, thefts, private sales, and straw buyers (i.e., individuals who buy guns from licensed dealers and transfer them to prohibited persons).

Firearms trafficking from the United States to Mexico remains one avenue by which cartels acquire firearms. Operation Southbound is DOJ’s primary initiative and showing sustained increases in investigations and seizures since 2020.

During 2025, enforcement activity reflected a significant nationwide surge—preventing thousands of firearms from diversion and seizing substantial quantities of ammunition, firearm parts, and explosives. For example, ATF revoked the licenses of 89 dealers who were complicit in the trafficking through willful violations. Moreover, Since January 20, 2025, ATF has seized 36,277 illegal crime guns and 2,317,999 rounds of ammunition from prohibited persons, gang members, and suppliers for transnational criminal organizations. 4,359 of these seized firearms were bound for Mexico, where they would have been used by

⁴Press Release, USAO-NDTX, “*Operation Showdown*” Targeting Violent Crime In Fort Worth Results In 76 Defendants Arrested For Firearms And Drug Offense (June 18, 2025), available at: <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ndtx/pr/operation-showdown-targeting-violent-crime-fort-worth-results-76-defendants-arrested>.

violent drug cartels and gangs. 648,975 rounds of the seized ammunition were bound for Mexico, which averages to over 1,600 rounds per day.⁵

ATF serves as a force multiplier to Federal, state, and local law enforcement and is at the forefront of protecting our country from threats posed by transnational criminal organizations. ATF's involvement in the HSTFs has significantly enhanced investigations and prosecutions into the trafficking and criminal possession of firearms by transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) and foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs). Working in collaboration with our law enforcement partners, ATF has degraded the capacity of these TCOs and FTOs by taking illegal firearms off the streets and increasing public safety.

Additionally, in 2024, ATF established the National Firearms Trafficking Center (NFTC) to provide ATF, and our law enforcement partners a unified investigative and intelligence forum providing comprehensive, coordinated, and effective intelligence, additional resources and strategies to identify, disrupt, and dismantle illegal firearms trafficking. The NFTC provides unique capabilities by combining and operationalizing premier Crime Gun Intelligence tools with expert illegal firearms trafficking analysis to generate timely and actionable intelligence. The NFTC enhances firearms trafficking intelligence through collaboration and operational focus, with the NFTC acting as a central hub and deconfliction center responsible for the national coordination of firearms trafficking investigations.

- c. Is ATF also focused on identifying the sources of trafficked guns? If so, please explain what these sources are and what steps ATF is taking to identify them.**

Response: Yes. ATF's CGICs focus on the rapid collection and analysis of evidence to generate investigative leads and identify sources in firearms trafficking cases. Additionally, as discussed above, in 2024, ATF established the NFTC. ATF has identified that firearms trafficked from the United States to Mexico remain a significant source by which cartels illegally acquire firearms. Under this Administration, ATF is using all of the tools at its disposal to prevent and reduce the trafficking of firearms, including through the continued implementation of Operation Southbound and participation in the HSTFs.

- 8. During your confirmation hearing, Senator Lee asked you about weapons regulated under the National Firearms Act of 1934 (NFA), including silencers, short-barreled rifles and short-barreled shotguns, and other concealable firearms.**

- a. If confirmed, will you commit to enforcing the NFA, including all its statutory provisions and implementing regulations, for all the weapons regulated under the NFA?**

⁵ Press Release, USDOJ. *ATF Seizes Thousands of Illegal Firearms Bound for Cartels in Mexico* (Feb. 18, 2026). Available at: <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/atf-seizes-thousands-illegal-firearms-bound-cartels-mexico>.

Response: If confirmed, my job as Director of ATF will be to enforce the laws that Congress has enacted. ATF's authority is defined by Congress through the NFA and the Gun Control Act (GCA). Under my leadership, ATF will remain committed to implementing and enforcing those statutes.

9. According to ATF's trace data, how many unregistered NFA weapons (broken down by type of weapon) were used in crimes in each calendar year since 2015?

Response: ATF's National Tracing Center (NTC) does not query the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record (NFRTR) database in furtherance of a trace request as it contains tax privileged information. The firearms tracing process relies solely on records that are required to be maintained pursuant to the Gun Control Act of 1968. Therefore, we are unable to provide information as to whether NFA weapons that were used in crimes and traced were registered or unregistered.

10. According to ATF's trace data, how many registered NFA weapons (broken down by type of weapon) were used in crime in each calendar year since 2015?

Response: Please see my response to Question 9.

11. During your testimony, you told Senator Booker and me that on any given day, no more than 100 ATF agents are reassigned to work on immigration cases.

Government disclosures indicated that in 2025, around 1,700 ATF agents—nearly two-thirds of all ATF agents—were diverted to assist ICE with Enforcement and Removal Operations.

a. How many ATF agents in total, not per day, have been diverted from the ATF to assist with immigration enforcement operations since January 20, 2025.

Since January 2025, an average of 75-100 agents per day have assigned to Title 8 immigration enforcement per day. Since the hearing, that number has decreased.

12. You also testified that ATF operations have not suffered because of the diversion of agents to ICE. Please describe what protocols ATF currently has in place or will implement under your supervision to ensure that ATF maintains its operations in spite of any diversion of agents to ICE.

Response: ATF is focused on protecting Americans from violent crime. That focus has never wavered. This Administration is taking a whole-of-government approach to keeping America safe, including by utilizing resources from all the federal law enforcement agencies to combat illegal immigration. DHS authorized ATF, and other Department law enforcement agencies, to investigate, locate, and apprehend certain noncitizens under Title 8 of the United States Code. ATF Special Agents have been working alongside our partners at ICE to help them succeed in their mission, while still

investigating violent gun crime. ATF is committed to being the most trusted and collaborative partner in public safety.

Since January 20, 2025, ATF has seized 36,277 illegal crime guns and 2,317,999 rounds of ammunition from prohibited persons, gang members, and suppliers for transnational criminal organizations. 4,359 of these seized firearms were bound for Mexico, where they would have been used by violent drug cartels and gangs. 648,975 rounds of the seized ammunition were bound for Mexico, which averages to over 1,600 rounds per day.⁶

13. As noted in your confirmation hearing and supporting letters, you have extensive law enforcement experience, including serving over two decades at the ATF.

a. Drawing on your experience and recent calls from House Republicans and Vice President JD. Vance to dismantle the ATF, how would you lead the ATF to ensure it enforces the law as written while upholding the agency's independence and public confidence?

Response: I have spent nearly 34 years in local and federal law enforcement with a singular mission: keeping the American people safe. Throughout my career my focus has been to identify and dismantle violent criminal organizations, remove dangerous offenders from our streets, and to protect the communities we serve.

At ATF, I have had the privilege of working alongside extraordinary professionals – special agents, industry operations investigators, forensic scientists, intelligence analysts, and professional staff – who carry out some of the most difficult and dangerous work in law enforcement. ATF's core mission is public safety: targeting violent criminals, disrupting firearms trafficking networks that arm gangs and cartels, investigating bombings and arsons, and supporting our partners with world-class forensic and intelligence capabilities.

I am committed to ATF's mission of reducing gun violence and violent crime. If confirmed as Director, my role would be to faithfully and effectively enforce the laws passed by Congress and signed by the President, and to respect the rulings of the courts.

b. How would you respond to members of Congress or the Administration seeking to defund or abolish the ATF?

Response: ATF protects America's communities by confronting violent crime driven by the illegal use of firearms, explosives, and acts of arson. Our Special Agents concentrate on identifying and dismantling illegal firearms traffickers who fuel violence by arming prohibited persons, gang members, drug cartels, illegal aliens, and terrorist organizations. Our crime gun intelligence tools make it easier for law

⁶ Press Release, USDOJ. *ATF Seizes Thousands of Illegal Firearms Bound for Cartels in Mexico* (Feb. 18, 2026). Available at: <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/atf-seizes-thousands-illegal-firearms-bound-cartels-mexico>.

enforcement officers across the nation to identify and apprehend violent criminals. During my tenure as Deputy Director of ATF, ATF has entered a new era of reform rooted in transparency and accountability, and we have renewed our focus on rebuilding trust with federal firearms licensees (FFLs), gun owners, and the public by prioritizing public safety and collaboration. I fully understand the responsibility of the Agency to uphold the Constitution, including the protection of rights guaranteed by the Second Amendment, while simultaneously fighting violent crime using the statutes on the books. Without ATF, our nation would see an increase in criminal gangs and violent crime activity. ATF is committed to keeping America safe.

- c. As Director, will you commit to responding fully, promptly, and in good faith to oversight requests from both majority and minority members of the Senate Judiciary Committee?**

Response: Yes, if confirmed, I commit to being transparent, responsive, and forthright with this Committee as we work together to protect the American people.