



Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies

April 22, 2019

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
2365 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
The Honorable Pat Leahy
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
304 Russell Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Funding for Department of Justice - Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

Dear Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Granger, Chairman Shelby, and Ranking Member Leahy,

On behalf of the Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies (ASCIA), I am writing to express our strong support for the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) within the Department of Justice (DOJ) and request continued robust funding for the services and programs it supports. ASCIA is a professional association consisting of the senior executives of 48 statewide criminal investigative agencies in the United States, including independent bureaus within states and state police agencies with both criminal and other enforcement responsibilities.

Along with our support for enhanced funding, we believe the COPS Office must remain an independent agency within the DOJ reporting directly to the Attorney General through the Deputy Attorney General, and should not be reorganized as a component falling under the Office of Justice Programs. The unique mission and purpose of the COPS Office - to protect our citizens through the advancement of community policing in our nation's law enforcement agencies - directly supports programs and practices that have led to reduced crime levels and increased public safety. The Administration's proposed FY20 budget would diminish to an extreme degree the ability of the COPS Office to directly assist law enforcement agencies in addressing crime prevention efforts by strengthening and enhancing local policing capabilities.

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Furthermore, as the COPS Office has played an especially vital role in helping to combat the ongoing drug crisis in this country through the COPS Anti-Heroin Task Force Program (AHTF) and COPS Anti-Methamphetamine Program (CAMP), we also stress the need for continued and expanded funding for these important initiatives. As the epidemic of opioid and methamphetamine abuse continues its devastating impact on public health and safety, these COPS Office programs have provided vitally needed grant funding to state-level law enforcement agencies for the investigation of illicit activities related to these drugs.

ASCIA looks forward to continuing our strong and beneficial partnership with the COPS Office. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Keel".

Mark Keel
President, ASCIA
Chief
South Carolina Division of Law Enforcement

CC: The Honorable Lindsey Graham, Senator – State of South Carolina;
The Honorable Tim Scott, Senator – State of South Carolina