



July 6, 2011

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Operation Fast & Furious Investigation Impeded by Tiahrt Amendment Restrictions

Dear Speaker Boehner and Majority Leader Reid:

We write as co-founders of the bipartisan coalition of more than 600 Mayors Against Illegal Guns to urge you to repeal the appropriations riders commonly referred to as the “Tiahrt Amendments” in the FY 2012 budget. These restrictions are now preventing Chairman Darrell Issa and Senator Charles Grassley from gathering information that is critical to their ongoing investigation of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Explosives & Firearms’ (ATF) controversial “Operation Fast & Furious.” They should be lifted without delay.

Earlier this year, allegations surfaced that under a controversial ATF surveillance program code-named “Operation Fast and Furious,” ATF agents were instructed to allow guns bought by known criminals to be illegally trafficked across the border to Mexico in an effort to connect those guns to drug cartels. The guns were later found at crime scenes. These allegations are serious and should be thoroughly investigated. We support efforts by Chairman Issa and Senator Grassley to get to the truth.

To understand the scope of the operation and the number of guns sold during the investigation, Senator Grassley and Chairman Issa sent a letter on June 21, 2011 to the Ambassador of Mexico to the U.S., Arturo Sarukhan, requesting the serial numbers of all firearms “submitted to the U.S. eTrace system” and “recovered in substantial violent crimes” and any other firearms that officials in the Mexican government “believe may be connected with Operation Fast and Furious.” Senator Grassley and Chairman Issa have contacted most law enforcement agencies in Arizona with similar requests.

This data is indeed important to understanding which Mexican crime guns were traced back to dealers in the United State who were cooperating with Fast & Furious. It is also a fact that ATF itself maintains eTrace and has immediate access to all of the data Chairman Issa and Senator Grassley have requested from the Mexican government and Arizona law enforcement, including the serial numbers of guns recovered in violent crimes and submitted for tracing as well as the results of each trace.

Unfortunately, as Senator Grassley pointed out in a June 16th letter addressed to ATF Deputy Director Kenneth Melson, the Tiahrt Amendments prohibit ATF from releasing trace data, even to members of Congress who are conducting oversight of ATF. Thus, Chairman Issa and Senator

Grassley find it necessary to request it from the Mexican government and Arizona law enforcement officials.

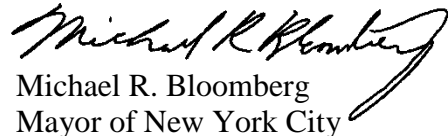
This is not the first time the Tiahrt Amendments have obstructed an investigation into gun trafficking from the United States to Mexico. In March 2009, The California Department of Justice wrote to ATF complaining that the Tiahrt Amendment blocked them from obtaining data related to guns that had been trafficked from California to Mexico. The Justice Department wrote, "As a result of this restriction, California law enforcement agencies (specifically the Bureau of Firearms within DOJ) have been unable to identify the California firearms dealers whose firearms are finding their way into Mexico's drug war." Due to recent changes to the Tiahrt Amendments in the FY 2010 budget, law enforcement now has access to trace data, but Congress and other policy makers still do not.

Trace data is critical both to law enforcement operations that target gun traffickers, as well as to the congressional oversight of those operations. As Chairman Issa and Senator Grassley wrote in their letter, "this information would be tremendously helpful to us in determining the full scale of the effects of Operation Fast and Furious, which includes the deaths of both American and Mexican citizens." Today, the Tiahrt Amendments are standing in the way of the truth.

Sincerely,



Thomas M. Menino
Mayor of Boston



Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor of New York City

Cc: The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Senate Minority Leader
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, House Minority Leader
The Honorable Kent Conrad
The Honorable Jeff Sessions
The Honorable Paul Ryan
The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
The Honorable Daniel Inouye
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Mayor Thomas Lush, Myerstown, Pennsylvania
Mayor Stephen Szymusiak, Nanty-Glo, Pennsylvania
Mayor Joseph Taylor, New Milford, Pennsylvania
Mayor Frances Tkach, New Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Mayor Mary M. Hetrick, Newport, Pennsylvania
Mayor Grace Angotti, New Salem, Pennsylvania
Mayor Thomas Reenock, Northampton, Pennsylvania
Mayor Carol A. Jarvis, Northern Cambria, Pennsylvania
Mayor Michele Petrini Avvisato, Old Forge, Pennsylvania
Mayor Austin Scandiber, Orwigsburg, Pennsylvania
Mayor Lewis Paul Cowher, Osceola Mills, Pennsylvania
Mayor Geoffrey L. Henry, Oxford, Pennsylvania
Mayor William McCall, Parker, Pennsylvania
Mayor Ardele R. Gordon, Parkside, Pennsylvania
Mayor Robert Winkler, Penndel, Pennsylvania
Mayor Michael Nutter, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Mayor Luke Ravenstahl, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Mayor John D.W. Reiley, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
Mayor Tom McMahan, Reading, Pennsylvania
Mayor Guillermo Udarbe, Ridgway, Pennsylvania
Mayor Desiree D. DeNicola, Roseto, Pennsylvania
Mayor Dave Urner, Royersford, Pennsylvania
Mayor Michael D. Thomas, Sayre, Pennsylvania
Mayor Gary J. Hess, Schuylkill Haven, Pennsylvania

Mayor Thomas C. Hufnagle, Sellersville, Pennsylvania
Mayor Anthony Hajjar, Seward, Pennsylvania
Mayor Joseph McGranghan, Shamokin Dam, Pennsylvania
Mayor Robert J. Lucas, Sharon, Pennsylvania
Mayor Robert O'Neil, Sharon Hill, Pennsylvania
Mayor Bruce Hockersmith, Shippensburg, Pennsylvania
Mayor Robert Prah, Smithton, Pennsylvania
Mayor Boyd Paul, Snow Shoe, Pennsylvania
Mayor William Meyer, Somerset, Pennsylvania
Mayor John Reynolds, Souderton, Pennsylvania
Mayor James C. Kennedy, South Coatesville, Pennsylvania
Mayor Clyde R. Wadsworth, South Fork, Pennsylvania
Mayor Sherman Metzgar, Stockertown, Pennsylvania
Mayor William A. Boyd, Stoystown, Pennsylvania
Mayor Charles Baughman, Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania
Mayor Warren Lubenow, St. Lawrence, Pennsylvania
Mayor Paul R. McArdle, Summit Hill, Pennsylvania
Mayor Richard H. Lowe, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania
Mayor Luke Duignam, Tatamy, Pennsylvania
Mayor Jay R. Stover, Telford, Pennsylvania
Mayor Charles Harper, Three Springs, Pennsylvania
Mayor Kenneth Danser, Timblin, Pennsylvania
Mayor William Allar, Tremont, Pennsylvania
Mayor J. David Cutchineal, Tullytown, Pennsylvania
Mayor Adam R. Forgie, Turtle Creek, Pennsylvania
Mayor Thomas Micozzie, Upper Darby, Pennsylvania
Mayor Jeffrey Steffler, Wampum, Pennsylvania
Mayor Ester Cotner, Washingtonville, Pennsylvania
Mayor Carolyn T. Comitta, West Chester, Pennsylvania
Mayor Donna M. Frankenfield, West Conshohocken, Pennsylvania
Mayor Ralph Harrington, West Elizabeth, Pennsylvania
Mayor Dick Vargeson, Westfield, Pennsylvania
Mayor Frank Schmidt, West Hazleton, Pennsylvania
Mayor John W. Dindak, West Homestead, Pennsylvania
Mayor Mary E. Popovich, West Newton, Pennsylvania
Mayor John Henry, West View, Pennsylvania
Mayor James F. Nowalk, Whitehall, Pennsylvania
Mayor Thomas M. Leighton, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania
Mayor John A. Thompson, Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania
Mayor David Perruso, Wilson, Pennsylvania
Mayor Larry Markel, Windsor, Pennsylvania
Mayor Dolores Jones-Butler, Yeadon, Pennsylvania
Mayor John Sanford, Yoe, Pennsylvania
Mayor C. Kim Bracey, York, Pennsylvania
Mayor Alford Shull, York Springs, Pennsylvania
Mayor Joan Derco, Youngwood, Pennsylvania
Mayor Angel Taveras, Providence, Rhode Island
Mayor Joseph Riley, Charleston, South Carolina
Mayor Joseph T. McElveen, Jr., Sumter, South Carolina
Mayor A C Wharton, Memphis, Tennessee
Mayor Tom Beehan, Oak Ridge, Tennessee
Mayor Daniel Brown, Knoxville, Tennessee
Mayor Richard Ward, Hurst, Texas
Mayor Bob Kiss, Burlington, Vermont
Mayor Christopher C. Louras, Rutland City, Vermont
Mayor William B. Euille, Alexandria, Virginia
Mayor Faye Prichard, Ashland, Virginia
Mayor Dave Norris, Charlottesville, Virginia
Mayor James P. Council III, Franklin, Virginia

Mayor Paul D. Fraim, Norfolk, Virginia
Mayor Iris Tharp, Quantico, Virginia
Mayor Dwight C. Jones, Richmond, Virginia
Mayor William D. Sessoms Jr, Virginia Beach, Virginia
Mayor Daniel V. Pike, Bellingham, Washington
Mayor H. Clarence Bauman, Chewelah, Washington
Mayor Garland D. Walton, Connell, Washington
Mayor Robert F. Sheckler, Des Moines, Washington
Mayor Tamara Jenkins, DuPont, Washington
Mayor Will Ibershof, Duvall, Washington
Mayor Gary S. Jensen, Ferndale, Washington
Mayor Ron (Pete) Poulson, Kalama, Washington
Mayor David M. Ferguson, Mesa, Washington
Mayor Daniel N. Mork, Millwood, Washington

Mayor James F. Gerwig, Morton, Washington
Mayor Dennis Palmer, Oakesdale, Washington
Mayor Spencer Nichols, Pe Ell, Washington
Mayor Paul Warden, Prosser, Washington
Mayor Terry Anderson, SeaTac, Washington
Mayor Mike McGinn, Seattle, Washington
Mayor Mary B. Verner, Spokane, Washington
Mayor Dianne W. White, Stanwood, Washington
Mayor Marilyn Strickland, Tacoma, Washington
Mayor Soo Ing-Moody, Twisp, Washington
Mayor Tom Barrett, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Mayor Richard Johns, Rhinelander, Wisconsin
Mayor Al Richards, Saint Francis, Wisconsin