



July 8, 2011

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

Six months ago today, the tragic shooting in Tucson, Arizona left six people dead and thirteen others wounded, including Representative Gabrielle Giffords. Every day since, 34 more Americans have been murdered with guns – an estimated 6,150 since January 8. This daily pattern of gun violence rips families apart, tears at the fabric of communities across America, and poses a constant threat to the police officers who put their lives on the line every day to protect us all.

In an op-ed published in the *Arizona Daily Star* on March 13, 2011 you said that our “focus right now should be on sound and effective steps that will actually keep those irresponsible, law-breaking few from getting their hands on a gun in the first place.” You said that “none of us should be willing to remain passive in the face of violence or resigned to watching helplessly as another rampage unfolds on television.”

But in the months since your op-ed was published, your Administration has not taken any new steps to keep guns out of the hands of criminals, terrorists and other dangerous people – even though there are many steps that could be taken administratively, without any new legislation.

We appreciate your call for a new discussion on illegal guns, and recognize that you are engaged in a process of meeting with stakeholders and developing administrative reforms to improve public safety. But as your process comes to a close, what our country really needs is your leadership. There is nothing to prevent your Administration from taking steps to make the country safer from illegal guns, including the four outlined below:

**1. Enforce reporting laws that could have stopped the Tucson shooter from obtaining a gun:**

The Tucson shooter, Jared Loughner, bought a shotgun and passed a background check less than a year after he was rejected from the Army in 2008 for habitual drug use. He should have failed the background check, but he didn't because his record wasn't forwarded by the Army to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System

(NICS). He went on to buy a second gun, which he used to murder 6 people and injure 13 others.

The NICS Improvement Amendments Act of 2007, passed in the wake of the Virginia Tech shootings, specifically mandated information-sharing among federal agencies. The law requires all federal agencies—including the military—to provide “any record of any person” who is prohibited from purchasing firearms to the FBI on at least a quarterly basis.

Shortly after the Tucson shooting, Mayors Against Illegal Guns reported that only three of 61 reporting federal agencies had submitted names of drug abusers to NICS, almost all of which were supplied by the FBI itself. Newly released FBI data revealed that as of April 2010, federal agencies were still failing to report these vital records. The Department of Defense, Department of Justice, U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, and U.S. Marines, and U.S. Navy have submitted no records at all.

Enforcing this law is a simple step the Justice Department should take immediately.

## **2. Remove riders in the proposed FY 2012 budget that obstruct the congressional investigation into Fast & Furious:**

Regrettably, your Administration again proposed appropriations riders (commonly referred to as the “Tiahrt Amendments”) in the FY2012 executive budget that hamper criminal investigations. Those amendments, which restrict the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) from releasing critical information to law enforcement bodies, are now preventing House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Chairman Darrell Issa and Senator Charles Grassley from gathering information that is critical to their ongoing investigation of ATF’s “Operation Fast & Furious.” Senator Grassley pointed out in a June 16th letter addressed to ATF Deputy Director Kenneth Melson that the Tiahrt Amendments prohibit ATF from releasing trace data, even to members of Congress who are conducting oversight of ATF. This has led to the absurd situation of the U.S. Congress having to request trace data on U.S. gun sales from the Mexican government.

In the interest both of getting to the truth behind Operation Fast & Furious and of improving law enforcement targeting of illegal gun trafficking operations, your Administration should move to lift Tiahrt restrictions without delay.

## **3. Proceed with the long-planned requirement for dealers to report multiple sales of assault rifles in states along the U.S.-Mexico border:**

ATF seeks a new policy that would require licensed gun dealers in states along the Mexican border to report bulk sales of certain types of semi-automatic rifles, including the Mexican drug cartels’ weapons of choice: AK-47 and AR-15 type assault weapons and .50 caliber military sniper rifles. The drug cartels have killed more than 30,000 people in Mexico, including thousands of police and military personnel who are trying to

combat them. According to ATF data, 70 percent of firearms recovered and traced in drug cartel crimes in Mexico originated in the United States. The cartels increasingly use assault weapons and other especially powerful rifles; the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General (OIG) reported that, in 2009, 48% of Mexican crime guns were long guns (rifles or shotguns), up from 20% in 2004.

This sales reporting requirement already exists nationwide for handguns and in 2008 generated more than 300 criminal investigations connected to 25,000 illegal guns. Semi-automatic assault rifles sold by U.S. dealers near the border are disproportionately fueling cartel violence.

Your Administration has been considering implementing this new policy, but has yet to do so. It is time to put it into effect to help ATF and other law enforcement identify individuals who may be buying guns like AK-47s and AR-15s by the carload and driving them south for sale to the violent drug gangs who are murdering thousands of people and destabilizing the entire border region.

#### **4. Address public safety and national security concerns surrounding private sales at gun shows by increasing enforcement of existing laws:**

The federal government has identified gun shows as one of the top two sources of illegally trafficked guns. Gun shows are a central market for private sellers who are not obligated by federal law to conduct background checks or keep paperwork. Last month, a senior operative for Al Qaeda urged terrorists to take advantage of weak U.S. gun laws and arm themselves at gun shows.

Al Qaeda's chilling message is just the latest evidence that dangerous people take advantage of this loophole in our laws. Just two weeks after the tragic shooting in Tucson, Arizona, an investigator bought a handgun from a private seller at a Phoenix gun show, even after the investigator said he probably couldn't pass a background check.

We've seen examples time and time again throughout the country. A criminal bought a gun from a private seller and shot four officers in a Detroit police station. A Columbus, Ohio gun show was connected to a shooting at Ohio State University. The Columbine killers obtained their guns through private sales at gun shows. Terrorists working for the Hezbollah and the IRA armed themselves at Michigan and Florida gun shows. International gun traffickers were caught arming themselves at a Billings, Montana gun show.

Two years ago, Mayors Against Illegal Guns sent you and your Administration a *Blueprint for Federal Action on Illegal Guns*, which contained 40 recommendations for policy changes that require no legislative action. In the *Blueprint*, the coalition identified several ways that your administration could improve enforcement at gun shows. First, ATF field agents should have the discretion to conduct criminal enforcement operations at gun shows when trace data, prosecutions, and witness statements suggest a particular show is a source of crime guns. ATF should also increase enforcement activities at gun shows to deter sales to prohibited purchasers by unlicensed gun sellers, and ATF should

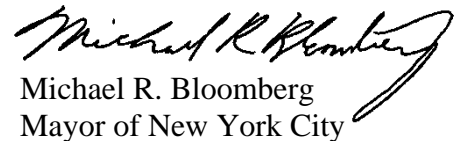
investigate private sellers at gun shows who appear to be engaged in the business of selling firearms without a license. To our knowledge, none of these steps have been taken.

President Obama, in the wake of Tucson, you sent a loud and clear message that you would lead the way in fixing our gun laws and improving the enforcement of existing laws. The time to turn that message into action is now.

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  
The Honorable Thad Cochran  
The Honorable Hal Rogers  
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The Honorable Barbara Mikulski  
The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison  
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The Honorable Chaka Fattah

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Mayor Vincent H. Liebel, Boswell, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Marianne Deery, Boyertown, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Kenneth Lockhart, Brentwood, Pennsylvania  
Mayor David Wonderling, Brookville, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Lester J. Ward, Brownsville, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Anna Marie Quader, Burgettstown, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Loyce Harpster, Burnham, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Margaret Stock, Butler, Pennsylvania  
Mayor John Henicheck, Callery, Pennsylvania  
Mayor David H. Rhome, Canonsburg, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Justin M. Taylor, Carbondale, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Kirk R. Wilson, Carlisle, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Donald Baumgarten, Castle Shannon, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Barbara A. Schlegel, Catasauqua, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Marilyn J. Becker, Chalfont, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Ronald W. Lockwood, Cherry Valley, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Wendell N. Butler, Jr., Chester, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Paul H. McKenna, Churchill, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Richard L. Lattanzi, Clairton, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Harry Kelly, Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania  
Mayor John Hartman, Cleona, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Richard P. Corkery, Coaldale, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Frank C. Kelly, Collingdale, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Allen Gyorko, Confluence, Pennsylvania  
Mayor John Haberland, Coraopolis, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Mark J. Thomas, Cornwall, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Timothy J. Carroll, Dallas, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Helen Thomas, Darby, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Thomas R. Lloyd, Dormont, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Libby White, Doylestown, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Philip Krivacek, Duquesne, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Betty M. Hays, Eagles Mere, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Salvatore J. Panto, Jr., Easton, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Louis J. Payne, East Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Mark A. Pacilla, East Washington, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Wayne T. Murphy, Edgeworth, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Joseph J. Cisco, Ellport, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Winfield Iobst, Emmaus, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Dorothy H. Quinn, Emsworth, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Joseph Sinnott, Erie, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Gary Foster, Evans City, Pennsylvania  
Mayor D. Gary Evans, Factoryville, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Charles Moore, Falls Creek, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Olive McKeithan, Farrell, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Gary McBrien, Felton, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Robert P. Frey, Folcroft, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Harry W. McLaughlin Jr., Fox Chapel, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Kim Phillips, Frackville, Pennsylvania  
Mayor Fred C. Moyer, Jr., Freeburg, Pennsylvania



Mayor Tim Martin, Freeland, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Gerald C. Yob, Freemansburg, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Arnie Bowser, Greensboro, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Roy Del Rosario, Hamburg, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Linda Thompson, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Norm Hawkes, Hatboro, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor John Hoerner, Highspire, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Joseph R. Dodson, Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Betty Esper, Homestead, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Dee Dee Brown, Huntingdon Borough, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor George Nicksic, Hyde Park, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Nicholas Yanosich, Industry, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Charles Ritter, Ivyland, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor James C. Sanders, Jefferson, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Donald Bosh, Knoxville, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Sandra Green, Kutztown, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Joseph Legnasky, Lake City, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Rick Gray, Lancaster, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Christopher Blaydon, Langhorne, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Jayne C. Young, Lansdowne, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Robert P. Carpenter, Laporte, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Fred Feltenberger, Laureldale, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Pete Poninsky, Leetsdale, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Donald L. Rehrig, Lehighton, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Nick Vay, Lincoln, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor John L. Mark, Liverpool, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor William D. Hart, Lykens, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Randy Schlegel, Lyons, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Thomas A. Bell, Mahaffey, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Gerard J. McGlone, Jr., Malvern, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Eric B. Phillips, Manheim, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor David Sturgess, Manor, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor James D. Schiliro, Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Russell LaRew, Marianna, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor James Frazier, McDonald, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Weslee A. Clapper-Krepps, McKean, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor John Christopher Soff, Meadville, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Ethel I. Kellerman, Milesburg, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Richard C. Trostle, Mohnton, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor John P. Antoline, Monaca, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor John Dorin, Montoursville, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Maureen A. Piselli, Morton, Pennsylvania  
 Mayor Raymond Bodnar, Munhall, Pennsylvania  
 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, Wilkesburg, 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