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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Committee on House Administration
Ranking Member

Committee on Appropriations
Vice Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Subcommittee on Defense

October 6, 2026

The Honorable Todd Blanche
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20530

The Honorable Robert Cekada
Director
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
99 New York Avenue NE
Washington, DC 20226

The Honorable Kash Patel
Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation
935 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20535

Dear Attorney General Blanche, Director Cekada, and Director Patel,

I am writing to you today in response to your letter dated June 24, 2026, which was sent in response to my initial letter dated November 18, 2025. Under your leadership, America continues to face a gun violence crisis, and firearm violence has remained the leading cause of death for American children and teens for five years.¹ In order to reverse this trend and reduce gun violence, it is of the utmost importance that ATF enforce the laws enacted by Congress to reduce firearms trafficking and prevent prohibited persons from obtaining firearms.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) is the sole agency responsible for regulating the firearms industry and is tasked with detecting trafficking networks to protect American communities. Yet, I have serious concerns about the recent decrease in ATF's oversight of the gun dealers and its impact on the safety of our neighborhoods. The number of ATF Industry Operations Investigators (IOIs) has fallen precipitously, and is now at its lowest number in more than two decades,² despite an over 20,000 increase in the number of federal firearms

¹ Firearm injury has been the leading cause of death for children aged 1-17 from 2020-2024, the latest year of data available. See: The Firearm Mortality Epidemic: Examining The U.S. Data From 2024 (2026, July) <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/sites/default/files/2026-07/2024-CGVS-gun-violence-in-the-united-states.pdf>

² FY2025 IOI and FFL numbers: <https://www.atf.gov/resource-center/fact-sheet/facts-and-figures-fiscal-year-2025>

FY2008-24 IOI numbers: ATF's translation materials, proactively published from some non-Brady organization's FOIA request: <https://assets.bradyunited.org/production/files/2024-ATF-Transition-Materials.pdf>

FY2004-07 IOI Data: <https://assets.bradyunited.org/production/files/FY15-Staffing-and-budget-factsheet.pdf>

FY2004 FFL Data: ATF 2021 Report on Firearms Commerce in the U.S.

licensees (FFLs) for ATF to oversee.³ Even prior to this staffing collapse, ATF was struggling to meet its goal of inspecting each FFL at least once every three years, with most licensees only inspected once per decade.⁴ It is further concerning that the number of compliance inspections conducted in 2025 fell for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic,⁵ reversing a years-long trend of returning to a pre-pandemic baseline.

This decrease in overall inspections is compounded by the fact that inspections have become far more lenient during the second Trump administration. It is deeply concerning that the number of dealers with serious violations who had their licenses revoked in 2026 is projected to be the lowest since at least 2004.⁶ As you stated in your June 2026 letter, ATF revoked 50 Federal Firearms Licenses (FFLs) and conducted 8,630 compliance inspections in the 2025 calendar year. However, I am aware the number of licenses revoked have likely continued to fall in 2026, as I know many of those revocations were likely initiated prior to changes in agency policy in 2024 and there can be up to a six month delay from the initial Notice-to-Revoke (NTR) to eventual revocation.⁷ To demonstrate, only three revocations were completed in the last three months of the 2025, and according to the information you provided, only 16 dealers were issued an initial NTR during all of the 2025 calendar year.⁸

I am also concerned that FFLs who had their licenses revoked are returning to the business of selling firearms to the public. In May 2025, ATF publicly invited dealers that had had their licenses revoked or denied, or surrendered their licenses in lieu of revocation, under the now-rescinded Enhanced Regulatory Enforcement Policy (EREP) to reapply and potentially be given

<https://www.atf.gov/media/16741/download>

³ FY2025 FFL numbers: <https://www.atf.gov/resource-center/fact-sheet/facts-and-figures-fiscal-year-2025>

FY2004 FFL Data: ATF 2021 Report on Firearms Commerce in the U.S.

<https://www.atf.gov/media/16741/download>

⁴ *Audit of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' Risk-Based Inspection Selection Processes and Administrative Actions Issued to Federal Firearms Licensees*, OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE (April 2023).

https://oig.justice.gov/sites/default/files/reports/23-062_0.pdf

⁵ CY2015-24 Data: Director Cekada answered to Senate, early 2026, page 43, for number of revocations by calendar year 2015-2024 https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/3502d997-daa5-f550-7914-e7d18cc5b59b/2026-02-04_QFR-Responses_Cekada.pdf (archive)

CY2025: ATF Director Cekada June 24, 2026 letter to Congress, saying CY2025 "approximately 8,630 inspections" were conducted.

⁶ CY2015-24 Data: Director Cekada answered to Senate, early 2026, page 43, for number of revocations by calendar year 2015-2024 https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/3502d997-daa5-f550-7914-e7d18cc5b59b/2026-02-04_QFR-Responses_Cekada.pdf (archive)

FY2014 Data: Fact Sheet - Facts and Figures for Fiscal Year 2024, Bureau Of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (May 2014), <https://bradyunited.box.com/s/cehib7es6cvw1zc3mwqd21odki4y7pwt>

FY2013 Data: Fact Sheet - Facts and Figures for Fiscal Year 2024, Bureau Of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (May 2014), <https://bradyunited.box.com/s/cehib7es6cvw1zc3mwqd21odki4y7pwt>

FY2012 Data: ATF factsheet, (February 2013)

<https://web.archive.org/web/20130721014421/https://www.atf.gov/publications/factsheets/factsheet-ffl-compliance.html> (archive: <https://bradyunited.box.com/s/s2ylecc0637xlt91jumw169li8t5r094>)

FY2004-11 Data: <https://assets.bradyunited.org/production/files/OIG-I-2013-005-FFL-compliance-inspection-program-report.pdf>

⁷ See inspection reports listed on <https://www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/enhanced-regulatory-enforcement-policy>, accessed October 31, 2023

⁸ ATF Director Cekada June 24, 2026 letter to Congress

new licenses.^{9 10} This will allow individuals who lost or surrendered their licenses because of serious willful violations of the GCA to begin dealing firearms again, despite no evidence that their behavior will change if they reenter the firearms business and in direct violation of federal law.¹¹

Furthermore, recent reporting¹² suggests there has been a precipitous decline in overall trafficking cases prosecuted by ATF, particularly in cases not involving international trafficking, which contradicts some of ATF's earlier public statements.¹³ I am equally concerned about the decrease in ATF Special Agents (SAs) available to investigate firearm trafficking. In fact, ATF has lost more than 165 SAs since Fiscal Year 2024,¹⁴ in addition to the up to 300 ATF SAs per day that you confirmed have been made available for Title 8 immigration enforcement with DHS, with an average of 41 SAs per day doing so.¹⁵ While you emphasized in your June 2026 response letter that "to the extent ATF has exercised its Title 8 immigration authorities, it has done so by focusing on identifying illegal firearms traffickers," I have deep concerns that the overall decrease in agent time spent on investigating domestic trafficking puts American communities at risk.

As a Member of Congress, it is my responsibility to conduct oversight of how the Department of Justice and ATF allocate their federal resources in compliance with the law. I request answers to the following questions by October 31, 2026:

1. Please provide an answer to the unanswered question (1)(a) from my letter on November 18, 2025, repeated below:
 - a. "Please provide the number, as well as the attending compliance inspection reports, of FFLs cited for willful violations that would have resulted in the initiation of license revocation under the now-repealed Enhanced Regulatory Enforcement Policy."
2. Please provide the exact number of reapplied FFLs by category. Specifically:
 - a. Of the 397 gun dealers that were revoked under the EREP¹⁶ have, as of July 1, 2026, how many have:
 - i. Reapplied in total.
 - ii. Been granted new license(s).
 - iii. Been denied new license(s).
 - iv. Had other outcomes (application still being processed, etc.)

⁹ <https://www.atf.gov/firearms/protecting-second-amendment-rights>

¹⁰ Note that this is despite the fact that your response disclosed that in 2025, six prior recommendations for revocation were rescinded under de novo review.

¹¹ See 18 U.S.C. § 923(d)(1)(C)

¹² <https://www.propublica.org/article/how-trump-reversed-biden-gun-crackdown-atf>

¹³ <https://www.atf.gov/news/press-releases/atf-reports-major-enforcement-wins-following-2025-shift-priorities>

¹⁴ 2565-2399=166 lost. As of June 2026 ATF had "just under 2,400" SAs remaining, <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/management/2026/06/the-bureau-of-alcohol-tobacco-firearms-and-explosives-says-its-entering-a-new-era/>, 2,565 SAs at the end of Fiscal Year 2024

<https://assets.bradyunited.org/production/files/2024-ATF-Transition-Materials.pdf>

¹⁵ ATF Director Czekada June 24, 2026 letter to Congress

¹⁶ <https://web.archive.org/web/20250117204029/https://www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/enhanced-regulatory-enforcement-policy>

- b. Of the 247 gun dealers that surrendered their firearms license(s) in lieu of revocation due to EREP¹⁷, as of July 1, 2026, how many have:
 - i. Reapplied in total?
 - ii. Been granted new license(s)?
 - iii. Been denied new license(s)?
 - iv. Had other outcomes (application still being processed, etc.)?
 - c. How many of the unknown number of gun dealers that had their firearms license(s) revoked, surrendered, or not renewed due to violations under EREP¹⁸ have, as of July 1, 2026, reapplied:
 - i. In total?
 - ii. Been granted new license(s)?
 - iii. Been denied new license(s)?
 - iv. Had other outcomes (application still being processed, etc.)?
 3. Starting in May 2025, with the advent of the new inspection guidance under 5370.1H, gun dealers are no longer cited for all violations detected, just all “material” violations. Given this change in policy:
 - a. Please provide the definition of materiality used by ATF IOIs in compliance inspections.
 - i. Please provide information on if there are and what are the certain violation(s) that are always determined to be “material” or “immaterial.” Please provide information on whether immaterial violations are recorded by ATF, and if so, please provide the firearms compliance inspection data, by inspection outcome, for the number of inspections that detected violation(s) that were not cited due an “immaterial” determination in the following timespans:¹⁹
 - ii. January 1, 2025 - September 30, 2025.
 - iii. October 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025.
 4. Has the overall decrease in SAs, including by redirecting SAs to focus on Title 8 (immigration) enforcement dependent on the requests of DHS, resulted in fewer domestic trafficking cases being charged?
 - a. Please provide the total number of trafficking cases, disaggregated by international and domestic cases:
 - i. Accepted for prosecution based on referrals from ATF Special Agents (SAs) in calendar years 2024 and 2025.
 - ii. Accepted for prosecution based on referrals from ATF Special Agents (SAs) in calendar years 2024 and 2025.

¹⁷ <https://web.archive.org/web/20250117204029/https://www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/enhanced-regulatory-enforcement-policy>

¹⁸ <https://web.archive.org/web/20250117204029/https://www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/enhanced-regulatory-enforcement-policy>

¹⁹ We acknowledge many of these may have varying outcomes for their final dispositions. For example, an inspection resulting in a Warning Conference could have had 10 violations detected but 1 was considered “immaterial”, so was only cited for 9.

5. Please explain why, despite a 276% increase in the total number of criminal referrals, the number of charges from ATF inspection referrals in 2025 accepted for prosecution decreased 28% from the 2024 totals for the following categories:
- a. Straw purchasing-related charges.
 - b. Aiding and abetting.

Charges Accepted for Prosecution from Referrals from ATF Inspections		2024	2025
Straw Purchasing Related (lying on forms) Charges Accepted for Prosecution by DOJ		136	81
	18 USC 922(a)(6): Falsified Information When Buying Firearms	124	17
	18 USC 924(a)(1)(A): Cause FFL to Falsify Records	4	59
	18 USC 932: Straw Purchasing	8	5
	18 USC 2: Aiding and Abetting Charges	30	0

Thank you for your attention to this important matter, and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Joseph D. Morelle
Member of Congress