Inspections of Firearms Sellers Under the White House's 2021 Zero Tolerance Policy

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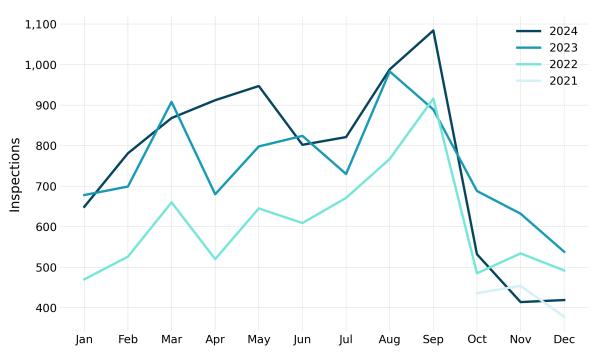
This document shares key findings from my analysis of publicly available Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) inspection data. The ATF, which conducts the nation's inspections of licensed firearms sellers (Federal Firearms Licenses or FFLs), launched these limited data on its website soon after the White House announced its "zero tolerance" policy.

The Biden Administration announced this policy in June 2021, explaining that it had zero tolerance for "rogue gun dealers" and planned to "crack down" on them with increased inspections as part of a wider gun control and public safety strategy. So I examined the number of inspections from October 2021 through 2024 to measure the ATF's response under the Biden Administration.

The Number of Inspections Grew from 2022 to 2024

The number of ATF inspections grew each year. Figure 1 shows this increase, accounting for seasonal patterns. The ATF inspected firearms sellers (known as Federal Firearms Licensees) the most during late summers.

Figure 1.



The Number of Inspections Varied by Field Office

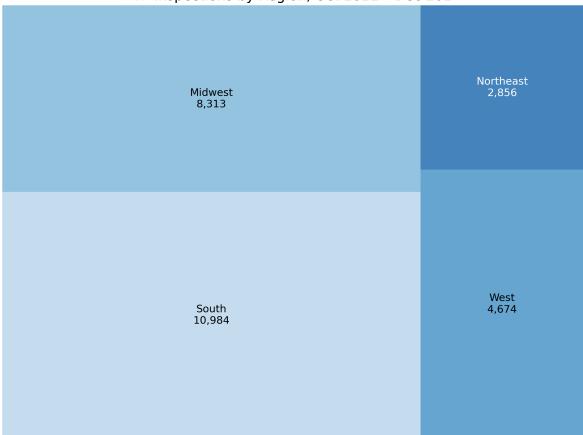
Dallas, Kansas City and Columbus—cities in the south and midwest—had the most inspections over the full period of data (Figures 2 and 3). Field offices in the west and northeast tended to have fewer inspections. These differences are likely because ATF field offices receive more funding when they have more licensees in their area. ATF has likely set up more offices where they have more licensees.

Figure 2.

ATF Inspections by Office, Oct 2021 - Dec 2024 Newark Detroit Philadelphia 796 632 St. Paul New York 446 363 Columbus 2,822 Denver **New Orleans** Washington 529 Seattle 513 852 Atlanta 644 591 Miami Louisville San Francisco Nashville Kansas City 878 747 751 747 3,049 Charlotte Boston Tampa 1,050 1,179 1,148 **Dallas** 3,217 Chicago 1,200 Houston Phoenix 1,927 1,556

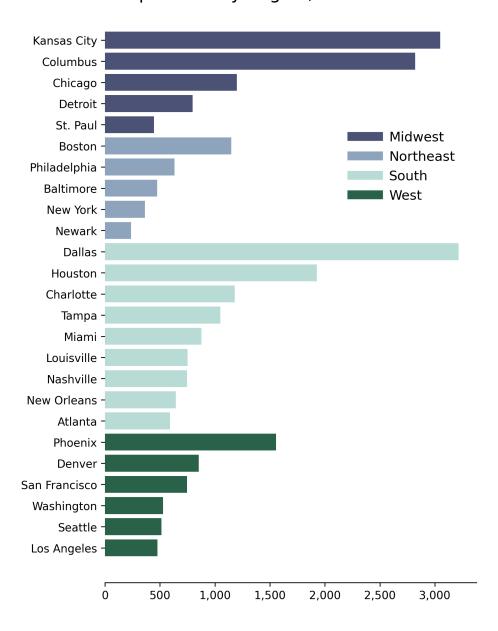
Figure 3.

ATF Inspections by Region, Oct 2021 - Dec 2024



Looking at offices by region in Figure 4 shows more offices in the south than the other regions.

ATF Inspections by Region, Oct 2021 – Dec 2024



Inspection Results Also Varied by Field Office

Field offices that issued the most warnings and revoked the most licenses (Figures 5 and 6) were similar to those that had the most inspections (Figure 2). These similarities suggest that so-called rogue gun dealers are not concentrated in or attracted to any particular area.

Figure 5.

ATF Warnings by Office. Oct 2021 - Dec 2024

ATF Warnings by Office, Oct 2021 - Dec 2024										
Kansas City 43 Miami 49	Louisville 24	Seattle 13	Philadelphia 12	San Francisco 8 St. Paul 9		Newark 5 Atlanta 6				
	Charlotte 25	New York 14	Detroit 12	Los Angeles N 12		lew Orleans 10				
	Boston 28	Baltimore 20	Chicago 19		Н	Houston 19				
Dallas 68	Washington 30	Nashville 29		(Columbus 28					
	Tampa 41	Denver 41			Phoenix 34					

Figure 6.

ATF Revoked Licenses by Office, Oct 2021 - Dec 2024

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Washington 30	Miami 21	Houston 14	San Francisco 8		Newark 4 Atlant Los Angeles ³	
			New York 10		4 Baltimore 7	
Charlotte 43	Chicago 21	St. Paul 16 Philadelphia 12		hia	Seattle 11	
	Detroit 22	Nashville 20	Louisville 19		Denver 19	
Kansas City 60	Columbus 24	Dalla: 23	5	Boston 22		
	Phoenix 30	New Or 28	w Orleans 28		Tampa 25	