

Senate Judiciary Committee
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

May 20, 2022

To the Esteemed Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

As you know, gun violence is up around the country. As faith leaders, we see every day the effects of gun violence on Americans as we bury and mourn the dead, and console and counsel survivors and families.

While this wave of gun violence demands a multifaceted response, at a minimum, the agency that protects our communities from gun violence by enforcing our federal gun laws should have a confirmed Director. It is for this reason that we write to you today: Please vote to confirm Steven Dettelbach, a dedicated public servant and experienced prosecutor, as Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Dettelbach's long career as a prosecutor and defender of our freedom exemplifies how he would serve as ATF director. He has protected vulnerable communities, especially religious communities, from extremists, domestic terrorists, and violent actors. Dettelbach, while assistant U.S. attorney, prosecuted hate crimes nationwide, and coordinated the prosecution of violence against faith communities under two attorneys-general. While in Northern Ohio, he led prosecutions of incidents against a Black church in Conneaut and a mosque in Toledo. He also led the prosecution of a Toledo man accused of intimidating Jewish and Black communities in Detroit. In addition to the legal work, Dettelbach worked with clergy from a range of religious traditions to launch a group called United Against Hate after the Conneaut incident. Dettelbach's work in Northern Ohio has earned him the endorsement of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, and his history of protecting religious freedom has led to the support from the Anti-Defamation League.

ATF has been without a Senate-confirmed director since 2015. While that is far from the only factor, violence has been steadily ticking up in major cities since then, and we need a confirmed director at the helm to provide ATF the leadership it needs to keep our communities safe. If confirmed, Dettelbach would be only the second Senate-confirmed Director in the Bureau's history, an important sign that the Senate is taking seriously the wave of violence we are facing.

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We understand the views of responsible, law-abiding Americans, and we believe Dettelbach's experience and values reflect their values well. As religious leaders, we know that the government must act to protect the lives of innocent Americans who are falling victim to gun violence. While we work to bring peace in our communities, we need the state and federal governments to play their roles. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives fills a key niche, working to keep illegal guns off our streets and out of the hands of those who shouldn't have them. We believe that Dettelbach is the right man to provide leadership to that agency, respecting the rights of law-abiding citizens while strengthening law enforcement. Please vote to confirm Steven Dettelbach.

Sincerely,

Interim Pastor Charles Dennis Alger
First Congregational Church of Santa Barbara
Oceanside, CA

Susan Anolik
Temple Beth Shalom
Cherry Hill, NJ

Rev. Tyler Araki
New Hope Fellowship
Fort Worth, TX

Rev. Talitha Arnold
United Church of Santa Fe
Santa Fe, NM

Senior Pastor Paul M. Ashby
First Congregational Church United Church of Christ
Grand Junction, CO

Dr. Michael W. Austin
Professor, Eastern Kentucky University
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Rt. Rev. Mark Beckwith
Bishop of Newark (ret.), The Episcopal Church
Jaffrey, NH

Rabbi Tiferet Berenbaum
Temple Beth Zion
Brookline, MA

Rabbi Barry H. Block
Congregation B'nai Israel
Little Rock, AK

Rabbi Stephen Booth-Nadav
Multifaith Leadership Forum of Metro Denver
Denver, CO

Rev. Adam C. Bowling
First United Presbyterian Church
Dale City, VA

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First United Presbyterian Church
Dale City, VA

Rabbi Bradd Boxman
Parkland, FL

Rev. Miles R. Brandon, II, Vicar
St. Julian of Norwich Episcopal Church
Round Rock, TX

Rev. Lecia Diaz Brannon
St. Mary's Episcopal Church
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Rabbi Deborah Bronstein
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Rev. James E. Brooking
West Covina United Methodist Church
West Covina, CA

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Kingdom Life Church & Ministries
Denton, TX

Sharmaine Brown
Jared's Heart of Success
Atlanta, GA

Rev. Dr. Tim Bruster
First United Methodist Church
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Rabbi Kenneth Carr
Easton, MA

Dr. Iva Carruthers
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Rev. Barbara Condon
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Armel Crocker, CP
First Presbyterian Church
Dallas, TX

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Rev. John Daniels
First United Methodist Church
Missoula, MT

Rev. Dr. Diana Davies
First Unitarian Church
Oklahoma City, OK

Rev. Susan DeBree
The United Methodist Church
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The Villages, FL

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The United Methodist Church
Austin, TX

Rev. Andrew Ellison
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Rev. Kathy Manis Findley
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Macon, GA

Bishop Douglas Fisher
Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts
Springfield, MA

Rev. Ben Fitzgerald-Fye
Scipioville Presbyterian Church
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Rev. Derek Forbes
Presbyterian Church (USA)
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Rabbi Laurie Franklin
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Rev. Karen Fry
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Sister Mary Ellen Gondeck
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Bishop Erik Gronberg
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Rev. Matt Horan
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Dr. Elizabeth Jackson
Faith In Florida
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Rev. Andrew Jacob
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Rev. Cynthia Lapp
Hyattsville Mennonite Church
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Rev. Kathy Lee-Cornell
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