

Attorney General Eric Holder
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001
Fax: 202-307-6777

Dear Attorney General Holder:

I am writing you to request that President Obama's promise to repeal the Tiahrt Amendment restrictions on the sharing of data collected by the ATF be fulfilled by removing the restrictions in the FY 2010 Department of Justice Budget. I am the president of Hoosiers Concerned about Gun Violence, a grass roots organization of Hoosiers who understand the critical role of the availability of guns in the high homicide and suicide rates that plague our state. Indiana has been among the five states in the country with the highest rate of homicide among black males for every one of the last nine years, according to the Commission on the Status of Black Males. We also have a high rate of suicide in our state, 11.7/100,000 for the years 2001-2005. Both the rates of homicide and suicide can be traced to the presence of guns in so many households and in the hands of so many people, felons and juveniles, who do not have the right to own or carry them.

For several years, Congress has been undermining police work by passing the Tiahrt Amendments, which are annual appropriations riders that restrict the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) from releasing crucial crime-fighting information to cities and states. I ask you to support the repeal of the Tiahrt Amendments for FY 2010. The Tiahrt restrictions prevent state and local police from accessing and using gun trace data in various ways; ways which would help them to identify gun dealers and individuals who may be involved in illegal gun trafficking operations. In addition, prior to the Tiahrt restrictions, researchers produced several important studies using crime gun trace data that have informed efforts to keep guns from criminals. But subsequent research of this type has been obstructed by Tiahrt. One solution to this problem is to replace the Tiahrt Amendments with the language in S.2769, the Firearms Information Use Act of 2008, introduced by Senator Robert Menendez, co-sponsored by President Obama when he was a Senator.

I also ask you to support the removal of other damaging restrictions within the Tiahrt Amendments. For example, the FBI is required to destroy certain NICS background check records after just 24 hours, which can hamper critical investigations. ATF also remains blocked from requiring gun dealers to check their inventories to detect lost and stolen guns, which only serves to create a law enforcement blind spot that helps criminals get guns.

Indiana law enforcement needs all the help it can get to deal with the brutal level of violence that accompanies crime in our cities. That's why it is so critical that law enforcement once again gain access to this information, which can serve as a key tool in their efforts to protect the public safety.

Sincerely,

Stephen R. Dunlop, MD
President, Hoosiers Concerned About Gun Violence

cc: Peter Orszag, Director of the Office of Management and Budget (Fax: 202-395-1005)
Cecilia Muñoz, Director of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs (Fax: 202-456-2461)
Melody Barnes, Director of the Domestic Policy Council (Fax: 202-456-3342)
Senator Harry Reid, Majority Leader (Fax: 202-224-7327)
Representative Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House (Fax: 202-225-4188)
Chairman Daniel Inouye, Senate Appropriations Committee (Fax: 202-224-6747)
Chairman David Obey, House Appropriations Committee (Fax: 715-842-4488)
Chairman Barbara Mikulski, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science (Fax: 202-224-8858)
Chairman Alan Mollohan, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science Fax: (Fax: 202-225-7564)