



U.S. Department of Justice

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco,
Firearms and Explosives

Public and Governmental Affairs

Washington, DC 20226

www.atf.gov

January 17, 2025

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Warren:

This responds to your letter dated October 23, 2024, to Attorney General Merrick Garland and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) Director Steven Dettelbach, regarding interstate firearm trafficking affecting Massachusetts. We appreciate your insights into the challenges Massachusetts is facing due to the influx of trafficked firearms and welcome the opportunity to update you on ATF's efforts to address these issues.

ATF's core mission is to protect the American people from violent crime. While violent crime surged in 2020,¹ the Nation has since experienced one of the most significant declines in violent crime in history due to the efforts of ATF and its partners.² Despite these gains, firearms-related violence remains a persistent threat, requiring us to double down on strategies that work.

Unfortunately, recent fiscal decisions threaten the reductions achieved in violent crime and firearms-related violence. The FY 2024 budget imposed the largest cut to the Department of Justice (Department) in a decade. ATF was hit disproportionately hard by these cuts—experiencing a reduction in salaries and expenses over 100% larger than any other Department law enforcement agency. As a small agency, currently with only about 2,500 agents, ATF will have more than 150 fewer special agents on the streets by year-end because of these cuts—undermining our ability to combat violent crime and support our state and local law enforcement partners. Without restored

¹ See, e.g., Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *New CDC/NCHS Data Confirm Largest One-Year Increase in U.S. Homicide Rate in 2020* (Oct. 6, 2021) ("The 2020 homicide rate of 7.8 is the highest in the United States since 1995"), available at www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/nchs_press_releases/2021/202110.htm.

² See, e.g., Department Press Release, *Readout of the Justice Department's Violent Crime Reduction Steering Committee Meeting* (Dec. 10, 2024) ("Over the past two years, we have turned the tide against the violent crime that spiked during the pandemic. Additional data from 85 cities released today indicates that between January and September of this year, violent crime again declined, and murders dropped 17.5%. This builds on last year's historic drop in homicides nationwide and one of the lowest levels of violent crime in 50 years."), available at www.justice.gov/opa/pr/readout-justice-departments-violent-crime-reduction-steering-committee-meeting-1.

funding, ATF's capacity to address illicit firearms trafficking, including the flow of firearms into Massachusetts, will be severely impacted.

Every day, ATF uses the tools and funding supplied by Congress to keep our communities safe using evidence-based methods to identify, disrupt, and dismantle the illicit flow of firearms into unlawful commerce. Illicit unlicensed dealing, firearms trafficking, and straw purchasing are not victimless crimes. Those who illegally help arm violent people are directly responsible for the violence that far too often follows. To combat the firearms trafficking, among other things, ATF and the Department focus on:

National Public Safety Partnership (PSP). Just last month, the Springfield Police Department (SPD) was selected by the Department to participate in the National Public Safety Partnership, an innovative Department-wide program that enables participating sites to consult with and receive expedited, coordinated training and technical assistance, and an array of resources from the Department to enhance local public safety strategies.³ As a 2024 PSP Site, over the next three years, the Department will provide the SPD with intensive training and assistance in the areas of gun violence, criminal justice collaboration, investigations, community engagement, federal partnerships, crime analysis, and technology to help identify strategies that target gun, drug, and gang violence within Springfield.

Enforcing the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA). In June of 2022, Congress passed the BSCA, which gave ATF new criminal statutes—straw purchasing, 18 U.S.C. § 932, and firearms trafficking, 18 U.S.C. § 933—to protect the public from gun crime by holding those accused of supplying illicit weapons accountable. Since the BSCA's enactment, the Department has charged over 500 defendants under the BSCA's new straw purchasing and firearms trafficking provisions. At ATF, these new tools are allowing our special agents to go after the criminals who flood our streets with weapons and put guns in the hands of individuals who are prohibited by law from having them. Recently, for example, ATF used the BSCA in the context of illicit firearms flowing into Massachusetts:

- In October 2024, two men pleaded guilty to conspiring to traffic dozens of illegal firearms from South Carolina to Boston. In total, the defendants trafficked more than 24 illegal firearms into Massachusetts from South Carolina. Eleven of the trafficked firearms were recovered in Massachusetts after being used in a crime.⁴
- In August 2024, a federal firearms licensee (FFL) pleaded guilty to conspiring to traffic firearms. One firearm was used in a shooting two weeks after it was sold, and was subsequently recovered from a juvenile in New Bedford,

³ See Department Office of Justice Programs, *Justice Department Announces Five New National Public Safety Partnership Sites to Help Build Safer Communities* (Dec. 4, 2024), available at www.ojp.gov/news/news-release/justice-department-announces-5-new-national-public-safety-partnership-sites

⁴ See USAO-D. Mass., *Two Men Plead Guilty to Trafficking More than Two Dozen Illegal Firearms into Boston* (Oct. 30, 2024), available at <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ma/pr/two-men-plead-guilty-trafficking-more-two-dozen-illegal-firearms-boston>.

Massachusetts.⁵

- On July 10, 2024, a Maine man was sentenced to two years in prison for conspiring to straw purchase and traffic firearms when he purchased two firearms from a federal firearm dealer in Maine and then drove them to Massachusetts.⁶

Unfortunately, the BSCA did not provide funding for ATF to implement these new BSCA criminal provisions. Moreover, these new authorities and related investigations, while vital to fighting gun violence and disrupting illicit trafficking networks, are extremely resource intensive to implement. That's why this Administration has made multiple funding requests for additional money to implement the BSCA, including, for \$73.4 million in the "[Bipartisan Safer Communities Act/IOI Operations](#)" program enhancement in the President's FY 2025 Budget request.⁷ This request would, among other things, be used to hire 100 special agents to investigate criminal referrals anticipated because of the BSCA's expanded authorities, including referrals related to straw purchasing, unlicensed firearms dealing, and firearms trafficking.

Cross-Jurisdictional Trafficking Strike Forces. Firearms violence is far too often caused by the ease with which criminals can obtain weapons from illicit commerce, including those engaged in illicit dealing without a license, firearms trafficking, and straw purchasing. In fact, between 2017 and 2021, 60% of trafficked firearms went into the hands of previously convicted felons or other prohibited people. And thousands of those illicit firearms were then used to commit crimes, such as murder, drug trafficking, aggravated assault, and home invasions.⁸

Massachusetts is one of the top ten market, or recipient, states for illicit firearms traveling through interstate commerce.⁹ A large number of these illicitly trafficked firearms are diverted by way of unlicensed dealing and straw purchasing in other states.¹⁰ In Massachusetts, for example, crime gun trace data shows that 63% of crime guns recovered by law enforcement originate from outside Massachusetts—some from source states nearby, like Maine and New Hampshire, and

⁵ See USAO-D. Mass., *Federal Firearms Licensee Pleads Guilty to Firearm Trafficking and Straw Purchasing Conspiracy* (Aug. 20, 2024), available at <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ma/pr/federal-firearms-licensee-pleads-guilty-firearm-trafficking-and-straw-purchasing>.

⁶ See USAO-D. Mass., *Maine Man Sentenced to Two Years in Prison for Conspiring to Straw Purchase Firearms* (Jul. 10, 2024), available at www.justice.gov/usao-ma/pr/maine-man-sentenced-two-years-prison-conspiring-straw-purchase-firearms.

⁷ See U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, *Fiscal Year 2025 Performance Budget Congressional Submission, Salaries and Expenses* (p. 44) (February 2024), available at https://www.justice.gov/d9/2024-03/atf_fy_2025_pb_narrative_final_3-6-2024_1.pdf#44.

⁸ See National Firearms Commerce and Trafficking Assessment (NFCTA), available at www.atf.gov/firearms/docs/report/national-firearms-commerce-and-traffickingassessment-firearms-commerce-volume

⁹ See ATF, *National Firearms Commerce and Trafficking Assessment (NFCTA) Volume 3, Part IV Source-to-Market Type* (p. 9), available at <https://www.atf.gov/firearms/docs/report/nfcta-volume-iii-part-iv/download>. Between 2017 and 2021, Massachusetts was the recipient of the fifth most illicit firearms, with 7.6% of all ATF interstate trafficking investigations.

¹⁰ See ATF, *National Firearms Commerce and Trafficking Assessment (NFCTA) Volume 3, Part III Firearm Trafficking Channels and Methods Used* (p. 2), available at <https://www.atf.gov/firearms/national-firearms-commerce-and-trafficking-assessment-nfcta-crime-guns-volume-three>.

others from states further away, like Florida and Georgia.¹¹ Notably, while these numbers still remain too high, Massachusetts experienced a significant 57.5% decline in interstate trafficking cases between 2017 and 2021.¹²

Nevertheless, ATF has redoubled its efforts to target the illegal trafficking corridors across the country where guns are sold from source cities, transported through other communities, and then end up in major cities. The work to formalize these efforts, and bring attention to these trafficking routes, is based on the recognition that in order to reduce gun violence, we must disrupt the flow of illegal firearms into our cities—no matter where the illegal firearms originate. The Department’s Cross-Jurisdictional Strike Forces, which were established in 2021, implement evidence-based strategies to disrupt these illegal gun trafficking networks, and have resulted in many successful interdictions directly impacting Massachusetts. For example:

- In July 2024, a Boston man was sentenced to 21 months in prison for conspiring to transport at least two dozen firearms from Alabama to Massachusetts. At least seven of the firearms were recovered from the streets of Boston and the surrounding communities.¹³
- In January 2024, a New York man was sentenced to more than 10 years in prison for trafficking firearms and drugs. The defendant was arrested for selling numerous machine gun conversion devices, an unserialized privately made firearm (PMF), and methamphetamine. During a search of his residence, law enforcement discovered numerous handguns, assault rifles, and a video of the defendant discharging a handgun out of his car window.¹⁴
- In September 2022, a Taunton man pleaded guilty to trafficking between eight and two dozen firearms. The defendant travelled from Ohio to Massachusetts with firearms acquired in Ohio to resell the firearms for a profit to individuals prohibited from possessing a firearm.¹⁵
- In April 2022, an Attleboro man sentenced to five years in prison for illegally trafficking dozens of firearms into Massachusetts from Georgia. The defendant purchased the firearms from a straw purchaser in Georgia, then transported the

¹¹ In calendar year 2023, a total of 2,381 firearms were recovered in Massachusetts. Of those, 1,504 (63%) were traced to a different source state. See ATF, *Top Source States for Firearms with a Massachusetts Recovery from Jan. 1, 2023 to Dec. 31, 2023* (Dec. 9, 2024), available at www.atf.gov/resource-center/firearms-trace-data-massachusetts-2023#source-states.

¹² “[T]he percentage of interstate trafficking cases that involved Massachusetts as a market-state decreased by 5.8 percentage points from 10.1% in 2017 to 4.3% in 2021 (a 57.4% decrease in the population share of cases).” <https://www.atf.gov/firearms/docs/report/nfcta-volume-iii-part-iv/download>.

¹³ See USAO-D. Mass., *Boston Man Sentenced to 21 Months in Prison for Firearm Trafficking Conspiracy* (July 12, 2024), available at <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ma/pr/boston-man-sentenced-21-months-prison-firearm-trafficking-conspiracy>.

¹⁴ See USAO-D. Mass., *New York Man Sentenced to More than 10 Years in Prison for Trafficking Firearms and Methamphetamine* (Jan. 18, 2024), available at <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ma/pr/new-york-man-sentenced-more-10-years-prison-trafficking-firearms-and-methamphetamine>.

¹⁵ See USAO-D. Mass., *Taunton Man Pleads Guilty to Firearm Offenses* (Sept. 6, 2022), available at www.justice.gov/usao-ma/pr/taunton-man-pleads-guilty-firearm-offenses.

firearms to a warehouse in Taunton where he sold them for cash. Several of the guns sold by the defendant were later found by police in the possession of criminals and drug dealers. One of the trafficked firearms was used by a gang member to fire at rival associates at the Braintree Mall, but tragically struck an innocent 15-year-old girl twice, in the hand and in the chest.¹⁶

To help ATF expand these efforts, the Administration has requested \$21 million and 97 positions in the “[Combating Gun Violence](#)” program enhancement in the President’s FY 2025 Budget request.¹⁷ This funding would be used to support the work done by these Strike Forces and Operation Southbound, which is the Department’s primary initiative for addressing cartel-driven firearms trafficking to Mexico. ATF has been overwhelmed with requests from members of Congress, Governors, mayors, police chiefs, and sheriffs to increase ATF resources in communities experiencing firearms violence and associated trafficking. This enhancement would help ATF expand its capacity to investigate the trafficking networks that fuel firearms violence in those impacted communities and, at least, begin address the broad range of requests we receive for additional resources.

Focusing on Unlicensed Firearms Dealing. In enacting the BSCA, Congress also chose to expand the category of people who must obtain a license and, therefore, conduct background checks before selling firearms. Unfortunately, the data shows that there is a large and growing illicit market of firearms that are being sold by people who are engaged in the business of dealing firearms, but doing so without a license. From 2021 to 2023, federal prosecutions for unlicensed firearms dealing increased by 52%.¹⁸ A recent ATF study, in fact, confirmed that, even before Congress passed the BSCA, which expanded the definition of “engaged in the business,” unlicensed dealing was increasing as a factor contributing to the illicit flow of firearms.¹⁹ This public safety issue, resulting in cases like the 2019 mass shooting in Midland-Odessa that killed seven and injured 17 more, including three police officers, was one of the reasons Congress passed the BSCA.

In Massachusetts, ATF has focused on the unlicensed dealing in firearms, including by individuals who have engaged in the business of selling unserialized PMFs, commonly known as “ghost guns.” For example, in January 2023, a Lawrence man was sentenced to five years in prison for engaging in the business of dealing in firearms without a federal firearms license (FFL).²⁰ Specifically, between July 2020 and December 2020, the defendant made and sold or attempted to

¹⁶ See USAO-D. Mass., *Attleboro Gun Trafficker Sentenced to Nearly Five Years in Prison* (Apr. 15, 2022), available at www.justice.gov/usao-ma/pr/attleboro-gun-trafficker-sentenced-nearly-five-years-prison.

¹⁷ See U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, *Fiscal Year 2025 Performance Budget Congressional Submission, Salaries and Expenses* (p. 39) (February 2024), available at https://www.justice.gov/d9/2024-03/atf_fy_2025_pb_narrative_final_3-6-2024_1.pdf#39.

¹⁸ See Dept. of Justice, *Fact Sheet: Update on Justice Department’s Ongoing Efforts to Tackle Gun Violence* (June 14, 2023), available at <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/fact-sheet-update-justice-department-s-ongoing-efforts-tackle-gun-violence>.

¹⁹ See ATF, *National Firearms Commerce and Trafficking Assessment (NFCTA) Volume III, Part III: Firearm Trafficking Channels and Methods Used* (p. 1), available at <https://www.atf.gov/firearms/docs/report/nfcta-volume-iii-part-iii/download>.

²⁰ See USAO-D. Mass., *Lawrence Man Sentenced to Five Years in Prison for Selling Firearms and Narcotics* (Jan. 12, 2023), available at www.justice.gov/usao-ma/pr/lawrence-man-sentenced-five-years-prison-selling-firearms-and-narcotics.

sell five unserialized PMFs—including two Glock 26 style pistols, two Glock 17 style pistols, and a Glock 43 style pistol.

Federal Firearms License Inspections. FFLs often are our first line of defense against illegal firearms trafficking. To help prevent trafficking, ATF works to educate FFLs on detecting and preventing the straw purchase of firearms. ATF routinely hosts firearms seminars to discuss the obligations of FFLs under the law and to respond to FFL questions and concerns. ATF also partners with the National Sports Shooting Foundation on the “Don’t Lie for the Other Guy” program, which is a campaign to help educate FFLs on how to detect would-be straw purchasers. The program also raises public awareness that it is a serious crime to buy a firearm for a prohibited person or for someone who does not otherwise want his or her name associated with the transaction.

Similarly, ATF uses inspections to promote public safety by enhancing FFL compliance with federal laws. Our strategy centers on proactive engagement and regular inspections, which help identify areas for improvement, strengthen internal controls, and prevent criminal activities such as straw purchasing and firearms trafficking. Through these inspections, ATF gains access to critical records that can uncover hidden patterns of criminal diversion, even when no direct regulatory violations by the FFL are evident.

To support this goal, ATF is committed to achieving a three-year inspection cycle for all FFLs. However, meeting this target requires significant expansion of our Industry Operations Investigator (IOI) workforce, given the growing number of FFLs nationwide. That’s why this Administration made repeated requests to Congress for additional IOI resources, including for \$73.4 million in the “[Bipartisan Safer Communities Act/IOI Operations](#)” program enhancement in the President’s FY 2025 Budget request.²¹ This enhancement would, among other things, allow ATF to hire 249 new IOIs to help ATF meet the three-year inspection cycle goal.

Using existing funds, in 2021, ATF implemented a risk-based inspection approach, leveraging Crime Gun Intelligence Analytics (CGIA) to prioritize inspections of FFLs that may pose the greatest risk for non-compliance or involvement in criminal diversion schemes. Rather than conducting a rigid analysis focused solely on the number of revocations, ATF employs this data-driven, intelligence-led strategy aimed at maximizing compliance and reducing gun crime. This approach ensures that our enforcement actions are targeted, fair, and effective, while also prioritizing education and collaboration with FFLs to achieve voluntary compliance. Using CGIA, ATF’s IOIs use data, such as gun trace-to-disposition ratios relative to time-to-crime and time-to-first shooting, to better identify and inspect higher-risk licenses.

In addition, also in 2021, the Administration and the Department, as part of its Gun Crime Prevention Strategy, implemented the Enhanced Regulatory Enforcement Policy (Policy) aimed at preventing the diversion of firearms from lawful commerce by ensuring a consistent

²¹ See U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, *Fiscal Year 2025 Performance Budget Congressional Submission, Salaries and Expenses* (p. 44) (February 2024), available at https://www.justice.gov/d9/2024-03/atf_fy_2025_pb_narrative_final_3-6-2024_1.pdf#44.

enforcement response to certain willful violations of federal firearm regulations and laws.²² This Policy, which did not change the statutory requirements for inspections or license revocations, directed ATF to focus its enforcement efforts on willful violations by FFLs that directly threaten public safety, such as transfers of firearms to prohibited persons, not allowing ATF to conduct an inspection, or failing to conduct a background check before transferring a firearm. These violations, when willful, are not mere “paperwork” violations. They put the American people at risk by allowing firearms to enter the illicit market.

ATF strives for transparency so the public can see for themselves how the Policy operates in practice. That’s why ATF publishes the results of inspections with qualifying violations under the Policy on their website. This includes the report and revocation documents for FFLs who ultimately have their FFL revoked.²³ According to that data, between July 2021 and January 2024, ATF inspections identified one or more violations of this Policy at 1,087 FFLs, resulting in 397 FFLs being revoked, 247 FFLs voluntarily ceasing operations, and 415 FFLs not being revoked after a hearing.²⁴

Data Transparency. ATF is committed to fostering data transparency within the bounds of the law. We actively strive to promote informed dialogue on firearm law and policy by sharing as much data as legally permissible. By providing policymakers, researchers, and the public with insights gathered through ATF’s regulatory and law enforcement missions, when permitted, we aim to support evidence-based decision-making and enhance collective efforts to address firearms-related violence issues. To that end, just last week, ATF published Volume IV of the *National Firearms Commerce and Trafficking Assessment* (NFCTA), which provides the most comprehensive analysis of firearms trafficking in over two decades.²⁵ Volume IV provides updated findings and trends that highlight how firearms reach criminal actors, with a specific focus on privately made firearms, machinegun conversion devices, firearms manufacturing and sales, and firearms trafficking along the southwest border.²⁶ It also underscores the role that ATF’s Crime Gun Intelligence tools play in solving gun crimes and taking trigger pullers off the streets, and provides comprehensive recommendations for action.²⁷

In April 2024, ATF published Volume III of the NFCTA.²⁸ This analysis of over 9,700 ATF trafficking investigations provides an updated account of contemporary trafficking channels

²² See ATF, *Enhanced Regulatory Enforcement Policy* (Sept. 26, 2024), available at <https://www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/enhanced-regulatory-enforcement-policy>.

²³ See ATF, *Enhanced Regulatory Enforcement Policy*, available at <https://www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/enhanced-regulatory-enforcement-policy>.

²⁴ See ATF, *Enhanced Regulatory Enforcement Policy*, available at <https://www.atf.gov/rules-and-regulations/enhanced-regulatory-enforcement-policy>.

²⁵ See ATF, *National Firearms Commerce and Trafficking Assessment (NFCTA): Protecting America from Trafficked Firearms, Volume IV*, available at <https://www.atf.gov/firearms/national-firearms-commerce-and-trafficking-assessment-nfcta-firearms-trafficking-volume-four>.

²⁶ See DOJ, *Justice Department Announces ATF's Publication of Final Volume of National Firearms Commerce and Trafficking Assessment*, available at <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-announces-atfs-publication-final-volume-national-firearms-commerce-and>.

²⁷ See *Id.*

²⁸ See ATF, *National Firearms Commerce and Trafficking Assessment (NFCTA): Firearms Trafficking Investigations, Volume III*, available at <https://www.atf.gov/firearms/national-firearms-commerce-and-trafficking-assessment-nfcta-firearms-trafficking>.

through which criminals obtain firearms and provides insight into how illegal firearm markets work. It also demonstrates that law enforcement can be successful in uncovering the illegal sources of firearms in a community and in holding firearm traffickers accountable for their crimes.

Similarly, ATF published aggregate crime gun trace data for states and cities in Volume II of the NFCTA, which focuses on ATF's firearms tracing program as facilitated through the National Tracing Center and the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN). Volume II includes in-depth analysis of crime guns recovered and traced by law enforcement, and includes firearms data broken down on multiple variables including the type of firearms traced, the top U.S. source states, and the average time to crime rates. It also provides specific analysis of aggregate data related to crime guns recovered in Massachusetts,²⁹ Boston,³⁰ New Bedford,³¹ and Norwood.³²

While we appreciate your interest in gaining more access to crime gun trace data, as you know, ATF's ability to share data publicly is constrained by the Tiahrt Amendment. Pursuant to the Tiahrt Amendment, crime gun trace data can only be released to a federal, state, local, Tribal, or foreign law enforcement agency, or a federal, state, or local prosecutor if it is part of a criminal investigation or prosecution, or shared with federal agencies for a national security or intelligence purpose. The Tiahrt Amendment further states that multi-jurisdictional crime gun trace data that does not identify specific investigations may be used by ATF and shared with fellow law enforcement agencies to identify firearm trafficking trends and leads, but ATF cannot release non-aggregated data.

Expanding Collaboration with State and Local Partners. ATF has no better partner in the fight against illegal firearms trafficking and violent crime than our state and local partners. ATF has a particularly strong working relationship with Massachusetts law enforcement and has helped them maintain high crime gun tracing rates and ensure comprehensive tracking of crime guns.

NIBIN, managed by ATF, is an indispensable tool in helping law enforcement reduce gun violence in communities across the Nation. As the only interstate automated ballistic imaging network in the United States, NIBIN links fired cartridge casings to firearms, allowing federal, state, and local law enforcement to connect shooting incidents across jurisdictions. This power technology, a pillar of ATF's crime gun intelligence efforts, is available at no cost to law enforcement and has led to over 1.2 million investigative leads from more than 7 million pieces of ballistic evidence, enabling the law enforcement to identify and disrupt serial shooters and the disrupt illegal firearms trafficking networks.

In 2022, the Deputy Attorney General issued a directive requiring that all firearms and fired cartridge casings recovered in connection with every criminal investigation opened by a

²⁹ See ATF, *National Firearms Commerce and Trafficking Assessment (NFCTA): Crime Guns, Volume II*, available at <https://www.atf.gov/firearms/docs/report/massachusetts-state-report/download>.

³⁰ See ATF, *National Firearms Commerce and Trafficking Assessment (NFCTA): Crime Guns, Volume II*, available at <https://www.atf.gov/firearms/docs/report/boston-ma-state-report-addendum-city-report/download>.

³¹ See ATF, *National Firearms Commerce and Trafficking Assessment (NFCTA): Crime Guns, Volume II*, available at <https://www.atf.gov/firearms/docs/report/new-bedford-ma-state-report-addendum-city-report/download>.

³² See ATF, *National Firearms Commerce and Trafficking Assessment (NFCTA): Crime Guns, Volume II*, available at <https://www.atf.gov/firearms/docs/report/norwood-ma-state-report-addendum-city-report/download>.

Department law enforcement agency, including any Department-funded task force operations, be analyzed and entered into NIBIN. This outreach has led to the steady increase in entry of ballistic data into NIBIN and, as a result, an increase in investigative leads. Between FY 2017 and 2023, NIBIN acquisition sites, total acquisitions, and leads increased 89%, 134%, and 433%, respectively.³³ In FY 2023 alone, ATF provided over 221,000 investigative leads to help law enforcement connect shooting incidents across the Nation—representing a 17% increase from the prior year³⁴.

However, NIBIN’s sustained success requires adequate funding. Budget cuts significantly hinder ATF’s ability to deliver timely investigative leads and implement advancements in our crime gun intelligence tools, including NIBIN. Increasing ATF’s funding is critical to maintaining the quality and resilience of the NIBIN infrastructure, enabling law enforcement to fight violent crime more effectively and safeguard our communities. That is why the President’s FY 2025 budget specifically requests \$18.7 million and 18 positions for [Enhancing NIBIN and Crime Gun Intelligence](#), which would increase ATF’s capacity to provide timely NIBIN investigative leads to our law enforcement partners, increase the number of new NIBIN sites across the nation to onboard new law enforcement partners, and fund the integration of 100 of the top-volume law enforcement agencies into our NIBIN Enforcement Support System—which leverages crime gun intelligence in a more efficient manner by focusing resources for the greatest impact on violent crime.³⁵

In Massachusetts, ATF’s Boston Field Division has hosted multi-state crime gun intelligence conferences to bring together law enforcement from 10 states to collaborate on crime gun intelligence and information sharing. This multi-state consortium convened to share intelligence, tools, tactics, and strategies to combat gun violence, especially as it relates to the trafficking of firearms between states. They discussed issues of mutual concern surrounding firearm-related investigations, policing strategies and best practices, along with ways to improve gun data sharing across local, state and federal information networks.³⁶ Such collaboration routinely results in successful prosecution of violent criminals throughout Massachusetts, including, for example, the sentencing of a Latin Kings member to prison after ballistics testing to match a firearm found in New Bedford to a shooting in Boston. That investigation was the result of crime gun intelligence and collaboration between ATF, New Bedford Police Department, and the Boston Police Department.³⁷

³³ See U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, *Fiscal Year 2025 Performance Budget Congressional Submission, Salaries and Expenses* (p. 5) (February 2024), available at https://www.justice.gov/d9/2024-03/atf_fy_2025_pb_narrative_final_3-6-2024_1.pdf#44.

³⁴ See U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, *Fiscal Year 2025 Performance Budget Congressional Submission, Salaries and Expenses* (p. 19) (February 2024), available at https://www.justice.gov/d9/2024-03/atf_fy_2025_pb_narrative_final_3-6-2024_1.pdf#44.

³⁵ See U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, *Fiscal Year 2025 Performance Budget Congressional Submission, Salaries and Expenses* (p. 49) (February 2024), available at https://www.justice.gov/d9/2024-03/atf_fy_2025_pb_narrative_final_3-6-2024_1.pdf#44.

³⁶ See ATF, *ATF Boston Hosts Multi-State Crime Gun Intelligence Conference* (March 24, 2022), available at <https://www.atf.gov/news/press-releases/atf-boston-hosts-multi-state-crime-gun-intelligence-conference>.

³⁷ See USAO D. Mass., *Member of New Bedford Latin Kings Sentenced for Being a Felon in Possession of a Firearm Following Robbery and Shooting Investigations* (April 29, 2021), available at <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ma/pr/member-new-bedford-latin-kings-sentenced-being-felon-possession-firearm-following-robbery>.

The combined efforts of ATF, state and local law enforcement, and federal legislative support are essential to combating interstate firearms trafficking. Your support in securing funding for these initiatives and ensuring that additional cuts to ATF's existing budget do not come to fruition is invaluable. Please let me know if I can provide additional information on ATF's work or the progress of these efforts.

Sincerely,

Brian Nickey
Acting Assistant Director
Public and Governmental Affairs