



October 28, 2002

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the nation's mayors, I am writing to urge that your Administration actively support the creation of a national ballistics imaging and identification system. Having reviewed the extensive research conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), and having discussed this issue with law enforcement professionals, it is our strong belief that a national "crime bullet tracing" system would be a significant law enforcement tool in the ongoing fight against crime.

Local law enforcement agencies already have the ability to trace crime guns to original purchasers when they are recovered following the commission of a crime - working with ATF's National Tracing Center. However, local law enforcement agencies do not have this same ability when only a bullet or cartridge is recovered from a crime scene. That is why we strongly believe that a national ballistics identification system is needed.

This is not an issue of gun control or gun registration, would in no way limit the right of law-abiding citizens to purchase and own firearms, and would not create a national database of gun purchasers and owners. Rather this system would allow law enforcement to trace bullets and casings to original gun purchasers only when a crime has been committed using existing tracing mechanisms. The technology of ballistics identification has been proven to be highly effective and reliable, which is why Congress and the Administration have already funded the deployment of Integrated Ballistics Identification System (IBIS) equipment to 160 sites, with all 16 multi-state regions and approximately 233 sites expected to have this technology by the end of the year.

I know that your Administration is committed to helping local law enforcement fight crime and make our cities safer. The creation of a national ballistics identification system will be an important step in this effort, and I look forward to your support.

Sincerely,

[signed]

Thomas M. Menino
Mayor of Boston
President