

February 26, 2018

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Culberson
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable José Serrano
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Cochran, Shelby, Culberson, Frelinghuysen, and Ranking Members Leahy, Shaheen, Lowey, and Serrano:

Thank you for Congress' recent passage of the FY18 Continuing Resolution that raises the budget caps for FY18 and FY19 defense and non-defense discretionary spending. This funding is needed to sustain critical non-defense discretionary programs that help to support and protect our communities nationwide. As you turn now to fully appropriate these funds, the undersigned organizations urge you to protect and sustain funding for the key justice assistance grant programs within the Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), Office of Violence Against Women, and COPS Office in the final FY18 and FY19 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies appropriations bills, including subcommittee allocations robust enough to accommodate these programs. Each of these programs supports the federal government's crucial role in spurring innovation, as well as testing and replicating evidence-based practices nationwide.

Federal funding to support such programming has declined steeply in recent years. Since FY10, the state and local justice assistance grant programs have been cut by up to 40 percent, with several programs cut much more deeply. These reductions come at a cost; many proven programs and new innovations to protect victims, prevent crime, and reduce recidivism are being curbed or eliminated entirely. Further, reductions in these programs would put public safety at risk and retreat from Congress's commitments to funding programs that improve state, local and tribal justice systems, advance best practices, reduce costs, and help achieve an effective balanced justice system overall.

The criminal justice system can only be successful and fair if all parts of the system – prevention, enforcement, courts, corrections, victim assistance, and community-based interventions and supports – are in balance, utilize effective strategies, and measure performance. Furthermore these innovations have led to a reduction in homicides and rape kit backlogs; specialized victims services; an effective collaboration between victim service providers and law enforcement; and a range of programs to improve outcomes related to reentry, youth justice, wrongful conviction, mental illness and addiction, and other challenges faced by communities nationwide.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration of this very important issue. We look forward to working with you as you complete the FY18 appropriations bill and begin the FY19 appropriations process.

Sincerely,

Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies (ASCIA)
American Psychological Association
Arizona Gang Investigators Association, Inc.
Association of Prosecuting Attorneys
Break the Cycle
Campaign for Youth Justice
Center for Children's Law and Policy
Center for Court Innovation
Center for Employment Opportunities
Coalition for Juvenile Justice
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA)
Council of State Governments Justice Center
Forum for Youth Investment
Futures Without Violence
Healthy Teen Network
Innocence Project
International Community Corrections Association
International Outlaw Motorcycle Gang Investigators Association
International Union of Police Associations
Just Detention International
Justice Consultants, LLC
Justice Policy Institute
Justice Programs Office, American University
Juvenile Justice Coalition (Ohio)
Juvenile Law Center
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Legal Action Center (LAC)
Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)
Major Cities Chiefs Association
Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA)
Midwest Gang Investigators Association
NAACP

National Alliance of Gang Investigators Associations
National Association of Drug Court Professionals
National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies
National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Congress of American Indians
National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
National Crime Prevention Council
National Criminal Justice Association
National District Attorneys Association
National Domestic Violence Hotline
National H.I.R.E. Network
National Juvenile Justice Network
National League of Cities
National Network for Youth
National Network to End Domestic Violence
National Youth Employment Coalition
North Carolina Gang Investigators Association
Pretrial Justice Institute
Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN)
Safer Foundation
School Social Work Association of America
SEARCH, The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics
SparkAction
The Sentencing Project
Treatment Communities of America
YWCA USA