

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 26, 2021

The Honorable Matt Cartwright
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cartwright and Ranking Member Aderholt,

As you begin to craft the Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (CJS) appropriation bill for Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22), we respectfully urge you to include increased funding for the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) Program and the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) programs, including the COPS Hiring Program. Together, these programs are critical to ensuring state and local law enforcement have the training, tools, and personnel necessary to protect and serve their communities. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to strain police departments across the nation, ensuring these programs receive increased funding must be a priority.

The Byrne JAG and COPS programs are the cornerstone of our federal justice assistance programs. Since their inception, Byrne JAG and COPS grants have enabled law enforcement agencies to better protect their communities and promote community policing initiatives that form vital bonds between officers and those they serve. As Congress considers proposals to improve and reform policing, these programs will serve as critical tools to allow departments to fund trainings for de-escalation, use of force, implicit bias, and other initiatives to ensure officers are fully equipped to protect and serve consistent with community expectations.

The strength of the Byrne JAG program is in its broad impact across the criminal justice system. Byrne JAG grants are used in states and communities across the country for a variety of important initiatives, including improved tools and technologies, crime prevention and education, mental health and substance use disorder treatment, drug and other specialty courts, alternatives to incarceration, prosecution and indigent defense, crime victim and wellness initiatives, recidivism reduction programs and services designed to stop the cycle of crime, and trainings to improve community policing efforts.

The COPS programs provide invaluable resources to hire community policing professionals, develop and test innovative policing strategies, and provide training to community members and local law enforcement. Since 1994, the COPS Office has invested more than \$14 billion to help advance community policing. Increased funding is critical to ensuring that law enforcement has the resources necessary to continue these important community policing efforts that build bonds and make our communities safer.

Support for the Byrne JAG and COPS programs is imperative to the safety of our communities and continued efforts to improve policing in our nation, yet funding for both programs have been cut over the past decade and must be restored to previous levels. These programs provide critical federal dollars to build upon successful crime reduction efforts and ensure officers maintain strong relationships with their communities. For these reasons, we respectfully request that you include increased funding for the Byrne JAG and COPS programs in the FY22 CJS appropriations bill.

Sincerely,



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



John Rutherford
Member of Congress

List of Signatories

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