

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 26, 2013

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski
Chairwoman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science
Washington, DC 20510

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

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski and Vice Chairman Shelby:

In light of the President's request for Congress to put 15,000 law enforcement officers on the street following the tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut, we write to request that you fund the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Hiring Program at a minimum of \$257 million—the amount requested in the President's FY 2014 budget—in the fiscal year (FY) 2014 Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations bill.

In the wake of the horrific event in Newtown and the other mass shootings in recent years, the President called on Congress to help communities keep 15,000 cops on the beat. In doing so, the President underscored the importance of maintaining police officer staffing levels to reducing gun violence. In addition, the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing and the continued gun violence in many cities underscore the critical need for increased police protection in our communities. While we understand the difficult budget environment you are facing, please remember that the Brookings Institution found the COPS Program to be “one of the most cost-effective options available for fighting crime.”

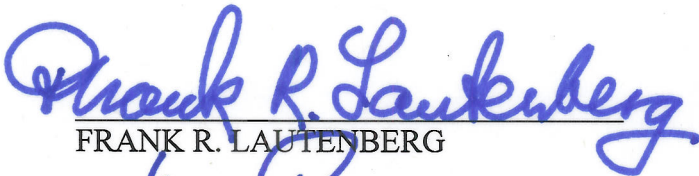
Since its creation in 1994, the COPS Hiring Program has put more than 123,500 community officers on the beat. When officers walk the streets, they establish positive relationships with the community they serve, which in turn increases their ability to solve local crimes and resolve public safety problems. Having officers on the ground in communities also facilitates cooperation and collaboration between law enforcement agencies and parents, teachers, and other community members to keep at-risk youth from falling into a life of crime and incarceration. By employing this proactive approach to policing to prevent crime from occurring in the first place, the COPS Hiring Program saves taxpayers the high costs associated with incarceration and services for victims. Additionally, during this period of continued efforts to rebuild the economy, appropriate funding for the COPS Program will help to make our communities safer while also immediately putting people to work.

The COPS Program advances community policing in ways beyond hiring more officers, and those efforts need our continued support as well. For instance, the COPS Office provides training and technical assistance to educate law enforcement officers on community policing best practices.

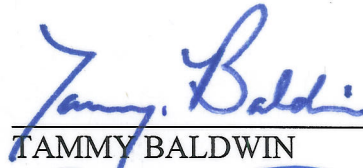
We are supported in this request by law enforcement organizations representing state, local, and tribal law enforcement officers across the nation, including the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, Fraternal Order of Police, Major County Sheriffs' Association, National Troopers Coalition, and National Association of Police Organizations. This request is also supported by the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

The Department of Justice's COPS Program has been effective in helping to reduce gun violence, and we owe it to our communities to do everything we can to help protect them from crime and violence. It is clear that by making a commitment to the COPS Program in the FY 2014 Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations bill, we will continue to help our communities reap the benefits of lower crime rates and safer communities. Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to working with you on these important issues during the FY 2014 appropriations process.

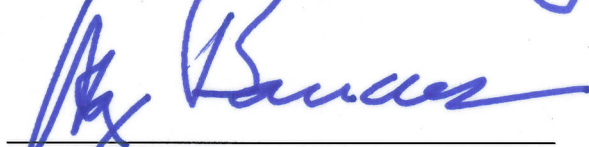
Sincerely,



FRANK R. LAUTENBERG



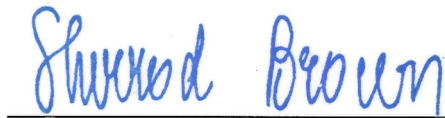
TAMMY BALDWIN



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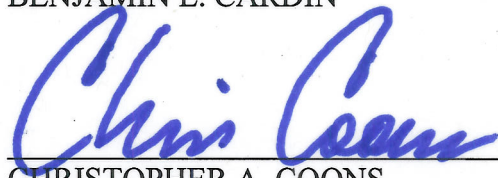
SHERROD BROWN



BENJAMIN L. CARDIN



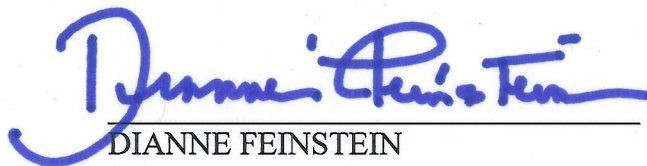
ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.



CHRISTOPHER A. COONS



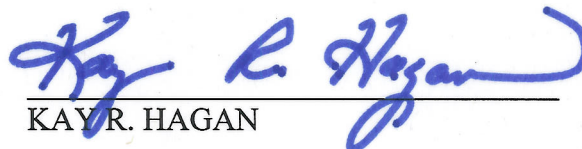
RICHARD J. DURBIN



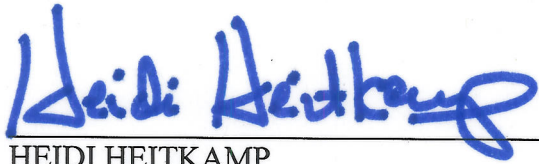
DIANNE FEINSTEIN



KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND



KAY R. HAGAN



HEIDI HEITKAMP



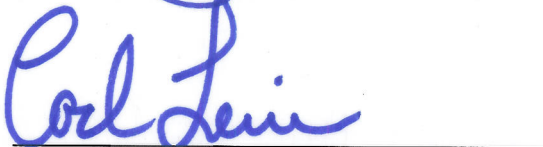
TIM JOHNSON



AMY KLOBUCHAR



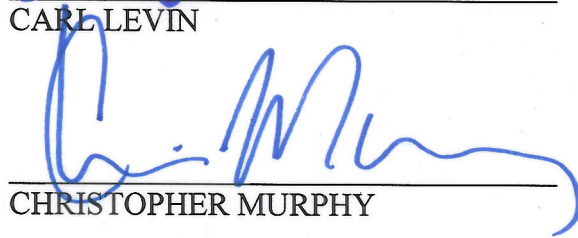
PATRICK LEAHY



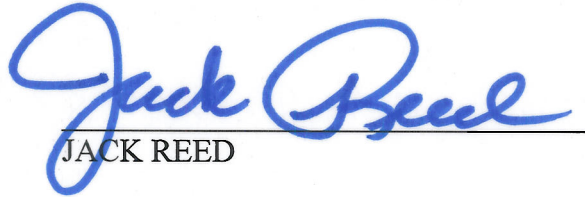
CARL LEVIN



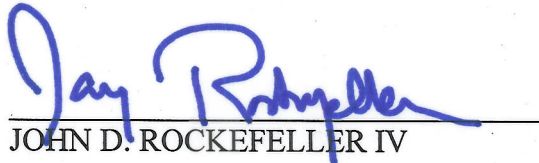
JEFFREY A. MERKLEY



CHRISTOPHER MURPHY



JACK REED



JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER IV



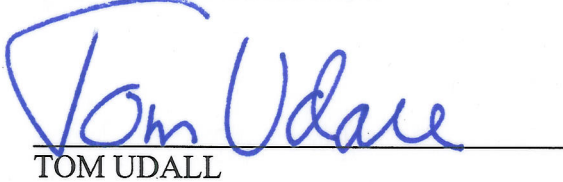
BERNARD SANDERS



CHARLES E. SCHUMER



DEBBIE STABENOW



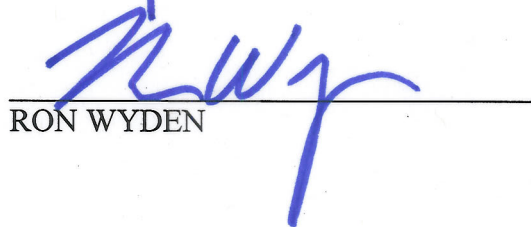
TOM UDALL



ELIZABETH WARREN



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