

May 23, 2022

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
Chair
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

RE: Confirmation of Steven Dettelbach as Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

Dear Chairman Durbin, Ranking Member Grassley, and Members of the Committee:

As members of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community, we write to express support for Steven M. Dettelbach as the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic, violence, harassment, and hate crimes against the AAPI community has increased over 300%. Guns have played a deadly role in the rise of anti-AAPI attacks. The March 2021 Atlanta spa shootings left a significant mark on the AAPI community when eight individuals – six of whom were Asian women – were murdered. Just this month, a mass shooter targeted congregants at a Taiwanese-American Christian Church because of their nationality. Stemming anti-AAPI violence and hate crimes requires aggressive policy and leadership at the federal level.

Steve Dettelbach will provide that leadership. Steve has over twenty years of experience as a federal prosecutor. From his work as a prosecutor in the landmark El Monte Slavery Case in the 1990's, where 70 Thai women were exploited and held in inhumane conditions outside Los Angeles, Steve has worked hard to protect vulnerable populations from violence and abuse. He has an extensive history in civil rights, having worked in the Civil Rights Division at Main Justice and serving as the Chair of the Civil Rights Subcommittee on the Attorney General's Advisory Committee. He has experience prosecuting hate crimes and protecting vulnerable communities. More recently, Steve spearheaded a call to action among former United States Attorneys immediately following the Atlanta spa shootings to increase law enforcement focus on AAPI hate crimes and incidents of bias.

Law enforcement plays a critical role in protecting vulnerable communities from domestic extremism. As Director of the ATF, Steve Dettelbach will work hard to stem anti-AAPI violence, and keep our communities safer.

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