

May 18, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell,

I am a retired Special Agent with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) and worked under David Chipman from January, 2000, to July, 2001 while he was the Resident Agent in Charge (RAC) of the ATF Flint, Michigan, Field Office. After a 28½ year career in law enforcement, I cannot think of another person more qualified or deserving to be appointed ATF Director than David. There are a scant few people I've met during my career who "check all the boxes": experience, intelligence, temperament, humility, common sense, strength in their conviction while not being a tyrant or ego maniac, and strong enough to voice and defend those convictions regardless of adversity or how loudly some protest. Some people check some of the boxes, David checks all of them.

While working for David I was impressed in so many ways, on so many days, not by the important decisions he made during critical times, but by the small things he did all the time. I greatly appreciate, wholly respect, and do not take for granted the critical, time-sensitive decisions he made while under the immense pressure of the moment. But that was his job. That is why he was the RAC. That is what he was supposed to do, and he did it. What impressed me the most was the little things he did, repeatedly, that I now believe are the foundation for him "batting 1000" on the greater, more critical decisions he made, and for which he was always correct. Those include:

- Never getting rattled and always maintaining his composure and professionalism.
- Seeking out advice or insight for matters he may not have been familiar with at the time, and seeking contrary opinions than his to ensure he fully understood every aspect of that matter.
- Working closely with everyone around him, including subordinates, other law enforcement, Prosecutors, and the United States Attorney Office, to ensure his plans were well thought through and legally sound.
- David always got the most out of his people, even those who didn't want to give it. David regularly reduced the workload demands of his more productive Agents by removing their menial work requirements. That allowed the productive workers to be more productive. David often completed that menial work himself, and other times

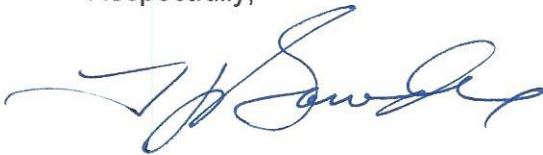
shifted that work to less productive Agents, which in turn made them more productive. David's management practices will ensure ATF gets the most out of its people.

- During that time and the years following, I never saw David do anything even remotely questionable, either ethically, professionally, or legally, while carrying out his duties. David reinforced the importance of doing the right things the right way.

During his tenure in Flint David continually pushed himself and his Agents to not be complacent. David continually looked how to improve and develop new/unique law enforcement strategies to implement, proactively and reactively, to combat decades of violent crime that plagued the city and its residents. Many of Flint's residents were trapped between warring groups actively engaging in drive-by shootings, daily prowling one block to the next, with citizens caught in the middle. Under David's watch, he actively coordinated the working relationship with the Michigan Department of Corrections (DOC), State/Local/County law enforcement, ATF, and the State Prosecutor and U.S Attorney Office expanding ATF and law enforcement's involvement in Operation Night Hawk. In the decades since his promotion and departure, David's initial efforts proved to be the foundation that resulted in a Department of Corrections Agent being permanently assigned as a law enforcement liaison, imbedded in the Flint Police Department, working closely with ATF. The working protocols he implemented then (which started by David inviting a DOC Officer to lunch, buying him a sandwich, and asking what ATF could do to help) remained active through the years following his departure, and are still paying dividends helping Flint citizens today.

I know David is not going to be a popular nominee with several very vocal groups. I know those groups will viciously attack every aspect of him in their attempt to villainize and neutralize him because of his position on some gun laws. (Positions that are not laws and cannot be enforced at this time.) Because of that I chose not to focus on David's obvious outstanding career, his overwhelming attributes, qualifications, commendations, experience, intelligence, education, etc. – I'm sure many others are already compiling that information. Instead, having worked under his direct supervision, I chose to concentrate on those things that form my opinion of him. Very simply: David is the best boss I ever had. Ever. I also believe, because of all the "big things" and "little things" in this letter, that David Chipman is the best person most qualified to be ATF Director. I urge you to confirm David as soon as possible.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Todd J. Bowden', written in a cursive style.

Todd J. Bowden
(Retired) ATF Special Agent