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Criminal Justice Community Applauds Inclusion of Byrne JAG Funding in House Version of the Stimulus

January 15, 2009 - Members of the criminal justice community cheered today's announcement that House Democrats have included \$4 billion for state and local law enforcement, including \$3 billion for Byrne Justice Assistance Grant program, in their version of the economic stimulus bill.

These funds will help states and local communities combat reported spikes in crime linked to the economic downturn. In addition, the \$1 billion for the COPS hiring grant program will allow communities to hire 13,000 new police officers for three years.

The Byrne Justice Assistance Grant program (Byrne JAG) is the cornerstone federal crime-fighting program, enabling communities to target resources to their most pressing local needs. Byrne JAG funds the people who fight the crime: drug task force officers, police investigators, prosecutors, crime and forensic analysts, public defenders, victims' services counselors, among others.

The FY08 omnibus appropriations bill cut the Byrne JAG by 67%, from \$520 million in FY07 to \$170 million in FY08, dealing a crippling blow to crime-fighting efforts nationwide.

"Safe communities are the foundation of a growing economy, and increased Byrne JAG funding will help state and local governments hire officers, add prosecutors and fund critical treatment and crime prevention programs," said NCJA President David Steingraber, executive director of the Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance. "I applaud the stimulus bill proposed by the House Democrats and press Congress for its quick approval."

Based in Washington, D.C., the National Criminal Justice Association (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.

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