

# THE CASE FOR FUNDING BYRNE JAG IN A STIMULUS BILL

## BACKGROUND

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 and laying off crime-fighting personnel in jurisdictions nationwide.

## BYRNE JAG CREATES JOBS

Fully 75 percent of the Byrne JAG formula funding is used to create and sustain jobs across the entire criminal justice system. These are family-supporting jobs in the public, private and non-profit sectors in both urban and rural areas.

States report a wide variety of jobs would be created by Byrne JAG funding in a stimulus bill:

*Victim service providers • Juvenile and adult probation officers • Drug and Alcohol counselors • Law enforcement officers and other staff • IT personnel • Prosecutors • Forensic criminalists and forensic scientists • Judges • Public defenders • Administrative Clerks • Drug Investigators • Gang Investigators • K-9 Officers • Criminalists • Research analysts • Child abuse investigators • Court Administrators • School Resource Officers • DARE Officers • Special Victims Unit Investigators • Victim Advocates • State prisons and regional jail personnel • Domestic violence investigators and prosecutors • Support staff • Computer crime analysts • DNA lab specialists • Victim service providers • Juvenile and adult probation officers • Drug and Alcohol counselors • Law enforcement officers and other staff • IT personnel • Prosecutors • Forensic criminalists and forensic scientists • Judges • Public defenders • Administrative Clerks • Drug Investigators • Gang Investigators • K-9 Officers • Criminalists • Research analysts • Child abuse investigators • Court Administrators • School Resource Officers • DARE Officers • Special Victims Unit Investigators • Victim Advocates • State prisons and regional jail personnel • Computer crime analysts • DNA lab specialists • Domestic violence investigators and prosecutors • Support staff • Computer crime analysts • DNA lab specialists*

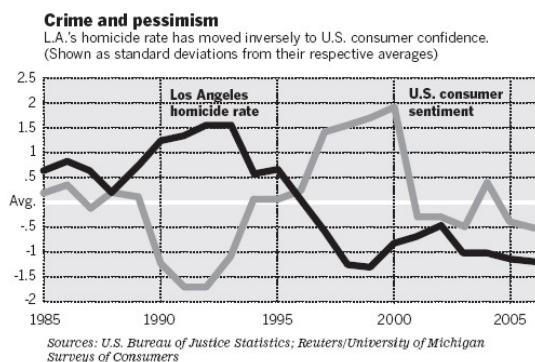
## BYRNE JAG WORKS

Byrne JAG funded initiatives work to prevent and fight crime. Thirty-four state criminal justice agencies responding to a survey found:

- **457 multi-jurisdictional task forces** supported
- **113,834 arrests** made;
- **6.5 million pounds** of drugs seized worth over **\$10.1 billion**;
- **2,445 meth labs** dismantled;
- **128 specialty and drug courts** funded which served **5,865 offenders**;
- **596 prevention programs** funded which served over **102,036 youth**; and
- **236 victim services programs** funded which helped **184,068 victims**.

## CRIME PREVENTION IS AN URGENT PRIORITY WHEN THE ECONOMY FALTERS

When people are worried about the economy, crime rises. Research has shown a relationship between consumer confidence and certain crimes.<sup>1</sup> Crime rises when consumers become pessimistic. With the Consumer Confidence Index at an all-time low<sup>2</sup>, Congress must restore funding for the Byrne JAG program so communities have the tools they need to fight this rising crime.



*“...a failing economy increases the temptations of crime. Worried consumers do not necessarily resort to street crime. But some will resort to buying stolen goods when they can no longer afford the prices at Target or Wal-Mart. As that demand increases, so does the incentive for the street criminals who supply underground markets. Other factors contribute too, but sooner or later more robberies, thefts and other crimes drive up homicide rates. ... But the computers, data analysts, tactical squads and “hot spot” patrols that are the hallmarks of today’s policing are costly.”* – “The Economics of Crime: Why LAPD Chief Bratton is wrong to take responsibility for the uptick in homicides”, LA Times, March 20, 2008.

*“Every recession since the late ’50s has been associated with an increase in crime...”*

– Richard Rosenfeld, professor of criminology, University of Missouri-St. Louis.

## COMMUNITIES NATIONWIDE ARE REPORTING SPIKES IN CRIME

Many communities are reporting spikes in crime, including domestic violence, linked to the economic downturn. The U.S. Conference of Mayors reported in August that “more than four in 10 of the survey cities report that they are seeing increased crime as a result of current economic conditions.”<sup>3</sup> At the same time, local law enforcement is being forced to cut back as budgets have been squeezed.

CNN has reported that “U.S. police departments are streamlining patrols, reducing training and cutting back on some preventative programs as their budgets fall victim to the struggling economy.” – “Police face cuts as economy falters,” Kevin Bohn, CNN, October 23, 2008.

USA Today found that “[t]he collapse of U.S. financial markets is forcing deep cuts in local police agencies and stoking fears among police chiefs that mass home foreclosures are bringing more crime to suburbs. Problems created by the financial meltdown are starting to touch everything from police response times to unsolved crimes.” – “Police agencies fear more crime in financial crisis,” Kevin Johnson, USA Today, October 16, 2008.

<sup>1</sup> Rosenfeld, Richard and Robert Fornango. 2007. “The Impact of Economic Conditions on Robbery and Property Crime: The Role of Consumer Sentiment.” *Criminology* 45: 735-769.

<sup>2</sup> Survey results from The Conference Board at <http://www.conference-board.org/>.

<sup>3</sup> “2008 Economic Downturn and Federal Inaction Impact on Crime, Mayors and Police Chiefs: 124 Cities Report to the Nation”, August 6, 2008