

November 5, 2018

The Honorable Jeff Sessions  
Attorney General of the United States  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Sessions:

We, the undersigned national groups representing a broad cross-section of the criminal and juvenile justice systems, thank you for your strong and consistent leadership, in the Senate and now at the Department of Justice, for federal assistance to state, tribal and local criminal justice programming. In particular, we applaud your steadfast support for the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) and the COPS Hiring programs and respectfully request full funding for these program in the Administration's FY20 budget request to Congress.

The Byrne JAG and COPS programs are the cornerstone of the federal government's support for state and local law enforcement. Since their inception, the Byrne JAG and COPS programs have provided urgently needed resources and tested new strategies for reducing crime and recidivism.

Byrne JAG powers innovation in states and local communities. Its flexibility is its strength, allowing states and local governments to address their most pressing challenges and fill gaps across the entire criminal and juvenile justice systems – in law enforcement, courts, prosecution, indigent defense, corrections, prevention, treatment, victim assistance, and other community supports. In recent years, states and localities have been able to draw upon Byrne JAG funds to jumpstart their efforts to fight the crisis of opioid misuse. This flexibility is the hallmark and the advantage of the Byrne JAG program.

Byrne JAG grants also serve as a catalyst for collaboration within communities and across states, including the critical role multijurisdictional drug task forces play in targeting regional drug trafficking organizations. This cross-jurisdictional model is being replicated in states across the country to tackle other cross-boundary crimes, such as human trafficking and cybercrime, while saving money and increasing efficiency in the process.

Likewise, the COPS Office and its corresponding programs provide invaluable resources and technical assistance to state and local law enforcement agencies, keeping our communities safe. Sufficient funding is critical to ensuring that law enforcement has the resources necessary to effectively and efficiently protect the public, because in recent years law enforcement agencies have experienced shrinking budgets and difficult decisions concerning operational readiness and number of officers on patrol.

Funding for Byrne JAG has been reduced by Congress by one-third and the COPS Hiring program by one-half since FY10, causing a serious contraction in the reach of Byrne JAG-funded programs and law enforcement officer hiring across the states and territories. Additional reductions will further

hinder our ability to prevent and deter a rise in violent crime, confront the opioid epidemic, and reduce recidivism.

We very much appreciate your leadership in fighting for law enforcement including for the strong, vibrant and fully funded Byrne JAG and COPS programs. We thank you for your steadfast support and respectfully request full funding for Byrne JAG and COPS Hiring in your Fiscal Year 2020 budget request to Congress.

Sincerely,

*Addiction Policy Forum*  
*American Academy of Forensic Sciences*  
*American Association of Psychiatry and the Law*  
*American Board of Forensic Toxicology*  
*American Correctional Association*  
*American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees*  
*American Jail Association*  
*American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors*  
*American University Justice Programs Office*  
*Association of Prosecuting Attorneys*  
*Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies*  
*Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America*  
*Consortium of Forensic Science Organizations*  
*Council of State Governments*  
*International Association for Identification*  
*International Association of Chiefs of Police*  
*International Community Corrections Association*  
*International Union of Police Associations*  
*Justice Research & Statistics Association*  
*Local Initiatives Support Corporation*  
*Major Cities Chiefs Association*  
*Major County Sheriffs' Association*  
*National Alliance of Gang Investigators' Associations*  
*National Association of Counties*  
*National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards*  
*National Association of Medical Examiners*  
*National Association of Police Organizations*  
*National Association of Pretrial Service Agencies*  
*National Association of Social Workers*  
*National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors*  
*National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators*  
*National Conference of State Legislatures*  
*National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges*  
*National Crime Prevention Council*  
*National Criminal Justice Association*

*National District Attorneys Association*  
*National Fusion Center Association*  
*National League of Cities*  
*National Narcotics Officers Associations Coalition*  
*National Organization for Victim Assistance*  
*Police Foundation*  
*PreTrial Judicial Institute*  
*Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network*  
*Society of Forensic Toxicologists*  
*Stop Child Predators*  
*U.S. Conference of Mayors*