

May 4, 2022

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

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

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley:

We are pleased to write today in strong, bipartisan support of President Biden's nomination of Steve Dettelbach to serve as the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. As former senior Department of Justice officials of both political parties, we know Steve as a friend and colleague and can attest to his outstanding character and reputation. We also are unanimous that Steve is an ideal candidate for the ATF Director position whose experience has thoroughly prepared him for the important responsibilities and challenges of that position.

Steve has excelled at every step of his life and career. Graduating with honors from Dartmouth College and Harvard Law School, he earned a prestigious clerkship with U.S. District Court Judge Stanley Sporkin before serving in a series of important positions within the Justice Department. In each of these roles, Steve was quickly identified as a star and was promoted into the supervisory ranks. He was then selected among a very competitive field of candidates as President Obama's nominee to serve as United States Attorney in his hometown of Cleveland, Ohio.

Steve's lengthy federal service has given him a strong grounding in the dynamics of effective law enforcement. For example, as a seasoned federal prosecutor in three different Justice Department offices, Steve learned the value of building strong partnerships among prosecutors and investigators – including many ATF agents – on the criminal cases that he and his office handled. Then, as a manager at two U.S. Attorneys' Offices and at Main Justice, he developed a clear understanding of the critical roles that the field and headquarters play in the operations of an effective law enforcement agency. Finally, as counsel to then-Chairman Leahy of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Steve gained a strong appreciation for the critical legislative and oversight role that Congress plays in federal law enforcement.

Those jobs also forged Steve into a strong and effective leader. From his first prosecutorial position in the Civil Rights Division to his current position within the partnership of his law firm, Steve has consistently demonstrated the skills of a natural leader. As the U.S. Attorney, for example, he was widely recognized as a role model in his office, among the federal, state and local law enforcement agencies in his district, and within the community of U.S. Attorneys across the country. In fact, Steve is one of a limited number of U.S. Attorneys who has been selected to the Attorney General's Advisory Committee by two different Attorneys General.

Throughout his exceptional career, Steve has also been recognized for being inclusive and even-handed in his approach to law enforcement. He also understands that there can be no room for partisanship or divisiveness among those who are vested with the sacred mission of fighting crime and defending the rule of law. Steve is known for hearing out every opinion and considering every perspective on an issue, and

for making apolitical decisions that focus solely on the interests of public safety. As a result, though a life-long Democrat, Steve is widely perceived first and foremost as a career law enforcement professional, and he enjoys many close friends and supporters among both Democrats and Republicans.

Finally, Steve has always conducted himself with the highest level of integrity and character. As a federal prosecutor, Steve prosecuted violent criminals, corporate fraudsters, and corrupt public officials. In the process, he earned a reputation among judges, prosecutors, and defense counsel for complete honesty and candor, for the even-handed exercise of prosecutorial discretion, and for his vigilance in protecting civil liberties and the rights of the accused in the criminal justice system. We have every confidence that Steve will continue to build this reputation for fair and impartial justice in his service as ATF Director.

With the surge in gun crime across our country in recent years, it is all the more important to have confirmed leadership at the helm of the ATF who will help keep our communities safe by taking gun traffickers and other violent criminals off our streets. To that end, many leading law enforcement officials have voiced their support of and trust in Steve to pursue that mission, as they know that he has the skills, temperament, and experience to effectively lead the ATF's efforts against gun crime while respecting the rights of law-abiding gun owners.

We share that view that Steve is the right person to serve as ATF Director. We applaud President Biden for nominating someone of such caliber, a dedicated public servant with a powerful record of service, accomplishment, effective law enforcement leadership, and complete dedication to the rule of law and the integrity and independence of federal law enforcement. We give Steve's nomination our unqualified endorsement, and we urge the Judiciary Committee and the United States Senate to promptly confirm him as the next Director of the ATF.

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