

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) and National H.I.R.E. Network  
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 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