

# United States Senate

Washington, DC 20510-1304

July 22, 2013

Dear

I write to encourage your department to take advantage of eTrace, an Internet-based firearm tracing program that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) makes available free of charge to law enforcement agencies.

Crime gun tracing is one of the most powerful tools available for law enforcement to use to help solve violent gun crimes. When a firearm is recovered by a law enforcement agency in the course of a criminal investigation, the agency can submit information about the gun to ATF's National Tracing Center which can trace the gun from its manufacturer to its first retail purchaser. This information can help generate leads in ultimately identifying the person who used the gun to commit a crime. When all crime guns in an area are traced, it can also help law enforcement agencies identify and respond to broader crime gun trends and trafficking patterns.

ATF's eTrace application provides law enforcement agencies with the ability to electronically submit firearm trace requests, monitor progress of traces, and retrieve completed trace results in a real-time environment. The eTrace database includes details on a crime gun's serial number, manufacturer, model, and chain of custody from manufacturer to first legal purchaser, as well as information on the type of crime the gun was used to commit, the recovery location, and the name of the criminal found in possession of the gun. eTrace also provides law enforcement agencies with the capability to quickly search all trace requests submitted by the particular agency. This search function permits law enforcement to perform customized analysis within their jurisdiction to determine, for example, whether particular individuals have repeatedly purchased firearms that were later recovered from crimes.

Law enforcement agencies can submit an online form to ATF to request a memorandum of understanding to use the eTrace system. That online form is available at [https://www.atfonline.gov/etrace/request\\_mou.do?action=init](https://www.atfonline.gov/etrace/request_mou.do?action=init). You can also contact ATF's Chicago Field Division office to obtain additional information about the benefits and procedures for taking advantage of this program. The contact information for ATF's Chicago Field Division is as follows:

Nick Starcevic, Group Supervisor  
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Chicago Field Division  
525 West Van Buren Street, Suite 600  
Chicago, Illinois 60607  
312-846-7200

RICHARD J. DURBIN

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ASSISTANT MAJORITY LEADER

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COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

COMMITTEE ON RULES  
AND ADMINISTRATION

Solving violent gun crimes and targeting crime gun trafficking networks are among the highest law enforcement priorities for our nation, and increased use of crime gun tracing will help law enforcement catch criminals and shut down illegal trafficking organizations. I urge your department to request a memorandum of understanding to use the eTrace system and to trace all crime guns that your department recovers.

Thank you for your time and for your attention to this matter. I look forward to continuing to work with you and with all Illinois law enforcement agencies to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and to keep our communities safe.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator