

Dear Chairman Culberson and Ranking Member Serrano,

Thank you for your ongoing and diligent efforts to appropriately rebalance limited resources in order to support our nation's highest priorities. As you begin to craft the Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (CJS) appropriation bill for Fiscal Year 2018, we respectfully urge you to include sufficient funding for the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) Program and the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) programs, in particular the COPS Hiring program. These programs are critical to ensuring that state and local law enforcement have the tools, personnel and resources necessary to protect and serve their communities, including in efforts to prevent further gun violence.

The Byrne JAG and COPS programs are the cornerstone of our federal justice assistance programs. Since their inception, the Byrne JAG and COPS programs have enabled law enforcement agencies to form vital partnerships among communities and law enforcement officers, combat criminal activities, and develop and implement problem-solving and crime prevention programs nationwide.

The strength of the Byrne JAG program is in its impact across the criminal justice system, from law enforcement to prosecution and courts, crime prevention and education, corrections and community corrections, drug treatment and enforcement, program planning, evaluation, technology improvement, and crime victim and witness initiatives. 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 experience shrinking budgets and difficult decisions concerning operational readiness and number of officers on patrol.

We appreciate the difficulty you face in appropriating adequate resources for the programs under your jurisdiction, and we thank you for your work. Support for the Byrne JAG and COPS Hiring programs is imperative to the safety of our communities. These programs supplement the manpower and incentivize the collaboration across agencies necessary to build upon successful crime reduction efforts over the past 20 years. For these reasons, we respectfully request that you include strong funding for the Byrne JAG and COPS programs, especially the COPS Hiring program, in the FY2018 CJS appropriations bill.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.