

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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May 21, 2026

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

Dear Director Cekada:

We write to request information about the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives's (ATF) latest announcement that it will dismantle or weaken critical firearm regulations and safeguards that keep Americans safe. On April 29, 2026, ATF announced that it will repeal and modify 34 regulations including final rules, proposed rules, and notices as part of the "new era of reform."<sup>1</sup> Many of these regulations exist to reduce the frequency and lethality of horrific acts of violence, by providing tighter oversight on accessories like stabilizing braces and bump stocks that have been used by shooters to harm more people.<sup>2</sup> The United States needs strong checks in place to prevent these horrific acts against children and communities. Please provide further detailed information about ATF's regulatory activities and engagement with the private sector.

On May 14, 2026, the Subcommittee on Law Enforcement held a hearing on privacy protections and the second amendment, where you testified that the ATF did not consult with gun-industry affiliated groups, such as the National Rifle Association, Gun Owners of America, or National Sports Shooting Foundation, in formulating and drafting the proposed rules.<sup>3</sup> However, ATF's joint press release contradicts your earlier testimony, which states that that "this review included a consideration of industry and expert feedback and concerns." Additionally, in

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<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, *ATF Launches New Era of Reform* (online at [www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/atf-launches-new-era-reform](http://www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/atf-launches-new-era-reform)) (accessed Apr. 29, 2026).

<sup>2</sup> *Las Vegas Shooting Survivors Alarmed at U.S. Supreme Court's Strike Down of Ban on Rifle Bump Stocks*, AP News (June 14, 2024) (online at <https://apnews.com/article/us-supreme-court-las-vegas-shooting-bump-stocks-ad4374e8b10f9a14580025cc5db713bc>); *Exclusive: Thousands of Agents Diverted to Trump Immigration Crackdown*, Reuters (Mar. 22, 2025) (online at [www.reuters.com/world/us/thousands-agents-diverted-trump-immigration-crackdown-2025-03-22/](http://www.reuters.com/world/us/thousands-agents-diverted-trump-immigration-crackdown-2025-03-22/)).

<sup>3</sup> Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, *Privacy Protections & The Second Amendment: Examining ATF's Relationship to the Tiahrt Amendment* (May 14, 2026) (online at <https://oversight.house.gov/hearing/privacy-protections-the-second-amendment-examining-atfs-relationship-to-the-tiahrt-amendment/>).

announcing these rule changes, you and Acting Attorney General Todd Banche were surrounded by representatives of these and other firearm industry groups.<sup>4</sup>

The recent ATF reforms appear to support the interests of gun manufacturers and the worst gun dealers at the expense of public safety and federal oversight. These 34 rule changes include:

- Repeal of a regulation that classified pistols as short-barreled rifles if they contained a stabilizing brace, an attachment designed to make a firearm more lethal.<sup>5</sup> These braces have been used in mass shootings, including the Covenant School in Nashville, Tennessee, and at Club Q in Colorado Springs, Colorado.<sup>6</sup> This rule ensured that pistols that had been modified to be exponentially more lethal against people were recognized alongside similar lethal classes of firearms. As a result, the rule made it more difficult for gun owners to avoid federal firearms restrictions on short-barreled rifles.
- Repeal of the *Engaged in the Business Rule*, which implemented a provision from the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act to close a gaping loophole that allowed firearm dealers to sell guns without a basic background check. This rule prevented the transfer of guns to criminals, reduced the risks involving unlicensed sellers, and helped law enforcement solve crimes.<sup>7</sup>

In addition, ATF is targeting basic recordkeeping and compliance procedures that would directly weaken public safety. Among them, ATF announced plans to rescind a policy of retaining federal firearms license (FFL) records until a license is discontinued.<sup>8</sup> Law enforcement officers use these records to trace guns that turn up in a crime scene or investigation to help shooters accountable. These rule changes will make it more difficult for law enforcement officers to solve crimes.

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<sup>4</sup> Department of Justice, *DOJ and ATF Announce Regulatory Reforms to Reduce Burdens on Law-Abiding Gun Owners and Businesses* (Apr. 29, 2026) (online at [www.justice.gov/opa/pr/doj-and-atf-announce-regulatory-reforms-reduce-burdens-law-abiding-gun-owners-and-businesses](https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/doj-and-atf-announce-regulatory-reforms-reduce-burdens-law-abiding-gun-owners-and-businesses)).

<sup>5</sup> Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, *Repeal* (updated Apr. 29, 2026) (online at [www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/atf-launches-new-era-reform/repeal](https://www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/atf-launches-new-era-reform/repeal)).

<sup>6</sup> *Las Vegas Shooting Survivors Alarmed at U.S. Supreme Court's Strike Down of Ban on Rifle Bump Stocks*, AP News (June 14, 2024) (online at <https://apnews.com/article/us-supreme-court-las-vegas-shooting-bump-stocks-ad4374e8b10f9a14580025cc5db713bc>); *Exclusive: Thousands of Agents Diverted to Trump Immigration Crackdown*, Reuters (Mar. 22, 2025) (online at [www.reuters.com/world/us/thousands-agents-diverted-trump-immigration-crackdown-2025-03-22/](https://www.reuters.com/world/us/thousands-agents-diverted-trump-immigration-crackdown-2025-03-22/)).

<sup>7</sup> Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, *Repeal* ([www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/atf-launches-new-era-reform/repeal](https://www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/atf-launches-new-era-reform/repeal)) (accessed Apr. 29, 2026).

<sup>8</sup> Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, *Modernize* (updated Apr. 29, 2026) (online at [www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/atf-launches-new-era-reform/modernize](https://www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/atf-launches-new-era-reform/modernize)).

These recordkeeping changes appear to track advocacy by Gun Owners of America (GOA), which has characterized ATF's firearms transaction records as a so-called "registry" and urged the Trump Administration to destroy those records. During an April 15, 2026, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs hearing on the Second Amendment, GOA Senior Vice President Erich Pratt stated:

Gun Owners of America has been working with the administration to do just that with the registry. They are coming out with a new rule because, under Biden, they made those records permanent. So, we are urging them, you know, a shall not be infringed view would mean the ATF retains those 4473s [FFL records] for zero years, not ten, not twenty, thirty, or indefinitely, but zero.<sup>9</sup>

This follows previous actions by the Trump Administration to withhold crucial information from the American public while simultaneously dismantling policies designed to protect Americans. Notably, ATF diverted its agents to support the Administration's mass deportation agenda.<sup>10</sup> ATF repealed an important zero-tolerance policy that targeted high-risk violators, undermining efforts to guard weapons from dangerous individuals.<sup>11</sup> ATF also removed inspection reports of revoked FFLs from its official website, further limiting public access to information that is vital for community safety and accountability.<sup>12</sup>

ATF is one of the few federal institutions that enforce federal firearms laws and hold violent, armed criminals accountable. ATF's 857 investigators and 2,572 special agents are dedicated professionals that ensure over 128,000 FFLs are compliant with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. As of fiscal year 2024, ATF conducted inspections of only 7.5% of all 128,690 active FFLs.<sup>13</sup> ATF historically lacks sufficient resources and personnel to inspect all licensees on a regular basis, so it is forced to prioritize inspections of licensees with a high-risk of noncompliance or exploitation.<sup>14</sup> The lack of resources combined with these

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<sup>9</sup> Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *Hearing on "The Second Amendment"* (Apr. 15, 2026) (online at <https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/hearings/the-second-amendment/>); Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Written Testimony of Erich Pratt, Senior Vice President, Gun Owners of America, *Hearing on "The Second Amendment"* (Apr. 15, 2026) (online at [www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/Testimony-Pratt-2026-04-15-REVISED.pdf](https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/Testimony-Pratt-2026-04-15-REVISED.pdf)).

<sup>10</sup> *Exclusive: Thousands of Agents Diverted to Trump Immigration Crackdown*, Reuters (Mar. 22, 2025) (online at [www.reuters.com/world/us/thousands-agents-diverted-trump-immigration-crackdown-2025-03-22/](https://www.reuters.com/world/us/thousands-agents-diverted-trump-immigration-crackdown-2025-03-22/)).

<sup>11</sup> Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, *Enhanced Regulatory Enforcement Policy* (Apr. 8, 2025) (online at <https://web.archive.org/web/20260128161415/https://www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/enhanced-regulatory-enforcement-policy>).

<sup>12</sup> Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, *ATF Launches New Era of Reform* (Aug. 8, 2025) (online at [www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/atf-launches-new-era-reform](https://www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/atf-launches-new-era-reform)).

<sup>13</sup> Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, *Fact Sheet — Facts and Figures for Fiscal Year 2024* (Mar. 2025) (online at [www.atf.gov/resource-center/fact-sheet/fact-sheet-facts-and-figures-fiscal-year-2024](https://www.atf.gov/resource-center/fact-sheet/fact-sheet-facts-and-figures-fiscal-year-2024)).

<sup>14</sup> Department of Justice Office of Inspector General, *Press Release: DOJ OIG Releases Report on the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' Risk-Based Inspection Selection Processes and Administrative Actions Issued to Federal Firearms Licensees* (Apr. 20, 2023) (online at <https://oig.justice.gov/news/doj-oig-releases-report-bureau-alcohol-tobacco-firearms-and-explosives-risk-based-inspection>).

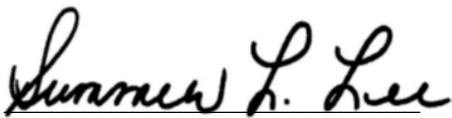
significant proposed rule changes will place the ATF in a weaker position to prevent and intercept criminal diversion of firearms.

To further understand ATF's efforts, I request that you provide the following documents and information, from January 20, 2025, to the present, no later than June 4, 2026:

1. The process employed in identifying and reviewing ATF rules and regulations, and the standards used to determine which regulations are revoked or modified. Please include a list of any analytics or generative artificial intelligence tools used to identify regulations for revocation or modification;
2. All documents and communications between any individual at ATF and Gun Owners of America related to ATF rulemaking;
3. All documents and communications between any individual at ATF and the National Shooting Sports Foundation related to ATF rulemaking; and
4. A list of offices and the number of staff involved, including any in the review and determination of rules and regulations for revocation or modification. Please specify the employee classification of all relevant employees.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives, and has broad authority to investigate "any matter" at "any time" under House Rule X. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Committee Democratic staff at (202) 225-5051.

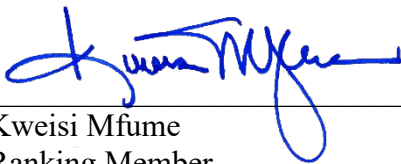
Sincerely,



Summer Lee  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Federal Law  
Enforcement



Maxwell Frost  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Economic Growth,  
Energy Policy, and Regulatory  
Affairs



Kweisi Mfume  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Government Operations

The Honorable Robert Cekada

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cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman

The Honorable Clay Higgins, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Federal Law Enforcement

The Honorable Eric Burlison, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Economic Growth, Energy Policy, and Regulatory Affairs

The Honorable Pete Sessions, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Government Operations