

March 15, 2012

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairwoman, Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice
Science and Related Agencies
503 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison
Ranking member, Senate Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
284 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Frank Wolf
Chairman, House Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science
Science and Related Agencies
241 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chaka Fattah
Ranking member, House Appropriations
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
2301 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators and Congressmen:

We, the undersigned national groups representing a broad cross-section of the criminal and juvenile justice systems, thank you for your strong, consistent and thoughtful leadership in the United States Congress on federal assistance to state and local evidence-based criminal justice programming. We recognize the many competing pressures as you prioritize funding across the Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (CJS) bill and among agency programs, and we appreciate how difficult it has been to protect the Department of Justice grant programs from catastrophic cuts. For that, we thank you. As you know, the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) program has been reduced by nearly one-third over the past two fiscal years. We write to ask that Byrne JAG be spared from further cuts in the FY13 appropriations bill.

Byrne JAG is the cornerstone federal crime-fighting program, supporting the federal government's crucial role in spurring innovation, as well as testing and replicating evidence-based practices nationwide. States and localities use Byrne JAG to test emerging and evidence-based approaches to the public safety challenges in their jurisdictions. Because Byrne JAG is flexible, states and local communities are able to use Byrne JAG to address needs and fill gaps across the entire criminal justice system. This is a hallmark of the Byrne JAG program and one that is vitally important. Criminal justice is a system, the activities and priorities of one component impact the activities and priorities of the other components. Only when the system is functioning as a seamless whole can public safety truly be protected, and Byrne JAG is used to keep the system functioning in balance.

A recent survey by the National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA) of the State Administering Agencies (SAAs) found that states and territories invest Byrne JAG dollars broadly across the criminal justice system, as follows:

- 52 percent for law enforcement (including operations, multi-jurisdictional task forces, equipment, overtime, information technology, juvenile delinquency prevention, anti-gang programs, etc.)
- 10 percent for prosecution and courts (including problem-solving courts and defense)
- 7 percent for prevention and education

- 10 percent for corrections and community corrections
- 8 percent for drug treatment and enforcement
- 10 percent for technology, planning and evaluation
- 3 percent for crime victim and witness programs

Further, nearly two-thirds of the states and territories invest in at least four of these seven purpose areas as set out in the Act. The state agencies generally award these dollars through a peer reviewed, competitive application process to local government agencies. The number of sub-grantees varies widely by state, of course, ranging from under 10 to over 200.

In partnership with the Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs (OJP), SAAs are engaged in a concerted strategy to invest Byrne JAG dollars in evidence-based, evidence-generating, and research-supported programs. In tough economic times, it is more important than ever that Byrne JAG grants support proven strategies for steering children away from delinquent behavior, effective incarceration and treatment strategies, and meaningful support services to individuals returning to their communities after incarceration. Byrne JAG is also the catalyst for new and enduring collaborations within communities and across states, including the critical role Byrne JAG-funded multijurisdictional drug task forces play in rising above a focus on day-to-day street crime in order to target larger, regional drug trafficking organizations.

Byrne JAG works. According to data from the Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), Byrne JAG grantees and subgrantees reported the following from October 2008 through September 2011:

- Over 5,000 drug trafficking organizations disrupted
- 27,048 firearms seized
- 2,612 federal forfeiture cases filed
- 19,066 state forfeiture cases filed
- Over 500,000 hours of overtime paid to police, prosecutors, social workers, clinical staff
- Nearly 156,000 individuals completed anti-bullying programs, drug prevention programs, community seminars about the court system and laws, at-risk youth summer camps, residential programs for alcohol and/or substance abuse problems, reentry, and other programs
- 7,739 gang members arrested for a felony
- 2,909 gang members arrested for a misdemeanor

Additionally, Byrne JAG-funded task forces reported the following for the time period July 2010 through July 2011:

- Large seizures (busts) accounted for the majority of all drugs seized, especially cocaine
- Nationwide, approximately 600 multi-jurisdictional task forces supported
- 2.3 million pounds of drugs reported seized:
 - 2,787 lbs. (1,264 kg) of heroin
 - 67,380 lbs. (30,558 kg) of cocaine (crack and powder combined)
 - 2,191,459 lbs. (993,859 kg) of marijuana
 - 21,752 lbs. (9,865 kg) of methamphetamine
 - 518 lbs. (235 kg) of ecstasy

We come together on this letter, not simply to support a popular program, but to ask that you recognize the central role Byrne JAG plays in preventing victimization and fighting crime in neighborhoods across our country and in leveraging other federal, state, local and private dollars to support the balanced functioning of the criminal justice system. We ask that Byrne JAG be spared from further cuts this year. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,



Kristen Mahoney
President
National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA)



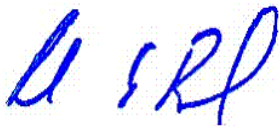
Sheriff Paul Fitzgerald
President
National Sheriffs Association (NSA)



Darrel W. Stephens
Executive Director
Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA)



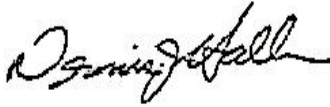
Richard W. Stanek
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President, Major County Sheriffs' Association (MCSA)



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Lenny Eliason
President
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Michael Thompson
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Council of State Governments Justice Center (CSG)



Tim Murray
Executive Director
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William J. Johnson
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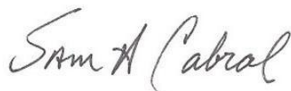
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National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO)*



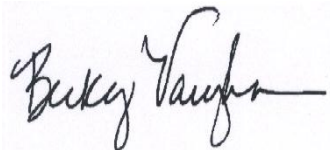
*Richard A. Neimiller
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American Jail Association (AJA)*



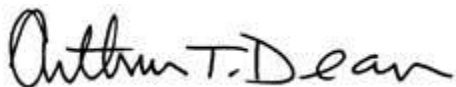
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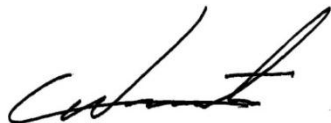
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West Huddleston
Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director
National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP)



Philip D. (Duane) Steen
President
National Alliance of State Drug Enforcement Agencies (NASDEA)

cc: Senator Thad Cochran, Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
Members of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and
Related Agencies
Representative Hal Rogers, Chair, House Appropriations Committee
Members of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and
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