A Call for Continued Support of NIBIN: A Vital Tool in Combating Violent Crime

The Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA), Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA), Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies (ASCIA), National Sheriffs' Association (NSA), International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), National Narcotic Officers' Associations' Coalition (NNOAC), National Fusion Center Association (NFCA), National District Attorneys Association (NDAA), National High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Directors Association (NHDA), and National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) urgently call for continued and expanded support of the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF).

NIBIN is a cornerstone in the fight against gun violence and violent crime that local and state agencies rely on every day. By enabling rapid matching of shell casings from crime scenes across the entire country, NIBIN enhances our ability to solve crimes and prevent future violence. Since 1997, NIBIN has processed over 6.5 million pieces of ballistic evidence, generating over 1 million investigative leads that have connected crimes and identified criminals. This tool is indispensable in linking gun-related crimes across jurisdictions and disrupting violent criminal activity.

NIBIN plays a pivotal role in dismantling transnational gangs and criminal organizations, including MS-13, Tren de Aragua, and major drug cartels. These groups rely on firearms to perpetuate violence across U.S. borders. By linking gun crimes internationally, NIBIN helps law enforcement identify repeat offenders, disrupt criminal operations, and prevent further violence. In particular, it is crucial in addressing the illegal flow of firearms along U.S. borders, a region plagued by cartel violence.

Every 2.4 minutes, NIBIN generates a new investigative lead, reinforcing its critical role in combating rising criminal threats. However, its potential is hampered by insufficient funding. To maximize its impact, NIBIN should receive robust support and remain under ATF's administration. The ATF's expertise, resources, and infrastructure are essential for coordinating efforts across federal, state, local, and tribal levels and for the effectiveness of the NIBIN program.

To strengthen NIBIN's capacity to combat crime, we strongly recommend the following investments:

1. **Deploy NIBIN systems more broadly** across the country to local and state law enforcement agencies and adequately fund and staff these efforts to expedite data entry and ballistic evidence processing.
2. **Increase correlation capacity** to process evidence more efficiently and generate leads as quickly as possible.
3. **Expand crime gun intelligence program access and training** for all law enforcement agencies, enabling integration of NIBIN into their crime gun intelligence operations.
4. **Enhance data analysis capabilities** to identify trends linked to transnational criminal organizations.
5. **Explore avenues for expanding the sharing of ballistic image data** with Mexico and the INTERPOL Ballistic Information Network to enhance cartel-related investigations.

In 2020, President Trump's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice formally recommended expanding NIBIN's reach and securing increased funding to expand the ability to help all of law enforcement solve and prevent violent crime. Given its proven ability to reduce gun violence and help dismantle criminal organizations, continued investment in NIBIN is essential for public safety.

We call on policymakers to prioritize funding for NIBIN and ensure its continued success under ATF's leadership.

MCSA, MCCA, ASCIA, NSA, IACP, NNOAC, NFCA, NDAA, NHDA, and NOBLE stand ready to support efforts ensuring law enforcement's access to this vital tool.