



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3605

February 3, 2026

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

Dear Deputy Director Cekada,

We, the undersigned members of Congress, have waited patiently to know how many records ATF is currently maintaining in its illegal, digital, searchable gun registry, also known as the Out-of-Business Records Imaging System (OBRIS). 18 members of Congress first submitted our inquiry on this matter to ATF over 290 days ago on February 14th, 2025 and have not been given a response. Therefore, we strongly urge an urgent response by February 10th, 2026.¹

Congress has great reason for concern.² We have reason to suspect that ATF now has over a billion-gun registration records in its digital database. Back in November of 2021, a document leaked by Gun Owners of America revealed the ATF was “processing” over 54.7 million Out-of-Business Records (OBR) per year.³ This prompted our first congressional investigation, which uncovered the shocking reality that the ATF currently had in its possession 920,664,765 gun registration records—the vast majority of which were digitalized and searchable.⁴ Our duty to the Second Amendment and gun owning Americans compels us to hold you, the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, accountable.

We fear that ATF could have as many as 1.1-billion-gun registration records in its database, if ATF has continued with this historic pace and digitalized an average of 50 million firearm transaction records per year. This is a violation of the federal prohibition on gun registration at 18 U.S.C. 926(a)(3) which clearly states:

¹ <https://www.gunowners.org/wp-content/uploads/Rep.-Cloud-Asks-ATF-For-OBR-Update-Letter-on-2.14.25.pdf>

² Johnston. “ATF’s Illegal Gun Owner Registry”. Gun Owners of America. 2022. <https://www.gunowners.org/wp-content/uploads/GOA-ATFs-Illegal-Gun-Owner-Registry.pdf>

³ <https://freebeacon.com/biden-administration/biden-admin-amassing-millions-of-records-on-u-s-gun-owners-amid-new-crackdown-on-firearms/>

⁴ 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

No such rule or regulation prescribed after the date of the enactment of the Firearms Owners' Protection Act may require that records required to be maintained under this chapter or any portion of the contents of such records, be recorded at or transferred to a facility owned, managed, or controlled by the United States or any State or any political subdivision thereof, nor that any system of registration of firearms, firearms owners, or firearms transactions or dispositions be established.

Concerned with this violation of the Second Amendment and federal law, the House of Representatives has begun to debate the best way to eliminate this unlawful gun registry. Last year, the House Appropriations Committee passed an amendment to defund the gun registry in 29-25 vote.⁵ This year, House Appropriators included two sections in the FY 2026 Justice Department funding bill to directly defund this unlawful registry.⁶ However, ATF's lack of transparency is harming our ability to conduct adequate congressional oversight and properly consider this legislation. Congress must know how many gun registration records ATF is currently maintaining.


Given the severity of this potential violation of federal law and the threat an illegal national gun registry poses towards the Second Amendment rights of the American people, we are also troubled by ATF's lack of a response to our investigative inquiry. Your continued refusal to provide basic information raises serious questions about whether the ATF—despite changes in leadership and stated priorities—remains in compliance with several congressional appropriations restrictions, a federal statute, and the Second and Fourteenth Amendments.⁷

Congress needs current information in order to inform its funding decisions. Once again, we write to receive an immediate update on “the total number of Out-of-Business Records the OBR Center is currently maintaining, including digital and hard copy record estimates” and all other questions included in our letter sent February 14th, 2025.

God Bless,



Michael Cloud
Member of Congress



Scott DesJarlais
Member of Congress



Andrew Clyde
Member of Congress



Andy Ogles
Member of Congress

⁵ <https://x.com/GunOwners/status/1810740703166701917?s=20>

⁶ Sec. 608 and Sec. 609. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/5342/text>

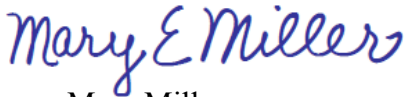
⁷ <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/gun-rights-atf-accuses-agency-illegal-gun-registry>



Adrian Smith
Member of Congress



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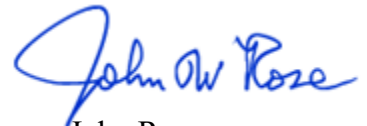
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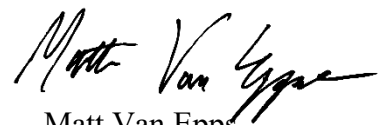
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Wesley Hunt
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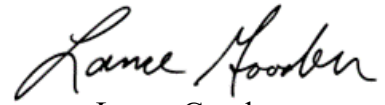
Anna Paulina Luna
Member of Congress



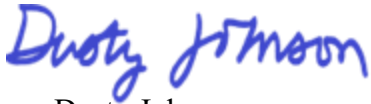
Matt Van Epps
Member of Congress



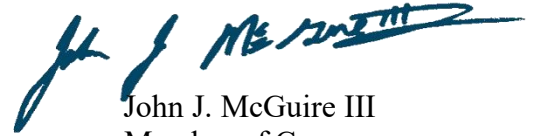
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Lance Gooden
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Dusty Johnson
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