

May 18, 2022

The Honorable Richard Durbin  
Chair Committee on the Judiciary  
United States Senate Washington, DC 20510

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

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

We are writing to express our support for the nomination of Steven Dettelbach to serve as the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

As a Bureau under the Department of Justice, ATF works to protect the public from crimes involving firearms, explosives, arson, and the diversion of alcohol and tobacco products; regulate lawful commerce in firearms and explosives; and provide worldwide support to law enforcement, public safety, and industry partners.

The laws ATF enforces are the laws passed by the United States Congress. Moreover, they must be enforced in a manner consistent with the protections afforded by the Constitution of the United States.

With the current surge in violent crimes involving the use of firearms, a top priority of the Administration, the Congress and indeed the public interest groups on both sides of the firearm regulation debate should be to provide ATF with strong, professional, and accountable leadership. Without proper leadership, ATF cannot develop the trusted relationship with the Administration and the Congress that is necessary to the establishment of a sustainable and properly resourced strategy to fight firearm-related violence in the United States. Steve's background as a prosecutor and United States Attorney, including his appointment to the Attorney General's Advisory Committee, makes him an ideal nominee for Director.

The confirmation process understandably places considerable attention on national firearm policy, the Second Amendment, and whether new laws are needed to address crimes involving firearms. However, the fact of the matter is Administration policy on these issues and oversight of ATF by the Department of Justice will occur whether there is an ATF Director or not. Those concerned about these policies regardless of which side of the debate they are on should want to have an ATF Director to hold accountable.

What gets lost in the process is the essential role that a confirmed Director brings to ATF's everyday crime-fighting mission. Before new policies or laws are considered, the first question should be whether the current federal laws are being adequately enforced and whether current resources dedicated to fighting firearms violence are sufficient and being effectively used. The single and most logical person to question and to hold accountable both on the policy front and the everyday execution of existing laws would be the Director of ATF. The Congress, the Administration and the American public should demand a Director of ATF that would be the honest broker of information about firearms violence, and a calm and thoughtful voice in a highly charged political debate. The Director of ATF should be the public

safety professional who provides guidance on how Federal laws and resources can best support State and local police efforts to fight crimes committed with firearms. Without a Director there is no one to hold accountable.

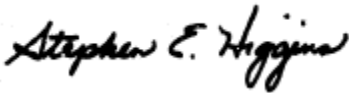
In the 16 years since the position of Director was subject to Senate confirmation, the position has been vacant for 14 of those years. For the last seven years ATF has been left without a confirmed leader. This is a situation benefits no one.

Mr. Dettelbach knows and understands firsthand the federal laws and operations of the Justice Department. As a highly respected United States Attorney, he worked closely with the full range of Federal law enforcement agencies, and understands it is essential that Federal, State and local law enforcement work collaboratively to make communities safer.

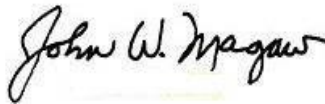
Those of us signing this letter have served as Director or Acting Director of ATF over the past 40 years in both Republican and Democratic Administrations, with several of us serving in both. We know that the bulk of ATF's mission under every Administration has focused on the role ATF can play in working with our State and local partners to combat deadly violence caused by the criminal use of firearms and explosives. That work is the core of what ATF is about and has always been non-controversial.

Finally, and most importantly, the men and women of ATF who have dedicated themselves to protecting the public, and the many who risk their personal safety and sometimes their lives to protect all of us, deserve the respect of having a confirmed Director as highly qualified as Mr. Dettelbach.

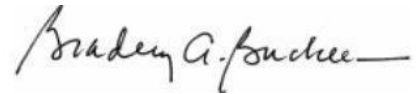
Respectfully yours,



Stephen E. Higgins  
Director, 1982-1993



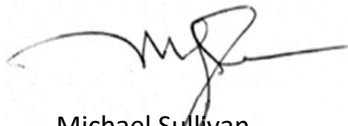
John W. Magaw  
Director, 1993-1999



Bradley A. Buckles  
Director, 1999-2004



Carl J. Truscott  
Director, 2004-2006



Michael Sullivan  
Acting Director 2006-2009



B. Todd Jones  
Director 2013-2015



Thomas Brandon  
Acting Director, 2015-2019



Regina Lombardo  
Acting Director, 2019-2021