

March 23, 2023

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science & Related Agencies
United States Senate
506 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science & Related Agencies
United States Senate
521 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science & Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives
2406 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Matt Cartwright
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science & Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives
2102 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Shaheen, Ranking Member Moran, Chair Rogers and Ranking Member Cartwright:

We, the undersigned national organizations representing a broad cross-section of the criminal and juvenile justice systems and impacted communities, thank you for your strong, consistent and thoughtful leadership on federal assistance to strengthen and improve state, tribal and local justice systems. In particular, we thank you for your steadfast support for the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) program and respectfully request that the Fiscal Year 2024 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (CJS) appropriations bill continue to restore funding the program has lost in recent years.

Byrne JAG is the cornerstone federal justice assistance grant program. It is one of the most important tools states and localities have for spurring innovation and for testing and replicating promising practices that make our justice systems more responsive to the needs of their communities. Because Byrne JAG is distributed by formula, it reaches every state and a broad cross-section of local communities, from large urban areas to smaller townships and rural counties. Due to Byrne JAG's flexibility, grantees use these funds to address their most pressing needs as well as to fill gaps across the entire justice system – for crime and violence prevention, law enforcement, courts, specialty courts, prosecution, indigent defense, corrections, community corrections, alternatives to incarceration, mental health and substance use disorder treatment and services, as well as a wide array of reentry programs.

This flexibility is the hallmark and advantage of the Byrne JAG program. It allows states to respond quickly to emerging needs and crises. It also means that states and localities can work across systems. This is helpful, even necessary, when considering alternative-to-incarceration programs, particularly for people with mental health and substance use disorders.

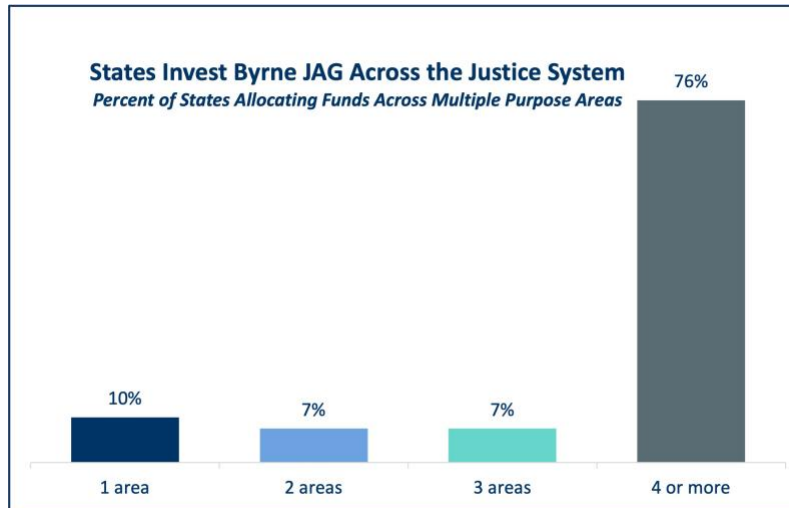
Byrne JAG is a critical resource for preventing and responding to gun violence and other forms of violent crime in urban and rural communities. The funds provide law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and public defenders with resources to implement innovative approaches to violence prevention and intervention, to improve the criminal justice system and build trust within their communities. The grants also allow law enforcement and prosecutor collaboration within communities and across states to target regional drug trafficking organizations and other cross-boundary crimes.

According to a Bureau of Justice Assistance [blog post](#), “The [Byrne JAG] program has supported and promoted improvements in every aspect of the justice system, from policing to prosecution and public defense, to corrections and reentry from incarceration. Its impact on advancing public safety and equal justice has been

consequential.... It is impossible to describe a 'typical' program that is supported by Byrne JAG grants because the program intentionally rejects a one-size-fits-all approach. Instead, public safety agencies design and submit plans that address the unique challenges facing their communities...[and have] latitude to innovate.”

The statute describes the justice system, and authorizes spending, in any or all of nine purpose areas, the ninth having been added by the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act of 2022: (1) law enforcement; (2) prosecution and courts; (3) prevention and education; (4) corrections and community corrections; (5) drug treatment and enforcement; (6) planning, evaluation, and technology improvement; (7) crime victim and witness programs (other than compensation); (8) mental health programs and related law enforcement and corrections programs, including behavioral programs and crisis intervention teams; and, (9) implementation of state crisis intervention court proceedings and related programs or initiatives, including but not limited to mental health courts, drug courts; veterans courts; and extreme risk protection order programs.

Data reported by the State Administering Agencies shows the vast majority of states extend the reach of Byrne JAG program dollars across the justice system. Three-quarters (76 percent) distribute at least a portion of the dollars in four or more purpose areas, and 13 states reported investing in all purpose areas.



In addition, in December 2022, Congress passed and President Biden signed S. 4003, the [Law Enforcement De-escalation Training Act of 2022](#). This new legislation directs the Department of Justice to identify best practices in de-escalation training and law enforcement/mental health treatment partnerships. It authorizes \$20 million in FY24 for these purposes and to support train-the-trainer trainings nationwide and a new grant program that will flow through the Byrne JAG formula program beginning in FY 2025.

As evidenced by the signatories below, Byrne JAG has the broad support of a dedicated coalition of national organizations from across the criminal and juvenile justice systems, including impacted communities. We recognize the central role Byrne JAG plays in preventing victimization, supporting innovative law enforcement practices, advancing the fair administration of and access to justice, serving and protecting crime victims, improving outcomes for the justice-involved, interrupting the cycle of crime, and leveraging other federal, state, local and private dollars in the balanced functioning of the criminal justice system.

We recognize the competing pressures you face as you seek to prioritize funding for the many important programs in the CJS bill. Funding for Byrne JAG was reduced by over one-third over several years beginning in FY10 which caused a serious contraction in the reach of Byrne JAG-funded programs. We are grateful for steady increases in the past several years. For these reasons we respectfully request in the Fiscal Year 2024 CJS appropriations bill a

return to the FY10 funding of \$520 million for the Byrne JAG formula program plus \$20 million and direction to the COPS Office to begin implementation the Law Enforcement De-escalation Training Act.

Sincerely,



Jessica Hulsey
President and CEO
Addiction Policy Forum (APF)



Penny Rosen, LCSW-R, BCD-P
AAPCSW Board Member
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work



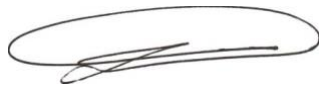
Laurel Stine, J.D., M.A.
Executive Vice President and Chief Policy Officer
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention



Chris Daniels
Executive Director
American Jail Association (AJA)



Veronica Cunningham
Executive Director
American Probation and Parole Association (APPA)



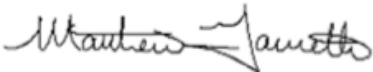
David LaBahn
President/CEO
Association of Prosecuting Attorneys (APA)



Mark Keel
President
Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies (ASCIA)



Naomi Evans
Executive Director
Coalition for Juvenile Justice (CJJ)



Matthew Gamette
Chair
Consortium of Forensic Science Organizations (CFSO) on behalf of its members:
American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS)
American Board of Forensic Toxicology (ABFT)
American Society of Crime Lab Directors (ASCLD)
International Association for Identification (IAI)
National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME)
Society of Forensic Toxicologists (SOFT)



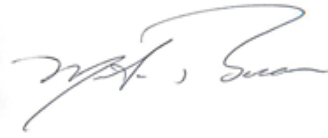
Anne Precythe
President
Correctional Leaders Association (CLA)



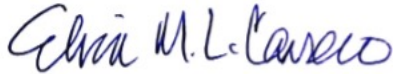
Megan Quattlebaum
Director
The CSG Justice Center (CSG)



Maria M. Cardiellos
Executive Director
IJIS Institute



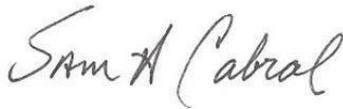
Michael Becar
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International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training (IADLEST)



Elisa Lopez-Canseco
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International Community Corrections Association (ICCA)

David Downey

David Downey
President/CEO
International Downtown Association



Sam A. Cabral
International President
International Union of Police Associations (IUPA)



Julie Abbate
National Advocacy Director
Just Detention International



Matt Josephs
Senior Vice President, Policy
Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)



Laura Cooper
Executive Director
Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA)



Dennis Lemma
Sheriff, Seminole County, Florida
President
Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA)



John Snook
Chief Policy Officer
Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute

Jeffrey Wennar

Jeffrey Wennar
Executive Director
National Alliance of Gang Investigators Associations (NAGIA)



Kevin Hobson
Lieutenant Colonel, Indiana State Police
President,
National Alliance of State Drug Enforcement Agencies (NASDEA)



Hannah Wesolowski
Chief Advocacy Officer
NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness

Jonah C. Cunningham
President/CEO
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors

Matthew D. Chase
CEO/Executive Director
National Association of Counties (NACo)

Carson Fox
Chief Executive Officer
National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP)

Jennifer Sonney, PhD, APRN, PPCNP-BC, FAANP, FAAN
President
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners

William J. Johnson
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National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO)

Jim Sawyer
Executive Director
National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies (NAPSA)



Jonah C. Cunningham
Executive Director
National Association for Rural Mental Health



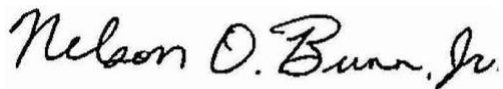
Robert L. Morrison
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Joey Orduna Hastings
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National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ)



Chris Asplen
Executive Director
National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA)



Nelson Bunn
Executive Director
National District Attorneys Association (NDAA)



Clarence Anthony
CEO/Executive Director
National League of Cities (NLC)



Beverly Malone, PhD, RN, FAAN
President and Chief Executive Officer
National League for Nursing



Eric Brown
President
National Narcotic Officers' Associations' Coalition (NNOAC)



Claire Ponder Selib
Executive Director
National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA)



James Burch
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National Policing Institute



Elizabeth A. Cullen
Washington Representative
Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies



Jac A. Charlier
Executive Director
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Wayne Lindstrom

Wayne W. Lindstrom, PhD
Vice President of Consulting & Business Development
RI International

Tom Cochran

Tom Cochran
CEO and Executive Director
The U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM)

cc:

The Honorable Patty Murray, Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Susan Collins, Vice Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Kay Granger, Chair, House Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee
Members of the Senate Appropriations Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Subcommittee
Members of the House Appropriations Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Subcommittee