Testimony of Gregory Jackson, Jr.
Former Deputy Director of the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention and Special Assistant to the President

U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Federal Law Enforcement Subcommittee Hearing
November 18, 2026

Thank you Chairman Higgins, Ranking Member Casar, and members of the committee for inviting me to be part of this important hearing. I am Greg Jackson, a D.C. resident, survivor of gun violence here in the District, and a former Deputy Director of the first-ever White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention. The office that coordinated federal resources, implemented life saving policies and coordinated with both state and local leaders to reach a nationwide reduction in violent crime by 14.3 and homicides by 40.9% in just three years[1]

I've spent the last decade of my life working to address gun violence and have seen the damage of this crisis first hand, from my own six month recovery to holding hands with hundreds of families grieving loss across the country. Whether it's eight small children in Louisiana or 35 people shot at a homecoming party in Georgia, gun violence continues to shatter communities and as the leading cause of death for youth,[2] pregnant women[3], Black men, and now the leading cause of newly disabled Americans.[4]

The encouraging news is that we know what works: comprehensive, proactive violence prevention. In the two years before the current Trump administration took office, major cities across the country took action and saw historic reductions in gun violence. Today, the United States is continuing to witness historically low levels of violent crime today, as a result of increased federal, state, and local investment in violence prevention, providing more valuable tools for law enforcement to investigate and apprehend those causing harm, and strengthened measures that regulate and hold the gun industry accountable for community safety.

A major resource that has been heavily requested by law enforcement in communities across the country is more support with firearm tracing to solve crimes. The "Out of Business" (OOB) records being discussed today are a crucial resource for the crime gun tracing requested by law enforcement. In fact, more than half (52%) of all crime gun trace requests submitted to the ATF National Tracing Center from 2000-2023 were completed using OOB records,[5] a large portion of

---

[1] Crime Index, "Historical Data Library," U.S. violent crime, 2023. Accessed November 17, 2026 https://crimeindex.org/historical

[2] Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, *New Report Highlights U.S. 2022 Gun-Related Deaths: Firearms Remain Leading Cause of Death for Children and Teens, and Disproportionately Affect People of Color* (September 12, 2024), https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2024/guns-remain-leading-cause-of-death-for-children-and-teens.

[3] Wallace, M., Gillispie-Bell, V., Cruz, K., Davis, K., & Vilda, D.; Homicide During Pregnancy and the Postpartum Period in the United States, 2018-2019. *Obstetrics and gynecology*, *138*(5), 762–769 (2021) https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9134264/ .

[4] Semenza, D. C., Baker, N. S., & Vil, C. S.; Firearm Violence Exposure and Functional Disability among Black Men and Women in the United States. *Journal of urban health : bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, *101*(3), 522–534 (2024), https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11189861/.

[5] ATF, *National Firearms Commerce and Trafficking Assessment (NFCTA): Crime Guns - Volume Two* (January 2023), https://www.atf.gov/firearms/national-firearms-commerce-and-trafficking-assessment-nfcta-crime-guns-volume-two

which were tied directly to violent crimes. That totals more than 4.6 million crime gun trace requests fulfilled using OOB records, or an average of over 520 completed traces every single day for 24 years.[6]

ATF itself reported successfully prosecuting an average of 8,310 cases per year between 2016 and 2020 in which the crime involved a firearm more than 20 years old, a figure ATF describes as under-representative because it captured only cases opened and closed within that period.[7] As the Department explained in 2022, "being able to trace a firearm to the first unlicensed transferee of the firearm from a firearms licensee, no matter how long ago, provides useful investigative leads to law enforcement."[8]

In recent years, several high-profile shootings have been investigated using information obtained directly from out-of-business records, including:

- The assasination attempt on Donald Trump on July 13, 2024 in Butler, PA, in which one person was killed and three, including President Trump who was injured.
- The California Lunar New Year Dance Hall mass shooting in Monterey Park, CA on January 21, 2023, in which 11 people were killed and nine people were injured.
- The Highland Park, IL July 4 Parade mass shooting in 2022, in which seven people were killed, and 48 others were wounded by bullets or shrapnel.
- The Brooklyn Subway mass shooting on April 12, 2022 in Sunset Park, in which ten people were shot and injured.

Among just those four examples of four crime guns, that's a total of 19 deaths and 70 injured.

Despite multiple statements from federal law enforcement, today you will hear from other witnesses about how they believe these records are illegal, infringe on the second amendment, and should be destroyed altogether. But, the current Trump-appointed ATF Director has said on the record that the "ATF does not have an illegal firearm registry" and that "ATF maintains firearm transaction records in accordance with federal requirements enacted by Congress." ATF Director Cekeda personally shared that "the Second Amendment is NOT infringed by laws that are based on ATF's historical tradition of regulating firearms."

Furthermore, a recent DOJ Office of the Inspector General Report, overseen by an IG appointed by President Trump, came to the same conclusion. As part of their audit of ATF's management of firearm trace requests at the National Tracing Center (NTC), released in August of this year, the OIG tested the NTC's compliance with federal law, including their restrictions against

---

; ATF *National Firearms Commerce and Trafficking Assessment (NFCTA): Crime Guns - Volume Four* (January 2025), https://www.atf.gov/firearms/national-firearms-commerce-and-trafficking-assessment-nfcta-firearms-trafficking-investigations-volume-four

[6] *Id.*

[7] 2022 RIA at 107–08 & tbl. 7.9.

[8] 2022 Final Rule, 87 Fed. Reg. at 24722–23.

maintaining a registry under the Firearm Owners Protection Act and longstanding appropriations law. The OIG report concluded that "nothing came to our attention that caused us to believe that ATF was not in compliance with the aforementioned laws and regulations."[9]

The facts here are clear, records kept in ATF's Out-of-Business Records Center are used exclusively to complete trace requests submitted by law enforcement agencies as part of bona fide criminal investigations. As ATF noted in their reply to Representative Cloud in 2021, "The NTC only traces crime guns, and every trace must be identified as such by the requestor by selecting an appropriate crime code when submitting the trace request."[10]

Since executive action was taken in 2022 to keep records permanently, we have only seen the tracing requests increase, which shows how the demand for this data has increased from state and local law enforcement. In fact, trace requests have expanded nearly 10% in the last four years, to over 636,000 in CY 2025,[11] following a longstanding trendline—over the past decade trace requests have grown almost 40%.[12]

This hearing is not about protecting the rights of Americans; it is simply another attempt by gun industry lobbyists and their friends in the Republican party to dismantle important measures designed to keep our communities safe from violent crime.

This hearing is yet another attempt to create an opportunity for this administration to do more harm. The Trump administration has already shut down the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention, defunded law enforcement including the ATF, cut over $1 billion in mental health resources from schools, terminated $812 million in funding for gun violence prevention and community violence intervention, defunded gun violence research, fired the CDC firearm injury team, dismantled important regulations like the zero tolerance policy for gun dealers, and now is aiming to strip our local, state and federal law enforcement of important tools to solve crimes.

With that said, I'd like to reinforce three points:

- First, crime gun tracing is among ATF's most critical functions and serves as an important tool for law enforcement agencies across the country to solve crimes and build cases against suspects. Crime gun tracing develops hundreds of thousands of investigative leads for law enforcement every year and the overwhelming majority (over

---

[9] U.S. Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General, *Audit of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' Management of Firearm Trace Requests at the National Tracing Center* (August 13, 2026), https://oig.justice.gov/reports/audit-bureau-alcohol-tobacco-firearms-and-explosives-management-firearm-trace-requests.

[10] ATF, Response Letter to the Honorable Michael Cloud (December 21, 2021), https://www.gunowners.org/wp-content/uploads/Letter-Response-Rep.-Michael-Cloud-R-TX-51-x-GOP-co-signers_Federal-Gun-Registry-signed-letter.pdf

[11] ATF, *Firearms Trace Data: Mexico - 2020-2025 Data Source: Firearms Tracing System January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2025,* (March 27, 2026), https://www.atf.gov/firearms/report/firearms-trace-data/firearms-trace-data-mexico-2020-2025.

[12] ATF, *Firearms Trace Data: Canada - 2015-2020 Data Source: Firearms Tracing System January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2020* (March 10, 2021), https://www.atf.gov/firearms/report/firearms-trace-data/firearms-trace-data-canada-2015-2020

80%) of those agencies are State and local.[13] On average, more than half of those traces are completed using records stored at ATF's Out-of-Business Records Center. It is impossible to say that you support law enforcement while pushing for a policy that would cripple their ability to solve crimes.

- Second, even ATF is straying from its role, and now is proposing a rule that will make it more difficult to solve crimes. Specifically, the proposed rule to destroy out-of-business records is unnecessary. If it is finalized, ATF will destroy records that investigators use today to solve shootings and trafficking cases. The importance of this cannot be overstated—destroyed records can never be recovered— and even ATF's own assessment of its proposed rule concluded that the "result of the proposed rule could delay or hinder federal, state, and local law enforcement efforts to track and stop violent offenders," and that "these failed trace requests may include high-profile urgent traces."[14]
- Third, the ATF's Out-of-Business Records Center is objectively not a national gun registry. The system is designed specifically to make it impossible to search by personally identifying information, something Trump's ATF Director has testified to repeatedly and that a recent OIG investigation likewise concluded.. You simply cannot have a registry of individual gun owners if you cannot search for gun owners.

Any community, any family, any person that feels threatened by crime is one too many. The statistics tell us that we've made progress, but as I opened my testimony, statistics don't tell us the whole story. All Americans need to feel safe — that should be our number one priority, and more work remains. Allowing the Trump administration to roll back critical public safety initiatives and slash funding for law enforcement will only worsen crime, not make us safer.

We have real solutions to save lives from gun violence and reduce violent crime, now is the time to protect that progress and build on the momentum. Thank you for your time, and I look forward to answering your questions.

---

[13] U.S. Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General, *Audit of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' Management of Firearm Trace Requests at the National Tracing Center* (August 13, 2026), https://oig.justice.gov/reports/audit-bureau-alcohol-tobacco-firearms-and-explosives-management-firearm-trace-requests.

[14] ATF, *Firearm Records Retention Periods*, 91 Fed. Reg. 24,413 (proposed May 6, 2026) (to be codified at 27 C.F.R. pt. 478), https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/05/06/2026-08929/firearm-records-retention-periods