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Congressman Says New Office Would Cut Gun Trafficking, Make City Safer

Washington, DC - Following through on his pledge to crack down on gun trafficking, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) today announced that he has secured Congressional endorsement of his plan to establish an Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) satellite office in Jersey City. Rothman successfully used his position as a member of the Treasury-Postal Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee to ensure that the final spending bill for Fiscal Year 2003 included a clause that names Jersey City as a site where Congress would like an ATF satellite office. No other city received a specific endorsement.

“Getting Congress to support the establishment of an ATF satellite office in Jersey City is a major victory for the city’s residents who have been victimized by guns and forced to deal with people illegally smuggling guns in from out of state and selling them on Jersey City’s streets,” said Rothman, who last year organized a meeting in his Washington, DC office between himself, ATF Director Bradley Buckles, and Jersey City Mayor Glenn Cunningham to request a stronger ATF presence in Jersey City. “With a satellite office in Jersey City, the ATF will be able to focus on tracing the sources and paths of these illegal weapons, stopping future weapons from entering the city, and bringing to justice those who illegally bring guns into our community.”

The call for the ATF office does not guarantee the office will be opened in Jersey City, but it makes it very likely, especially since the agency received the \$11 million from Congress that it had requested for office expansion. The ATF is a law enforcement agency that is part of the U.S. Department of Justice and is under the budgetary control of Rothman’s Treasury-Postal Appropriations Subcommittee. The ATF’s responsibilities include protecting the public, reducing violent crime, and collecting overdue revenue. ATF enforces the federal laws and regulations relating to alcohol, tobacco products, firearms, explosives, and arson.

“By bringing in ATF officers who specialize in tracking weapons, we are saying to gun traffickers that you run and hide all you want, but your days of endangering and threatening the people of Jersey City and Northern New Jersey are over,” said Rothman, who noted that 85 percent of the weapons used in traceable gun crimes in Jersey City are brought in from outside New Jersey. “As Jersey City continues to grow and flourish, it is imperative that we continue to crack down on gun crime in order to keep our people safe and to improve the overall quality of life for our city residents.”

The call for an ATF satellite office in Jersey City was included in the final appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2003 that President Bush signed into law on February 20. On February 13, the House approved the measure by a margin of 338-83 and the Senate approved it by a margin of 76-20.

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