

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 17, 2020

The Honorable William P. Barr
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

We urge you to use your discretion when awarding federal grants to states and local jurisdictions that have acted to reduce their law enforcement budgets. During these challenging times, our country is facing a lawlessness from well-coordinated groups that completely disregard our country's traditions and institutions. One demand by these groups is for the "defunding" of law enforcement budgets and some jurisdictions have obliged without protest.

Former President Ronald Reagan foreshadowed the catalyst of today's events in his farewell speech. He mentioned the importance of an "unambivalent appreciation of America" and warned the American people that the younger generations were not being taught "well-grounded patriotism." In comparison, he said older generations "were taught, very directly, what it means to be an American, and we absorbed almost in the air of love of country and an *appreciation of its institutions.*" [Emphasis added.]

One of the ways we can appreciate our institutions is choosing not to reward states and local jurisdictions that have reduced law enforcement budgets with additional federal grants. Specifically, the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) program and the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program should not be used as a backdoor means of replenishing budgets that are cut by state and local elected officials. The Byrne JAG and COPS programs have enabled law enforcement agencies to develop and implement crime prevention programs, build partnerships between communities and law enforcement officers, and combat criminal activities nationwide.

Instead of sending Byrne JAG and COPS grants to jurisdictions that intentionally reduce law enforcement budgets, these grants should be used to supplement law enforcement budgets of states and local jurisdictions that make public safety, as well as law and order, a high priority.

We should heed Reagan's warning from his farewell address and work to appreciate America's traditions and institutions. Exercising discretion in awarding Byrne JAG and COPS grants is a good means of carrying this out.

Thank you for your attention to our request. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Bill Posey
Member of Congress



Andy Biggs
Member of Congress