



ATF director lambasted for not defining 'assault weapon': 'Why is he leading the agency?'

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Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) Director Steve Dettelbach came under fire on Tuesday for once again failing to provide a definition to the term "assault weapon" despite leading the government agency dealing with firearms.

Dettelbach appeared before a House Appropriations subcommittee where he was questioned by Rep. Jake Ellzey, R-Texas, to define an assault weapon.

"As a gun owner of many different types and a 20-year military veteran, I have some expertise in weaponry and self-defense weapons. In 15 seconds, would you define an 'assault weapon' for me?" Ellzey asked.



ATF Director Steve Dettelbach appeared at a House subcommittee hearing on Tuesday. (House Committee)

"I'll go shorter than that, because honestly, if Congress wishes to take that up, I think Congress would have to do the work, but we would be there to provide technical assistance. I, unlike you, am not a firearms expert to the same extent as you maybe, but we have people at ATF who can talk about velocity of firearms, what damage different kinds of firearms cause, so that whatever determination you chose to make would be an informed one." Dettelbach answered.

EDUCATION SECRETARY CARDONA TAKES VEILED DIG AT DESANTIS, GOP LEADERS: 'BAN ASSAULT WEAPONS, NOT BOOKS'

Dettelbach's denial to give a definition as well as his past support for an assault weapons ban was blasted by Twitter users as proof of his ineptitude.

"ATF Director Dettelbach, 'I'm not a firearms expert...' So why is he leading the agency responsible for overseeing federal firearms law?" Florida State Board of Education member Ryan Petty asked.

Attorney Kostas Moras wrote, "He admits he isn't a firearms expert, and I appreciate that honesty. But then, why is he head of the ATF? Does he know a lot about alcohol or tobacco or something?"

Townhall.com columnist Derek Hunter joked, "If it looks like anything Stallone, Schwarzenegger, Statham or Willis ever held in a movie it is scary and needs to be banned."



Steve Dettelbach was confirmed as Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives in July. (MANDEL

NGAN/AFP via Getty Images)

"Biden's ATF Director wants an 'assault weapons' ban but can't define an assault weapon and says he's not an expert on guns like the Veteran/Congressman asking him is. Again, this guy leads the agency focused on alcohol, tobacco and FIREARMS. Lunacy," Director and producer Robby Starbuck blasted.

"He's not an expert but he'll eagerly propose regulation to be followed like law anyway," conservative radio host Dana Loesch tweeted.

Rep. Troy Nehls, R-Texas, agreed, "Joe Biden's ATF Director just testified in a Congressional hearing that he's not a firearms expert. Wow. Maybe the ATF shouldn't be regulating your firearms then."

BIDEN TAKING HEAT AFTER CALLING FOR 'ASSAULT WEAPONS' BAN: 'IT'S TIME FOR YOUR NAP'

During Dettelbach's Senate confirmation hearing in May 2022, he was questioned on his previous support for an assault weapon ban during his bid for Ohio attorney general in 2018. Dettelbach acknowledged that he did not define the term during the time despite suggesting gun restrictions.

"When I was a candidate for office, I did talk about restrictions on assault weapons. I did not define the term. And I haven't gone through the process of defining that term," Dettelbach said.



Many Democratic figures have recently renewed calls for an assault weapons ban. (ATF)

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"I think it's very telling that you're nominated to lead the ATF and you don't have a definition of assault weapon. And point is that there is really no such thing as a category of weapons known as assault weapons," Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., said.

Dettelbach was later confirmed in July on a 48-46 vote.

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