

Email to an Illinois constituent and gun violence prevention activist from Senator Barack Obama supporting the repeal of the Tiahrt Amendment.

Dear Jennifer:

Thank you for advising me of your opposition to the restriction on ATF's ability to share information on guns used in the commission of a crime that is contained in the Department of Justice (DOJ) spending bill. We agree on this issue.

As you know, the "Tiahrt" amendment, which has been included in each of the DOJ appropriations measures since FY 2003, prohibits the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) from sharing data on the sources of guns used in crimes with states, cities and police. It is important to understand that this ATF database deals exclusively with "crime guns" and has no effect on any gun owner who has not used his firearm to commit a crime. This debate is not part of the broader ideological discussion about responsible gun ownership and the Second Amendment. It is about providing law enforcement a tool that could be used to track down terrorists and criminals.

Congress will vote in the coming days on whether to renew this legislation in the Department of Justice's FY 2008 spending bill. I support repeal of the Tiahrt Amendment.

Images from the Virginia Tech tragedy are still fresh in my memory, and hopefully we will never again watch our nation's students suffer such a tragedy. We must join together, gun owners and non-gun owners alike, to examine what needs to be done to keep our communities safe, and I look forward to staying in touch with you during this process.

Thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

Barack Obama
United States Senator