

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ATTORNEYS GENERAL

2030 M Street, 8th Floor
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036
Phone (202) 326-6000
Fax (202) 331-1427
<http://www.naag.org/>

JAMES E. MCPHERSON
Executive Director

February 4, 2009

PRESIDENT
PATRICK LYNCH
Attorney General of Rhode Island

PRESIDENT-ELECT
JON BRUNING
Attorney General of Nebraska

VICE PRESIDENT
ROY COOPER
Attorney General of North Carolina

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT
LAWRENCE WADDEN
Attorney General of Idaho

Via Facsimile

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John Boehner
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

To the Leadership of Congress:

We, the undersigned Attorneys General, write to express our concern about the severe cuts to the Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grants (Byrne/JAG) that were contained in the FY 2008 omnibus appropriations bill. We ask that you restore the funding that was cut. The Senate had funded the FY 2008 Byrne/JAG program at \$660 million and the House at \$600 million in each of their respective appropriations bills. The omnibus bill that was enacted into law, however, cut the Byrne/JAG program by 67% of its FY 2007 funding level, from \$520 million to \$170 million. These funding cuts have severely impacted law enforcement efforts in our states. If they are not restored this year, additional cutbacks will occur.

Byrne/JAG funds a variety of important programs in our state and territory, including multi-jurisdictional drug enforcement, treatment interventions, police training, technology improvements, crime prevention programs, and crime victims' assistance programs. Byrne/JAG is currently the only source of funding available for multi-jurisdictional drug enforcement, including methamphetamine initiatives, and is critical for drug courts, law enforcement information sharing, gang prevention, and prisoner reentry programs.

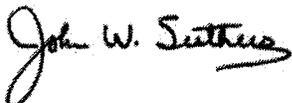
The 67% cut in the Byrne/JAG funding has already forced our law enforcement agencies to shut down multi-jurisdictional drug and gang task forces. If the funding is not restored, we will likely see widespread layoffs of police and prosecutors. Without this funding, programs that have

successfully assisted drug-addicted citizens become productive members of society will be shut down. With the economic downturn and a possible increase in crime due to a weakened economy, the cuts could not have come at a worse time. Additionally, significant budget problems in our states will further hamper our state and local efforts while drug related problems are on the increase.

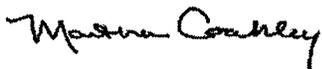
Without law enforcement, drug addicts rarely seek treatment. The National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) estimated that in 1995 untreated drug and alcohol addiction cost the nation \$276 billion in hidden expenses such as lost productivity and crime. Untreated substance abuse adds significant costs to communities including violent and property crimes, prison expenses, court and criminal costs, emergency room visits, child abuse and neglect, lost child support, foster care and welfare costs, reduced productivity, unemployment, and victimization. While NIDA estimated that the cost to society of drug abuse in the year 2002 was \$181 billion - \$107 billion associated with drug-related crime – this decline occurred during generally increased spending on state and local law enforcement assistance programs now consolidated under Byrne/ JAG. Restoration of these funds is critical, as the human cost of drug abuse is even higher and cannot be calculated.

We ask that you restore FY 2008 Byrne JAG funds through whatever supplemental appropriations are appropriate, as well as return to adequate levels for Byrne/JAG funding in FY 2009 and FY 2010 so that we can continue to protect the citizens of our states, territories and of this nation against drug abuse, crime, and violence.

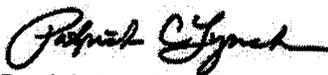
Sincerely,



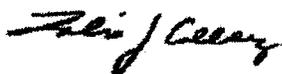
John Suthers
Attorney General of Colorado



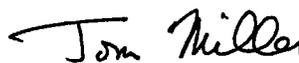
Martha Coakley
Attorney General of Massachusetts



Patrick Lynch
Attorney General of Rhode Island



Talis J. Colberg
Attorney General of Alaska



Tom Miller
Attorney General of Iowa



Jon Bruning
Attorney General of Nebraska



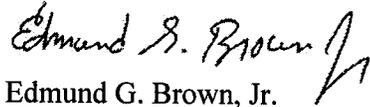
Troy King
Attorney General of Alabama



Terry Goddard
Attorney General of Arizona



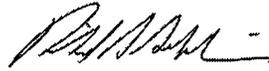
Dustin McDaniel
Attorney General of Arkansas



Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Attorney General of California



Richard Blumenthal
Attorney General of Connecticut



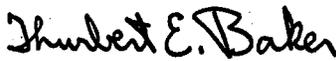
Richard Gebelein
Acting Attorney General of Delaware



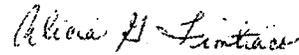
Peter J. Nickles
Attorney General of the District of Columbia



Bill McCollum
Attorney General of Florida



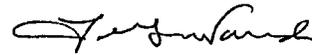
Thurbert E. Baker
Attorney General of Georgia



Alicia G. Limtiaco
Attorney General of Guam



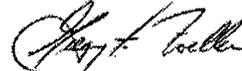
Mark J. Bennett
Attorney General of Hawaii



Lawrence G. Wasden
Attorney General of Idaho



Lisa Madigan
Attorney General of Illinois



Greg Zoeller
Attorney General of Indiana



Steve Six
Attorney General of Kansas



Jack Conway
Attorney General of Kentucky



James D. "Buddy" Caldwell
Attorney General of Louisiana



Janet T. Mills
Attorney General of Maine



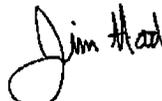
Douglas Gansler
Attorney General of Maryland



Michael A. Cox
Attorney General of Michigan



Lori Swanson
Attorney General of Minnesota



Jim Hood
Attorney General of Mississippi



Chris Koster
Attorney General of Missouri



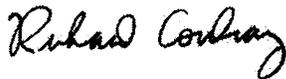
Catherine Cortez Masto
Attorney General of Nevada



Anne Milgram
Attorney General of New Jersey



Roy Cooper
Attorney General of North Carolina



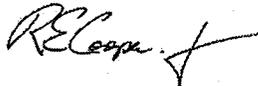
Richard Cordray
Attorney General of Ohio



John R. Kroger
Attorney General of Oregon



Henry McMaster
Attorney General of South Carolina



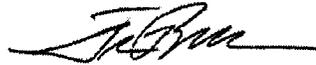
Robert E. Cooper, Jr.
Attorney General of Tennessee



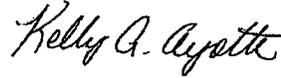
Mark Shurtleff
Attorney General of Utah



Vincent F. Frazer
Attorney General of Virgin Islands



Steve Bullock
Attorney General of Montana



Kelly Ayotte
Attorney General of New Hampshire



Gary King
Attorney General of New Mexico



Wayne Stenehjem
Attorney General of North Dakota



W.A. Drew Edmondson
Attorney General of Oklahoma



Tom Corbett
Attorney General of Pennsylvania



Lawrence Long
Attorney General of South Dakota



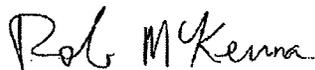
Greg Abbott
Attorney General of Texas



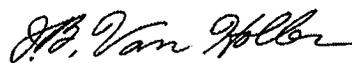
William H. Sorrell
Attorney General of Vermont



Robert F. McDonnell
Attorney General of Virginia



Rob McKenna
Attorney General of Washington



J.B. Van Hollen
Attorney General of Wisconsin



Bruce A. Salzburg
Attorney General of Wyoming

Cc: The Honorable David Obey, Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations;
The Honorable Jerry Lewis, Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations;
The Honorable Alan Mollohan, Chairman, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies, House Committee on Appropriations;
The Honorable Frank R. Wolf, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, House Committee on Appropriations;
The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye, Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations;
The Honorable Thad Cochran, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Appropriations;
The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski, Chairman, Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, Senate Committee on Appropriations;
The Honorable Richard C. Shelby, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, Senate Committee on Appropriations;
The Honorable John Conyers, Jr., Chairman, House Committee on the Judiciary;
The Honorable Lamar Smith, Ranking Member, House Committee on the Judiciary;
The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman, Senate Committee on the Judiciary;
The Honorable Arlen Specter, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on the Judiciary