



U.S. Department of Justice

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco,
Firearms and Explosives

www.atf.gov

April 17, 2023

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MEMORANDUM TO: All ATF Employees

FROM: ATF Director

SUBJECT: Recruitment of Friends and Family for Special Agent Positions

In 2013, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) granted ATF "Schedule B" excepted service appointing authority to recruit and hire Special Agents. This authority recognizes the unique challenges of recruiting applicants that require the specialized skills and characteristics necessary to succeed as a law enforcement officer. ATF employees are in a unique position to identify potential applicants and may recruit, refer, and encourage potential applicants to seek employment as an ATF Special Agent. There are times when an ATF employee may also have a personal relationship with that recruit. While that alone is not a problem, care must be taken not to improperly bias ATF's neutral and fair hiring policies because of an employee's personal feelings. That danger is especially strong in the case of familial relationships.

All applicants seeking employment with ATF, without exception, must undergo a thorough and neutral pre-employment selection process. This process must remain fair and free from improper influence. Seeking to improperly influence the hiring process based on a close personal or familial relationship is not permitted and may result in a prohibited personnel practice, 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(7). It could also violate the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch. Employees have an obligation to act impartially, 5 C.F.R. § 2635.502, and an obligation not to use their public office for the private gain of themselves or others, 5 C.F.R. § 2635.702. Such conduct is not permitted at ATF.

This memorandum is not intended to discourage ATF employees from encouraging people they know with the requisite skill set to seek employment with ATF. However, ATF employees must be mindful to avoid taking any improper action to ensure the appointment, based on that personal relationship.

Any questions about recruitment of friends and family should be directed to the Office of Chief Counsel, Management Division at: (202) 746-7980.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'SMD', with a large, sweeping loop at the end.

Steven M. Dettelbach