



March 22, 2005

An Open Letter to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees: Follow President Bush’s Lead in Eliminating Federal Law-Enforcement Block Grants

Dear Appropriations Committee Member:

On behalf of the hundreds-of-thousands of members represented by the undersigned organizations, we urge you to adhere closely to the President’s 2006 budget request, which would eliminate the Community Oriented Policing Services program (COPS) and the Byrne Justice Assistance Grants program.

According to the Office of Management and Budget, there is virtually no evidence that either program has been effective in reducing crime. A detailed study conducted in 2002 by the Heritage Foundation found that the COPS program “has not proven successful when its performance has been measured by standards of social science research.”¹ The Heritage study also reported that it is unlikely the program will ever add 100,000 officers to local police forces as originally promised. A similar Heritage study on the Bryne grant program concluded, “there is virtually no evidence” that Byrne grants have been successful in reducing crime and the program lacks “adequate measures of performance.”²

Although it has been shown that police initiatives can reduce crime if they are guided by a clear plan to target resources at a specific problem, simply spending more federal dollars in a vague effort to “put more officers on the streets” has proved to be an ineffective and inefficient use of resources – especially since few of these dollars are allocated on a competitive basis.

Unfortunately, each of these crime prevention grant programs is fatally flawed due to their lack of adequate measures of performance. President Bush has wisely chosen to eliminate funding for both, which would save taxpayers almost a billion dollars a year.

At a time of heightened concern about the security of the nation’s communities, these funds should be employed in initiatives that will have greater impact and accountability. The members of the undersigned groups look forward to working with Congress to ensure that President Bush’s reforms are incorporated in Congress’s final 2006 appropriations bill.

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¹ David B. Muhlhausen, *Research Challenges Claims of COPS Effectiveness*, The Heritage Foundation, April 5, 2002, <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Crime/CDA02-02.cfm>.

² David B. Muhlhausen, *How Congress Can Improve Its Financial Support for Law Enforcement*, The Heritage Foundation, August 12, 2002, available at: <http://heritage.org/Research/Crime/EM827.cfm>.