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2288 Blue Water Blvd. • Suite 337 • Odenton, MD 21113

Phone: 202-870-5503 • www.fleoa.org

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January 30, 2026

To the Members of the Committee:

I write in strong support of the nomination of Robert J. Cekada to serve as Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. I offer this perspective as a career law enforcement officer and as the National President of the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association. Over the course of my career, I have worked alongside leaders at every level of law enforcement. I have seen firsthand what effective leadership looks like. Mr. Cekada is one of the most capable and credible leaders I have had the opportunity to work with.

What makes his nomination especially compelling is his experience. He has lived the mission he would now be asked to lead. He understands the job because he has done the job. His career reflects steady growth through nearly every major function within ATF. That experience gives him a practical understanding of the challenges agents face today, as well as the responsibilities carried by industry partners.

Mr. Cekada began his career as a police officer and detective with the New York City Police Department. He later served as a police officer and SWAT operator with the Plantation Police Department. In 2005, he joined ATF as a Special Agent in the Baltimore Field Division, where he worked on the RAGE Task Force. He later served as a Special Agent in the Tampa Field Division.

He also held multiple assignments at ATF Headquarters, including roles within the Firearms Operations Division. He served as both a Program Manager and a Special Assistant. Mr. Cekada went on to become the Resident Agent in Charge of the HIDTA Task Force North in the Miami Field Division. He later served as an Assistant Special Agent in Charge in the Philadelphia Field Division.

He was selected to lead two of ATF's largest and most complex field offices. He served as Special Agent in Charge of the Baltimore Field Division and later the Miami Field Division. He then advanced to Deputy Assistant Director for the Central Region within Field Operations. He went on to serve as Executive Assistant Director. In 2025, he was appointed Deputy Director of ATF.

Across each of these roles, one theme stands out. Mr. Cekada is steady. He exercises sound judgment. He communicates clearly and honestly. He handles difficult issues directly and without unnecessary theatrics. He has earned trust because he respects the work, the risks, and the responsibility that come with the job. That trust extends beyond law enforcement and into the private sector, where he is widely viewed as fair, professional, and credible.

Just as important is his commitment to the workforce. Throughout his career, Mr. Cekada has focused on the people who do the job every day. Much of that work happens behind the scenes. It includes prioritizing employee safety, supporting professional development, addressing concerns early, and improving agency culture. These efforts may not generate headlines, but they are essential to maintaining a strong and effective organization.

ATF is operating in a challenging environment. The agency faces serious criminal threats, increased scrutiny, and complex regulatory responsibilities. It needs a leader who understands both field operations and executive decision making. It needs someone who bases decisions on experience, not theory. It needs a leader who remains focused on the mission. Mr. Cekada meets those needs.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to advance his nomination and the Senate to confirm him as Director of ATF. He has the experience, judgment, and temperament required for this role. He has earned the confidence of the workforce he would lead. Most importantly, his confirmation would ensure that the men and women of ATF, and the country they serve, are guided by a steady and dedicated leader prepared to lead the agency into the future.

Fraternally,



Mathew Silverman
National President
Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association