

Firearms (ATF) released a new report about the illegal firearms market. The ATF's report documents 1,530 criminal investigations involving firearms traffickers for the time period between July 1996 and December 1998. These trafficking investigations led to the recovery of more than 84,000 illegal firearms and the prosecution of more than 1,700 defendants.

The ATF report provides significant insight in to the gun trafficking trade. The investigation reveals that too many loopholes in our national framework for firearms distribution permits traffickers to divert legal guns to the illegal marketplace. The vulnerabilities in our law, identified by the ATF, are a result of corrupt federal firearms licensees, who were associated with only 10 percent of the investigations in the report but accounted for nearly half of the firearms involved, a staggering 40,000 guns; gun shows, which supplied channels for 26,000 guns, the second highest number of illegally trafficked firearms in the investigation; straw purchasers, who bought and transferred firearms to unlicensed sellers or prohibited users; unlicensed sellers, who were not required to conduct Brady background checks or maintain records of their sales; and firearms theft.

Mr. President, we can no longer afford to ignore the deficiencies in our federal firearm laws. Gun trafficking gives criminal users and young people access to tens of thousands of illegal guns. If Congress wants to reduce firearm trafficking, then first and foremost, we must close the gun show loophole. Secretary Lawrence Summers, who oversees the ATF explained "This report . . . shows that we must do more to close every trafficking channel, starting with closing the gun show loophole . . ." Furthermore, we must increase criminal penalties for traffickers and crack down on corrupt federal firearms licensees, straw purchasers, and unlicensed sellers. I urge Congress to pay attention to this report and pass sensible gun measures that will end the deadly flow of firearms to the illegal marketplace.

I request an article be printed in the RECORD entitled "The Biography of a Gun," which explains how a single gun makes the transition from legal to illegal commerce.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the New York Times, Apr. 9, 2000]
 THE NATION—THE BIOGRAPHY OF A GUN
 (By Jayson Blair and Sarah Weissman)

In America, more than 200,000 guns are traced by law enforcement each year. This is the story of one of those weapons—named after its serial number—No. 997126, a 12-shot, 9 millimeter Jennings semi-automatic.

The gun, made mostly of plastic, was manufactured in 1995, at a factory near John Wayne International Airport in Costa Mesa,

Calif. It is now wrapped in plastic, locked in a police property clerk's office near the New York State Supreme Court building in downtown Brooklyn. In between, the gun is believed to have been used in at least 13 crimes—including the murder of 2 people and the wounding of at least 3 others in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn.

The dead were a 16-year-old boy who was sitting on top of a mailbox and a 48-year-old shopkeeper who was the father of 4 children. The injured were a man who got in the way during a robbery, a Jehovah's Witness from Chicago who had moved to Brooklyn to do volunteer work, and a rookie New York City police officer.

In New York, about 6 in 10 murder victims are killed with firearms.

No. 997126 is 6 inches long and weighs 16 ounces. It was made at the Bryco Arms plant, where more than 200,000 inexpensive handguns are manufactured each year.

Byrco is owned by Janice Jennings, the former daughter-in-law of George Jennings, who founded the first in what became a cluster of Southern California gun manufacturers known collectively as the Ring of Fire.

From Byrco, the gun was shipped to B.L. Jennings, Inc., a Carson City, Nev., distributor owned by George Jennings's son and Janice's ex-husband, Bruce. No. 997126 was bought by Acua Sport Corporation, a federally licensed wholesaler in Bellefontaine, Ohio. Acua sold it, for about \$90, to Classic Pawn and Jewelry, Inc. in Chickamauga, Ga.

In August 1998, Classic resold the gun to a Georgia woman for about \$150. Investigators believe that the woman was buying the 9 millimeter gun as a straw purchaser on behalf of Charles Chapman. He was prohibited by federal law, because of a previous felony conviction, from purchasing firearms. Investigators say they believe Mr. Chapman drove the firearm to New York, where it was sold to a member of the Bloods gang. And that is how, investigators say, the gun got to Demeris Tolbert.

The police say No. 997126 was recovered when Mr. Tolbert was arrested on the roof of the Howard Houses after the shooting of a New York police officer, Tanagiot Benekos, who was looking for suspects in the killing of a pawnbroker earlier that afternoon.

Mr. Tolbert had been paroled the previous January after serving three years of a nine year sentence for drug possession. Prosecutors say that after the New York City Police Department's ballistics laboratory linked the gun to slugs recovered from the earlier shootings, Mr. Tolbert, 32, of Brownville confessed.

Investigators say he also took responsibility for a 1990 shooting of a clerk at an East New York bodega, the 1991 killing of a Crown Heights security guard, four other shootings and an attempted murder.

The Brooklyn District Attorney's office has charged him with murder, attempted murder and attempted murder of a police officer.

The ballistic information and serial number were matched against a Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms database, which prompted a federal gun-smuggling investigation. Special Agent Edgar A. Domenech, who oversees the bureau's New York and New Jersey division, said the A.T.F. traced the weapon and 30 others to Charles Chapman. He is being held, along with alleged accomplices, on charges of gun trafficking and conspiracy to illegally purchase firearms and transport them for sale to criminals in New York, where more stringent laws bar the sort of wholesale purchases permitted in Georgia.

Howard Safir, the New York City police commissioner, has proposed tighter, uniform national licensing regulations, and the annual registration of firearms to hold owners accountable for the illegal sales of weapons they purchase.

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, I wanted to draw the attention of the Senate to an important funding issue that is pending in the Senate version of the Labor/HHS Appropriations bill. The funding level for Social Security administrative expenses doesn't receive much attention, but it is critical to the effective delivery of Social Security benefits to those who are entitled to them.

Social Security administrative expenses are actually partially funded from the Social Security trust funds, and they ensure that the programs administered by the Social Security Administration are delivered to the American public in an efficient, timely, and professional manner. In addition, SSA maintains records of the yearly earnings of over 140 million U.S. workers and provides them with annual estimates of their future benefits. The agency will also administer the Ticket to Work Program, and the administrative workload associated with the Retirement Earnings Test.

I am concerned that the level of funding contained in the Labor/HHS Appropriations bill is not sufficient, and does not recognize the administrative challenges Social Security will be facing in the near future. Last year the Social Security Administration provided service to 48 million people. In 2010 SSA will be providing services to 62 million people, due to the retirement of many baby boomers. During this same period, the SSA will lose nearly half of its staff to retirement, including many individuals who staff the offices located in our states and who work directly with the public.

In North Dakota, there have been large staff reductions in some of my state's main SSA offices. These shortages have affected timely completion of continuing disability reviews, and service delivery has been difficult to maintain for those who live in rural areas.

The Social Security Advisory Board—a bipartisan Congressionally mandated Board—recently issued a report on "How the Social Security Administration Can Improve Its Service to the Public," which stated that "there is a serious administrative deficit now in that there is a significant gap between the level of services the public needs and that which the agency is providing. Moreover, this gap could grow to far larger proportions in the long term if it is not adequately addressed."

The Senate Labor/HHS bill includes a funding level that is \$123 million below