

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 19, 2026

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

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

Dear Director Cekada and Acting Attorney General Blanche,

As Members of Congress, we write to express our profound concern regarding the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' (ATF) recent announcement of 34 regulatory changes that will severely weaken federal oversight of the firearms industry. Announced just days after a thwarted mass shooting attempt at the White House Correspondents' Dinner, this action sends a deeply troubling message about this Administration's priorities at a time when communities across the country continue to face the devastating impact of widespread gun violence.

The newly announced rulemakings appear to prioritize the interests of the gun industry over public safety. By rolling back critical safeguards, ATF is making it easier for firearms to be diverted into the illegal market and into the hands of prohibited individuals. This approach undermines the agency's core mission and weakens law enforcement's ability to trace firearms, solve crimes, and disrupt trafficking networks.

We are particularly concerned by the decision to rescind the 'Engaged in the Business' rule, which required individuals selling firearms for profit to obtain a license and conduct background checks.¹ Eliminating this rule reopens dangerous loopholes, allowing unlicensed sellers to operate with minimal oversight and enabling traffickers to move guns more easily into illegal markets. It also removes safeguards that prevented dealers with revoked licenses from continuing sales through private collections.

We are equally troubled by the repeal of the stabilizing brace rule, which addressed certain devices which are designed to serve as shoulder stocks and convert pistols into short-barreled rifles, firearms that combine the concealability of pistols with the increased lethality of rifles.² These weapons have been used in numerous mass casualty events, and removing this rule risks broader proliferation of highly dangerous, lightly regulated firearms.

Additional changes, including reducing firearm record retention periods and eliminating notification requirements to local law enforcement, will further undermine ATF's ability to trace firearms and support

¹ *New Era Actions Taken: Repeal*, BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS AND EXPLOSIVES (April 29, 2026), <https://www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/atf-launches-new-era-reform/repeal>.

² *New Era Actions Taken: Repeal*, BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS AND EXPLOSIVES (April 29, 2026), <https://www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/atf-launches-new-era-reform/repeal>.

federal, state, and local criminal investigations.³ These tools are essential to identifying trafficking patterns and holding bad actors accountable.

These changes do not exist in a vacuum. They represent a deliberate and comprehensive effort to dismantle evidence-based policies that have demonstrably reduced violent crime and saved lives in recent years. Targeted reforms put in place after the passage of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act including strengthened background check requirements, oversight of gun dealers, and regulation of weapons covered by the National Firearms Act, contributed to a sustained decline in gun violence that we cannot ignore.⁴

At a time when a majority of Americans support commonsense gun safety measures, these changes move the country in the wrong direction. The consequences will be felt by families, communities, and law enforcement nationwide. By weakening its oversight capabilities and enabling the proliferation of unregulated firearms, ATF risks reversing years of progress and making it more difficult to prevent and respond to future gun violence.

Given the serious implications of these actions, we request detailed responses to the following questions no later than June 2, 2026:

1. What analysis did ATF conduct to assess the public safety impact of rescinding the “Engaged in the Business” rule, particularly with respect to firearm trafficking and background check compliance? What did the analysis reveal?
 - a. How many current and prospective federal firearm licensees does ATF estimate would no longer be required to obtain licensure and complete background checks on firearm sales?
2. How does ATF justify repealing the stabilizing brace rule, given the documented use of short-barreled rifles equipped with shoulder stocks marketed as “stabilizing braces” in mass casualty events?
3. What steps will ATF take to ensure that reductions in record retention requirements and alterations to the Form 4473 do not impair the agency’s ability to trace firearms used in crimes?
4. What consultation, if any, did ATF undertake with state and local law enforcement agencies regarding these regulatory changes?
5. How does ATF reconcile these actions with its statutory mission to protect the public and reduce violent crime?

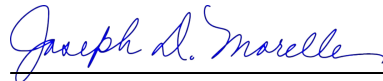
We urge ATF to reconsider these actions and to prioritize policies that strengthen, rather than weaken, public safety. The American people deserve a federal government that is committed to reducing gun violence, not one that makes it easier for dangerous weapons to fall into the wrong hands.

We expect your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

³ *ATF’s New Era of Reform*, BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS AND EXPLOSIVES (April 29, 2026), <https://www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/atf-launches-new-era-reform>.

⁴ *A Report on the Implementation of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act*, BIDEN WHITE HOUSE ARCHIVES (June 25, 2024), <https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/A-Report-on-the-Implementation-of-the-Bipartisan-Safer-Communities-Act.pdf>.



Joseph D. Morelle
Member of Congress



Dave Min
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



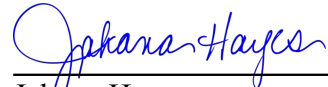
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



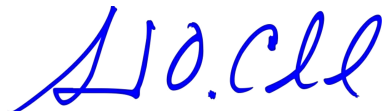
Shri Thanedar
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Madeleine Dean
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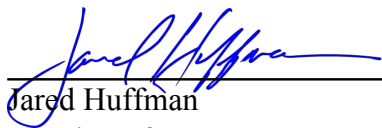
Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



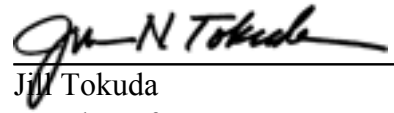
Salud Carbajal
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Gabe Amo
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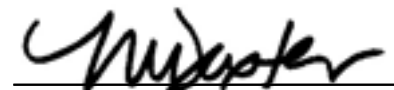
Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



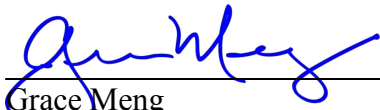
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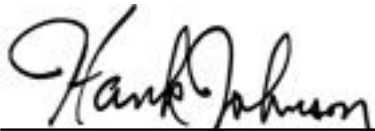
Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



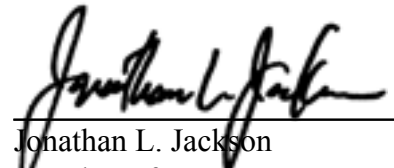
Suzanne Bonamici
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Shontel M. Brown
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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
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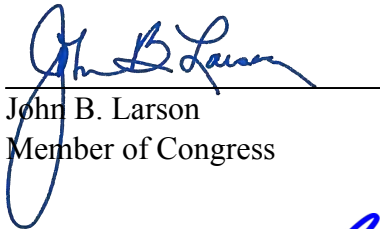
Jonathan L. Jackson
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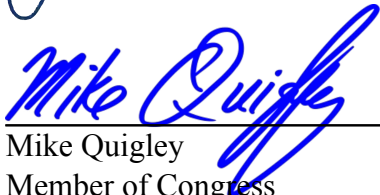
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Mike Quigley
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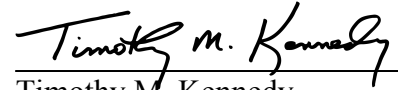
Valerie P. Foushee
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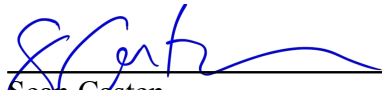
Robin L. Kelly
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Timothy M. Kennedy
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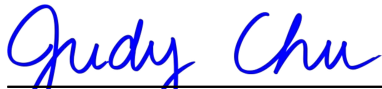
Mike Thompson
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Dina Titus
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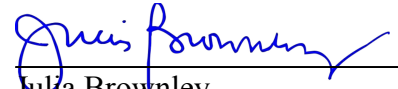
Judy Chu
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Raja Krishnamoorthi
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LaMonica McIver
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Julia Brownley
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Angie Craig
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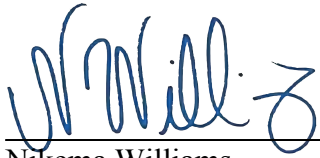
Ritchie Torres
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Stephen F. Lynch
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Nikema Williams
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Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



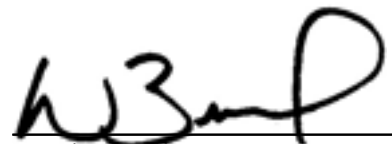
George Latimer
Member of Congress



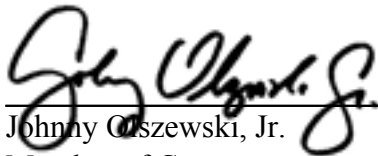
John Garamendi
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Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



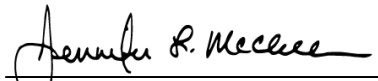
Wesley Bell
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Johnny Guszewski, Jr.
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
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Jennifer L. McClellan
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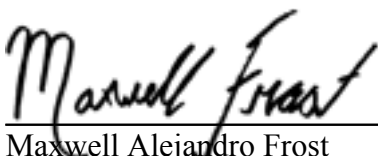
Dan Goldman
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Chrissy Houlahan
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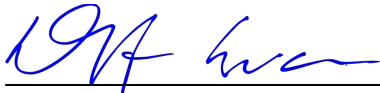
Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress



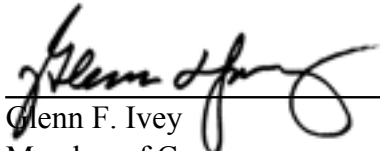
Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress



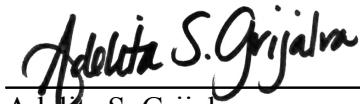
Jason Crow
Member of Congress



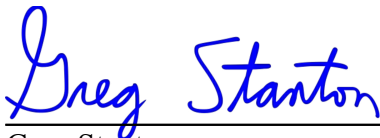
Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Glenn F. Ivey
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Adelta S. Grijalva
Member of Congress



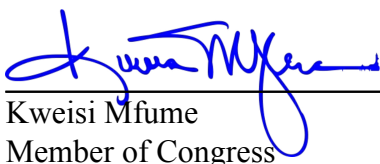
Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



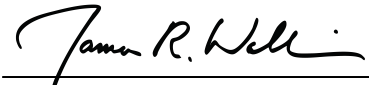
Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



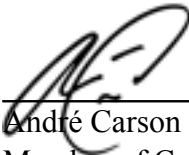
Ted W. Lieu
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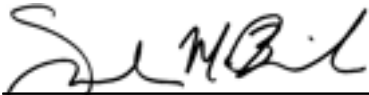
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James R. Walkinshaw
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André Carson
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Sarah McBride
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Patrick Ryan
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Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



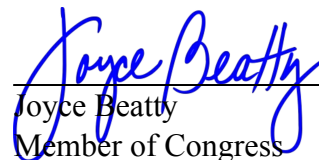
Ami Bera
Member of Congress



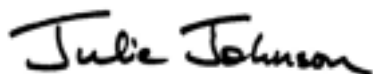
Mary Gay Scanlon
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Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



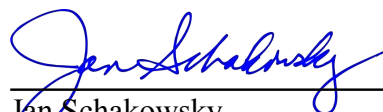
Joyce Beatty
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Julie Johnson
Member of Congress



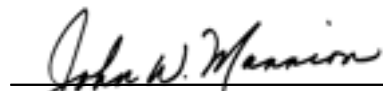
Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



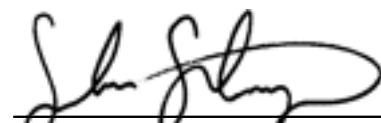
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



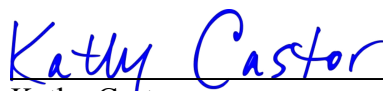
Melanie Stansbury
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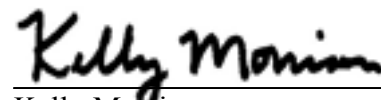
John W. Mannion
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Suhas Subramanyam
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Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



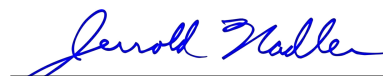
Kelly Morrison
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Jake Auchincloss
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Lauren Underwood
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Jerrold Nadler
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Lizzie Fletcher
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SETH MOULTON
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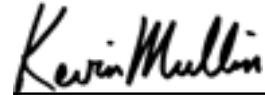
Gwen S. Moore
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Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



Lucy McBath
Member of Congress



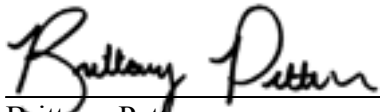
Kevin Mullin
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Brittany Petersen
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Frederica S. Wilson
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