



BOARD OF DIRECTORS VIA E-MAIL

William I. Edlund
PRESIDENT

Steven L. Smith
VICE PRESIDENT

David H. Fry
TREASURER

Carol M. Kingsley
SECRETARY

Steven L. Baron
Douglas Boxer
Frederick Brown
Elizabeth J. Cabraser
Owen J. Clements
Alexis S. Coll-Very
Gene Crew
Charles M. Dyke
James T. Fousekis
Simon J. Frankel
George A. Hisert
Donald R. Joseph
David J. Kapnick
William D. Kissinger
David Lipkin
Mark Melickian
Mark L. Mosley
David J. Pasternak
Robert K. Perun
Guy Rounsaville
Megin C. Scully, M.D.
James M. Seff
Randal Short
John M. Skonberg
Rebecca A. Speer
Henry C. Su
Roderick M. Thompson

Robyn Thomas
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FOUNDERS CIRCLE

Cameron Baker
William I. Edlund
Charles G. Ehrlich
James T. Fousekis
John R. Heisse II
George A. Hisert
Edward Kallgren
Lawrence Low
Richard W. Odgers

January 30, 2013

The Honorable Elijah Cummings, the Honorable Carolyn Maloney, the Honorable Patrick Meehan, the Honorable Scott Rigell
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Support for the Gun Trafficking Prevention Act of 2013

Dear Representatives Cummings, Maloney, Meehan and Rigell,

On behalf of the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence (Law Center), I write to express our strong support for the Gun Trafficking Prevention Act of 2013, legislation to strengthen federal anti-trafficking efforts. Founded by attorneys following an assault weapon massacre at a San Francisco law firm in 1993, the Law Center provides legal expertise in support of gun violence prevention to federal, state, and local officials nationwide.

Gun trafficking leads to astonishing levels of violence, both in the U.S. and abroad. Moreover, since guns are trafficked illegally across state and international borders, gun trafficking is a problem in need of a national solution.

The Gun Trafficking Prevention Act of 2013 would address these concerns by creating key new crimes and strong penalties for those who traffic in firearms. The bill would create a specific new criminal prohibition on straw purchasing, the practice of persons with clean backgrounds buying guns on behalf of prohibited persons such as felons, domestic abusers, minors and mentally ill individuals. Straw purchasers funnel guns to gangs and are a major source of weapons on the illegal market.

The bill also would impose stiff penalties for violations of this important law. These penalties include imprisonment for up to 20 years, with a five-year enhancement for a person who runs a gun trafficking ring. In addition, the bill would create a separate crime for any person who conspires to commit any of these offenses, incurring a maximum confinement of 10 years. Finally, the bill would direct the U.S. Sentencing Commission to review and amend federal sentencing guidelines and consider a new, tougher penalty structure for gun trafficking crimes.

This bipartisan legislation is desperately needed to improve our weak federal gun laws. According to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), straw purchases represent a significant overall crime and public safety problem. Federal investigations show that straw purchasing is one of the most common channels of illegal gun trafficking: one study analyzing trafficking investigations during the period July 1996 –



December 1998 found that straw purchases were involved in almost one-half of all trafficking investigations, and involved nearly 26,000 illegally trafficked firearms.

Easily accessible firearms – purchased or trafficked from U.S. gun dealers and gun shows – also flow into Mexico and fuel violence in that country. ATF trace data show that between 2007 and 2011, over two-thirds of guns recovered by the Government of Mexico originated in the U.S. This bill will help stifle the illegal movement of firearms across our southern border and stem the violence inflicted by these guns.

The Law Center firmly supports the Gun Trafficking Prevention Act of 2013, as it will enhance public safety by barring straw purchasing, curbing the flow of guns to the unregulated secondary market, and imposing tough penalties upon traffickers. Thank you for sponsoring this bipartisan legislation and your ongoing dedication to preventing gun violence. Please feel free to contact the Law Center for further assistance on gun law and policy issues.

Sincerely,

Robyn Thomas
Executive Director
Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence