



June 19, 2025

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Grace Meng
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Moran, Ranking Member Van Hollen, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Member Meng,

On behalf of the Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA), I write to respectfully request your strong support for critical law enforcement programs in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies appropriations measures.

MCSA represents the largest Sheriff's Offices in the United States, serving over one-third of the nation's population. Our members lead agencies in counties with populations exceeding 400,000 and staffs of more than 700 personnel. Every day, we address complex and evolving threats to public safety. To meet these challenges, local law enforcement must have reliable access to federal tools, resources, and collaborative partnerships.

To ensure we can continue to safeguard our communities and respond effectively to today's public safety demands, we emphasize the importance of sustained and increased investment in key programs that are essential to our mission:

National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN)

The National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) should be funded at no less than FY 2023 levels, with additional resources needed to expand capacity, modernize technology, and support trained personnel.

Administered by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), NIBIN is a critical investigative tool that has processed over 6.5 million ballistic entries and produced more than 1

million investigative leads. It enables law enforcement to match ballistic evidence from different crime scenes, identify serial shooters, and develop actionable leads in gun-related investigations. For state and local law enforcement, NIBIN is often the only tool that connects firearm-related crimes across city, county, and even state lines. It helps generate timely intelligence in cases that might otherwise go cold, enhances coordination across jurisdictions, and supports faster apprehension of violent offenders. In many communities - especially those with limited local forensic capabilities - NIBIN serves as a vital force multiplier.

High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) Program

Sustained funding for the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) Program is essential, and the program must remain under the leadership of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). Operating across 33 regions in all 50 states, HIDTA plays a vital role in coordinating efforts among federal, state, and local agencies to disrupt and dismantle major drug trafficking networks. Its success in targeting complex, transnational operations relies on the program's ability to remain flexible and mission-focused. Any restructuring should preserve this operational independence and maintain its strategic placement within ONDCP.

DOJ Grant Programs Supporting Local Law Enforcement

Continued investment in a range of federal grant programs is vital to the safety and effectiveness of local law enforcement agencies nationwide. These programs provide critical support in the areas of crime prevention, officer safety, behavioral health, substance use treatment, forensic science, and victim services.

In addition, federal support is vital for addressing the needs of those experiencing mental health and substance use challenges while reducing recidivism. Programs such as the Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program (COSSUP), Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program (JMHC), and Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) provide coordinated, evidence-based responses for individuals in crisis. Similarly, Second Chance Act grants assist formerly incarcerated individuals in successfully reintegrating into their communities, helping to lower the risk of reoffending.

Officer safety and wellness remain a top priority, supported through a range of vital programs that require sustained funding. The Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) provides life-saving equipment to officers on the front lines, while initiatives such as the Preventing Violence Against Law Enforcement and Ensuring Officer Resilience and Survivability (VALOR) Program and the National Suicide Awareness for Law Enforcement Officers (SAFLEO) Program deliver essential training, peer support, and wellness resources aimed at preventing injury, burnout, and suicide.

Additionally, the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) program offers meaningful financial support to the families of officers who are killed or permanently disabled in the line of duty - recognizing their service and sacrifice.

Equally important are continued investments in forensic science and services. The Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) helps clear testing backlogs and improve investigative outcomes in sexual assault cases, while the Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants strengthen the reliability and capacity of forensic laboratories nationwide.

Finally, the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) provides needed reimbursement to local jurisdictions for the cost of housing undocumented criminal aliens. This program helps ease the financial burden on local governments and ensures continued federal partnership in addressing shared responsibilities.

Training, Technical Assistance, and Equitable Resource Access

Federal investment in training and technical assistance (TTA) is essential to build capacity in law enforcement agencies of all sizes, especially smaller and rural departments. Programs like VALOR have trained over 146,000 officers in life-saving skills, showcasing the critical value of accessible, evidence-based resources.

We also encourage appropriators to prioritize efforts that streamline federal grant processes. Reducing administrative burdens will ensure that more resources reach frontline agencies, allowing them to focus on public safety, training, officer wellness, and operational readiness.

Preserving Distinct Agency Functions and Expertise

We request careful consideration and meaningful engagement with state and local law enforcement as you evaluate potential restructuring of key federal law enforcement agencies. For instance, the ATF and Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) each play unique and complementary roles in combatting violent crime and drug trafficking, so any restructuring should preserve their specialized capabilities and avoid disrupting operational effectiveness.

Similarly, proposals to merge the COPS Office into the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) must be evaluated carefully. While we support greater coordination and efficiency, any changes must retain the specific missions, institutional knowledge, and relationships these offices have built with the law enforcement community over decades. It is critical that decisions regarding agency mergers or program consolidations be informed by the perspectives of the practitioners who rely on these federal partners daily.

The programs and partnerships outlined above are indispensable to local law enforcement's ability to respond to emerging threats, conduct complex investigations, and maintain trust within our communities. Continued federal investment in these initiatives strengthens the entire criminal justice system and delivers direct, measurable public safety outcomes.

We thank you for your steadfast support of the law enforcement community and ask that you prioritize these critical programs in the FY 2026 appropriations process. MCSA stands ready to serve as a resource as you work to ensure that agencies at all levels are equipped to protect and serve effectively.

Respectfully,



Megan Noland
Executive Director