



## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF POLICE ORGANIZATIONS, INC.

*Representing America's Finest*

317 South Patrick Street. ~ Alexandria, Virginia ~ 22314-3501

(703) 549-0775 ~ (800) 322-NAPO ~ Fax: (703) 684-0515

[www.napo.org](http://www.napo.org) ~ Email: [info@napo.org](mailto:info@napo.org)

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WILLIAM J. JOHNSON

**Executive Director**

April 30, 2008

The Honorable Robert Byrd  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Byrd and Ranking Member Cochran:

On behalf of the National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO) representing more than 238,000 law enforcement officers throughout the United States, I am writing to respectfully urge you to provide \$489.6 million for the Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne-JAG) program in any supplemental appropriations bill that comes before the Senate. This additional funding would restore the program to the same level previously approved by the Senate of \$660 million in the Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations bill for fiscal 2008.

NAPO is exceedingly concerned about the consequences being faced by America's law enforcement and communities they serve due to the steep cut in funding to the Byrne-JAG program in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008. The \$170 million appropriated by Congress for fiscal year 2008 is insufficient to meet the growing needs of our nation's law enforcement. This deep cut in funding has resulted in the closing of drug and gang task forces in California, Nevada, and Texas and throughout the Mid-West, at a time when these forces were making tremendous strides in the fight against methamphetamine. States and municipalities are being forced to contemplate laying-off law enforcement officers because of tightened budgets due to the lack of Byrne-JAG money. Additionally, cold case units, identity theft investigations, school violence prevention programs, and victims and witness protection services are all now feeling the strain of this cut.

However, this is not only a law enforcement issue; it is also a homeland security issue. Since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks law enforcement officers have taken on additional duties to protect our nation from another attack. As a result, today, local police departments, already understaffed due to the lack of resources to hire new officers, must place officers into Drug, Gang and Terrorism Task Forces, as well as protect critical infrastructure during periods of heightened national threat advisory levels, often at the expense of street patrols. Additionally, many cities and municipalities, because of tight budget constraints, are forcing officers to take on counterterrorism duties on top of their community policing duties, adding to their responsibilities while patrolling the streets.

Over the past 15 years, state and local law enforcement officers and the agencies they serve have made tremendous strides in reducing the level of crime and violence in our communities with the aid of federal assistance and support given to them through the Byrne-JAG program. Additionally, NAPO is proud to report that there has not been a major attack on our homeland since September 11, 2001. This is due in no small part to the tools given to state and local law enforcement through this program that have improved information sharing,

cooperation between departments and agencies, equipment, and training, which, in turn, has led to more effective and efficient law enforcement, better protected communities, and thus a safer nation.

However, the severe cut in funding suffered by the Byrne-JAG program in fiscal year 2008 is already beginning to dismantle the progress law enforcement has made in the fight against crime. Appropriating an additional \$489.6 million for this vital program will help law enforcement sustain and build upon the tremendous strides they have made in keeping our communities safe.

Therefore, NAPO urges you to provide an additional \$489.6 million in funding for the Byrne-JAG program and make supporting our nation's state and local law enforcement a priority. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, or NAPO's Director of Governmental Affairs, Andrea Mournighan, at (703) 549-0775.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William J. Johnson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William J. Johnson  
Executive Director

*The National Association of Police Organizations (NAPO) is a coalition of police unions and associations from across the United States that serves to advance the interests of America's law enforcement through legislative and legal advocacy, political action and education. Founded in 1978, NAPO now represents more than 2,000 police unions and associations, 238,000 sworn law enforcement officers, 11,000 retired officers and more than 100,000 citizens who share a common dedication to fair and effective crime control and law enforcement.*