

JOHN CORNYN  
TEXAS

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4305

March 9, 2026

Mr. Robert Cekada  
Deputy Director  
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives  
99 New York Ave NE  
Washington, DC 20226

Dear Deputy Director Cekada,

Thank you for the opportunity to follow up on your February 4<sup>th</sup> testimony with further questions.

1. At your confirmation hearing, you stated that the ATF is in the process of hiring up to 800 additional ATF agents. However, Congress cut ATF's budget in its last two funding bills. Can you please provide information on how ATF plans to hire these new agents, where funding will come from, and who authorized the hiring plan?
2. In 2022, the Biden administration issued a Final Rule on the "Definition of 'Frame or Receiver' and Identification of Firearms." *See* 87 Fed. Reg. 24652. After multiple parties challenged the legality of the Rule, the Supreme Court upheld it in *Bondi v. VanDerStok*, 604 U.S. 458 (2025). Unfortunately, the Court's opinion failed to fully understand the nuanced legal issues at play in the case, and left gun owners without any real guidance on what types of privately made firearm products are legal. Are you committed to repealing or otherwise fixing the nightmare scenario gun owners face because of this opinion in a timely manner?
3. In 2021, ATF revealed to Congressman Michael Cloud that it had 920,664,765 records of guns and gun owners contained in a digital, searchable registry. ATF has not responded to Representative Cloud's request for an updated record request for over a year, and we suspect that there are now over a billion records in ATF's database, despite Congress banning gun registries under 18 U.S.C. § 926(a).

Last Congress, former ATF Director Dettelbach testified that this database is not a registry because ATF pays Adobe Acrobat extra money to remove search-by-name functionality. Is this database an illegal gun registry? What steps do you plan to take to address this registry? Will ATF respond to Congressman Cloud's inquiry?

4. Until recently, firearms dealers were required to keep certain records of firearms transactions for twenty years. President Biden, however, changed ATF regulations to require that firearm transaction records be kept permanently—effectively creating a registry of every gun sold from 2002 onwards. However, the national time-to-crime is less than ten years, and ATF reports very few traces which implicate firearm records that are older than twenty years. Do you oppose the Biden Administration's permanent gun record keeping scheme? What will you do to ensure gun owner privacy?

I look forward to your responses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Cornyn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator John Cornyn  
Texas