



May 25, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable A. Mitchell McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators:

The Second Amendment is the cornerstone of the Bill of Rights. It guarantees our natural God-given right to defend our lives, our families, our property, and our freedom. The confirmation of David Chipman to head the Department of Justice's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives ("ATF") is an attack on that right and on the millions of law-abiding gun owners across the country.

As state Attorneys General, we took an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States and protect the rights and freedoms of our constituents. These responsibilities force us to stand in opposition to Mr. Chipman's nomination and in support of our constituents' rights.

Firearms are far beyond a hobby or a passion. They are a part of our national heritage and everyday life for tens of millions of Americans, particularly those of us who live in rural areas. We use them to hunt, protect livestock, and provide peace of mind when law enforcement may be miles away. This is why Mr. Chipman's past affiliation with anti-gun organizations and his extreme positions on commonly owned firearms is so concerning to us as attorneys general and why he is unfit to be confirmed as head of the ATF.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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Mr. Chipman has a long history with organizations whose mission is to erase the Second Amendment. He has spent the last five years as a senior policy advisor for the Giffords Law Center. This radical group attempted to defend Washington, D.C.'s complete ban on the possession of handguns in the home at the U.S. Supreme Court. This organization argued that "nothing in the Second Amendment restrains the authority of States or their political subdivisions" when enacting firearm regulations. This extreme position would allow politicians to run roughshod over the rights of their citizens. Fortunately, it did not prevail.

His direct advocacy has targeted mainstream gun owners. The AR-15 is one of, if not the most, popular rifles in America to the point news reports have called it "America's rifle." More and more Americans are seeing the utility and value of the AR-15 – demonstrating that yet again Mr. Chipman is out of touch with the mainstream.

In 2019 Congressional testimony, Mr. Chipman said he wants to ban the manufacturing and future sale of AR-15s. In his dream scenario, the millions of law-abiding Americans who already own these popular rifles would need to pay a \$200 tax, subject themselves to fingerprinting and another federal background check, and have that information stored in a federal registration system.

It is indisputable that an extremely small percentage of gun crimes are committed with AR-15s – a fact that should be well known to a former ATF agent. Given Mr. Chipman's radical views and disdain for the facts, it is not a stretch to wonder if he wants owners of any type of firearm placed in a government registry. More people are murdered with sharp objects than with any type of rifle. Does he believe letter openers should also be taxed and registered?

The ATF has an important role to play in upholding the public safety of communities around the country. Its agents deserve a director who will inspire confidence from the people they serve. Given Mr. Chipman's history of anti-gun lobbying and political activism, Americans cannot be reasonably expected to believe he will be an unbiased enforcer of current laws. As chief law enforcement or legal officers in our respective states, we are concerned that Mr. Chipman will make Americans less safe by diverting ATF resources to attack the rights of law-abiding gun owners instead of cracking down on violent criminals and criminal organizations.

Mr. Chipman has a First Amendment right as a private citizen to work for these political organizations and to lobby for the taxation, registration, and even

confiscation of firearms. Americans likewise have the Second Amendment to protect their God-given rights to keep and bear arms. Accordingly, we ask you to oppose Mr. Chipman's confirmation to this important position and demand President Biden nominate someone who is not hostile to our rights and way of life.


Sincerely,



Austin Knudsen
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF MONTANA



Theodore E. Rokita
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF INDIANA



Eric S. Schmitt
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF MISSOURI



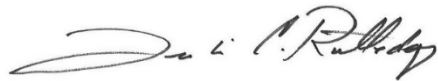
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