



International Association of Arson Investigators, Inc.
2331 Rock Spring Road, Forest Hill, MD 21050

June 26, 2025

Rep. Mike Bost
Chair, Congressional Fire Services Caucus
352 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Bost,

On behalf of the International Association of Arson Investigators, Inc. (“IAAI”), I write to express concern regarding the proposed FY 2026 federal budget and its impact on the United States Department of Justice’s (“USDOJ”) Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (“ATF”). For more than forty years, the IAAI has partnered with the ATF to advance education, training, and research related to fire, explosion, and arson prevention and investigation. This teamwork is essential in ensuring public safety and supporting the public sector fire and explosion investigation and prosecutorial community nationwide.

President Donald J. Trump’s FY 2026 budget proposes to eliminate the ATF as a law enforcement agency, with selected functions absorbed by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). The proposed budget allocates \$1.207 billion for the ATF—representing a 25.7% decrease from the FY 2025 enacted budget—and includes a reduction of 1,465 positions, leaving the agency with only 3,671 employees.

The ATF’s mission goes well beyond firearms enforcement. Its work in fire, arson, and explosives investigation and prosecution is vital to national security, public safety, and scientific advancement. Yet, the Department of Justice’s FY 2026 Budget and Performance Summary provides no clarity on whether these critical fire and arson responsibilities will continue under the DEA—or whether they will be eliminated altogether.

Our association relies heavily on collaboration with the ATF in several key areas:

- **Fire Research Laboratory (“FRL”)** in Ammendale, Maryland, the nation’s only large-scale fire science research facility focused on criminal investigations, provides cutting-edge research and on-scene/remote support to fire investigators.
- **National Center for Explosives Training and Research (“NCETR”)**, at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama, delivers world-class arson and explosives training to U.S. investigators.
- **Certified Fire Investigator (“CFI”) Program**—through which we work with the ATF to provide education and professional development for investigators nationwide.
- **National and International Response Teams (“NRT”)** which deploy to support high-impact fire, arson, and explosion investigations.

Municipal, combination, and volunteer fire departments, as well as the other public sector fire and explosion investigation and litigation professionals, often lack the resources to handle complex fire and explosives investigations on their own. Without the ATF’s expertise and support, these departments—and the communities they serve—will face unacceptable risks.

The IAAI respectfully urges the Congressional Fire Services Caucus to oppose the proposed cuts and use your voice to preserve the ATF as a critical component of the USDOJ.

While the IAAI recognizes the current administration's efforts to reduce government spending through agency budget cuts, the proposed 25.7% reduction to the ATF is particularly concerning—especially when compared to the more modest proposed cuts of 5.12% to the FBI and 4.35% to the DEA. The IAAI strongly recommends restoring ATF funding to FY 2025 levels or, at a minimum, ensuring that any reduction is consistent with the approximately 5% cuts proposed for other DOJ law enforcement agencies.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and for your steadfast support of the nation's public sector fire and explosion investigation and prosecutorial community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anne Stone".

Anne Stone
Executive Director
International Association of Arson Investigators (IAAI)