

June 26, 2006

The Honorable Lee Terry
United States House of Representatives
1524 Longworth Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mark Kennedy
United States House of Representatives
1415 Longworth Building
Washington, DC 20515

**RE: SUPPORT FOR BYRNE JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT (JAG)
FORMULA PROGRAM AMENDMENTS**

Dear Congressmen Terry and Kennedy,

On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of law enforcement professionals and public servants our organizations represent, we are writing to express our strong support for amendments that you will offer during floor debate on FY 2007 SSJC appropriations that would increase funding for the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) formula program.

The Byrne JAG program is one of the most important tools criminal justice agencies have in fostering cooperation in the intergovernmental fight against drug trafficking, gang crime, and other community crime. Multi-jurisdictional task forces funded in part by Byrne JAG were responsible for almost 9,000 methamphetamine laboratory responses, almost 5,500 kilograms of meth seized, almost 18,000 kilograms of cocaine seized, and almost 55,000 weapons seized – all in 2004 alone. Despite these outstanding results, funding for this program has been slashed in recent years – from \$1.02 billion in FY 2001 to only \$416 million in FY 2006.

The chairman's mark for the House Budget Resolution for FY 2007 specifies \$900 million for the Byrne JAG program. However, the Science, State, Justice and Commerce (SSJC) appropriations subcommittee included \$367 million for Byrne JAG – an increase of about \$50 million from FY 2006 totals for the formula portion, but still well short of what is needed by state and local law enforcement and what has been authorized by Congress. Just six months ago Congress reauthorized the Byrne JAG program at \$1.1 billion.

Byrne JAG supports effective programs that address gang-related crime, prevent drug use, treat non-violent offenders, and improve the effectiveness of prosecution, courts, and corrections practices. The cooperation and information sharing fostered by Byrne-funded multi-jurisdictional drug task

forces enables state and local law enforcement to be *proactive* in fighting local, regional, and national drug traffickers.

We hope all members of the House will support criminal justice system improvements and fight drug traffickers in our communities by supporting your amendments to increase funding for the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) formula program.

Sincerely,

National Narcotic Officers' Associations' Coalition

National Sheriffs' Association

International Association of Chiefs of Police

National Association of Counties

American Probation and Parole Association

Law Enforcement Steering Committee

National Criminal Justice Association

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America

International Brotherhood of Police Officers

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees

Major County Sheriffs' Association

Major City Chiefs' Association