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## **National Criminal Justice Leaders Call Federal Omnibus Appropriations Bill a Threat to Public Safety**

### ***67 percent cut in Criminal Justice Funding Will Have Drastic Effects***

Cuts to criminal justice programs nationwide are expected after Congress passed the FY08 omnibus appropriations bill. The bill includes a \$350 million, or 67 percent cut in the Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program. The JAG program funds multi-jurisdictional drug and gang task forces, substance abuse prevention and treatment, courts, prosecutors, justice information sharing initiatives, sex offender management, mental health treatment programs, community corrections, rehabilitation, offender reentry and juvenile justice programs. Wisconsin is set to lose \$4.3 million of critical justice funding from the cuts to the Byrne/JAG program.

“Let there be no room for doubt, communities everywhere will see the effects of this bill and its cuts to criminal justice funding,” said David Steingraber, executive director of the Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance and president of the National Criminal Justice Association. “A cut to the JAG program is a cut to local law enforcement and victims of crime everywhere. Congress has just made the job of every police officer in this country more difficult.”

At least 75 percent of every JAG dollar goes directly to local sheriffs’ and police departments. The JAG program is a highly successful program that enjoys broad support within the criminal justice community. State, local and tribal jurisdictions depend on this program to provide critical funds used to fight violence and drugs and to support crime victims.

“Members of Congress have turned their backs on local law enforcement officers who are now forced to make due without significant federal assistance,” Steingraber said. “It is our hope these drastic cuts are not a long-term solution to a federal fiscal problem. The safety of our nation is far too important and deserves adequate funding, with violent crime back on the rise.”

Based in Washington, D.C., the NCJA represents state, tribal and local governments on crime control and public safety issues. The NCJA Advisory Council, the association's governing body, is comprised of high-level state and tribal officials designated as their jurisdiction's representatives on the Council. Members of the Advisory Council represent attorneys' general offices, juvenile justice departments, universities, state, tribal and local law enforcement agencies, local criminal justice administrative offices, as well as state and tribal criminal justice planning and administrative offices.