

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 8, 2006

Support Full Funding of ATF
Deadline: COB March 14, 2006

Dear Colleague:

As you know, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives provide invaluable services to our nation's law enforcement. Through various programs, they aide our state and local law enforcement agencies put an end to violent crimes and illegal activity.

We urge you to work to ensure the ATF receives the proper funding necessary to continue their essential work. The ATF operate numerous vital programs that will be in jeopardy if proper funding is not secured. One such program is the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) Program.

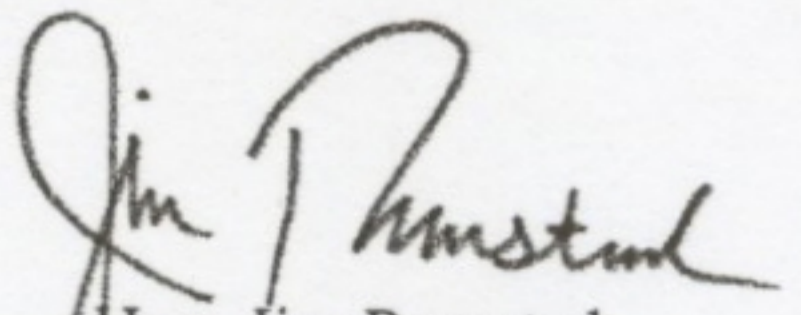
Through its NIBIN Program, ATF deploys Integrated Ballistic Identification System (IBIS) equipment to Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies for their use in imaging and comparing crime gun evidence. This equipment allows firearms technicians to acquire digital images of the marking made by a firearm on bullets and cartridge casings. The images then undergo an automated comparison with other bullets and casings from across the nation. If a piece of evidence returns with a high-confidence match, firearms examiners compare the original evidence to confirm the match. The NIBIN system enables law enforcement agencies to discover links between crimes more quickly, and makes it possible to share intelligence across jurisdictional boundaries, enabling Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies to work together to stop violent criminals.

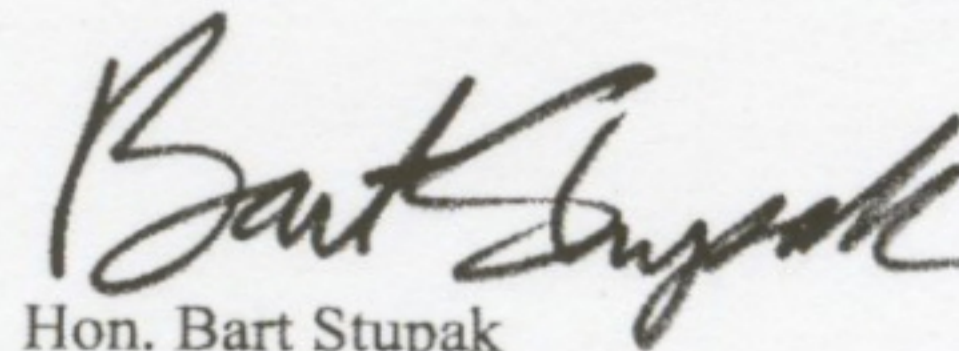
The NIBIN Program currently has 228 sites that have received IBIS equipment. There are 182 agencies participating in the Program, with every major population are having access to this incredible technology. Since ATF and its partner agencies began using this technology, over 926,000 pieces of crime scene evidence have been entered, and over 12,500 "hits" have been logged, many of them yielding vital information not obtainable my other means.


NIBIN partner agencies and ATF work together in partnership against violent crime. ATF purchases IBIS equipment for deployment, and provides for regular upgrades and service, as well as administering the network over which it communicates. ATF also provides weeklong training courses for new users of the system. In return, NIBIN partner agencies agree to adequately staff the program and to work with agencies across the country to determine any possible links to violent crimes.

If ATF were not to receive adequate funding, the future and effectiveness of programs such as NIBIN would be jeopardy. We urge you to do all you can to fully fund ATF and ensure the partnership between Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies remains as strong as it is today. **If you would like to sign the attached letter, please contact George Burke with Rep. McCarthy (george.burke@mail.house.gov).**

Sincerely,


Hon. Jim Ramstad
Co-Chair
Law Enforcement Caucus


Hon. Bart Stupak
Co-Chair
Law Enforcement Caucus


Carolyn McCarthy
Member
Law Enforcement Caucus