

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4904

January 30, 2008

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

A year ago, I wrote to urge you to include in your budget proposal the fully authorized funding levels for the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program and the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant program. In light of the detrimental cuts these programs have suffered in the past several years, and particularly in fiscal year (FY) 2008, I write again to encourage you to include adequate funding for these essential state and local law enforcement programs in your budget proposal.

In recent years, I have heard repeatedly from law enforcement officials in my state that they are concerned about the increase in violent crime rates in their communities. Indeed, according to the 2006 FBI Uniform Crime Report, violent crime in Wisconsin increased by 18.1%. Unfortunately, the preliminary statistics for 2007 recently released by the FBI indicate that these rates have continued to rise in both Milwaukee and Green Bay.

In this time of rising crime, it is critically important that we provide sufficient federal funding for state and local law enforcement agencies. The federal government, in partnership with states and local communities, has a responsibility to provide the tools, technology, and training that our nation's law enforcement officers need to protect our communities. A major source of this federal support is the range of federal grant programs already in place. For example, the COPS Program is instrumental in providing funding to train new officers and purchase crime-fighting technologies, and the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Program provides funding to help fight violent and drug-related crime in a variety of ways—including support for multi-jurisdictional drug task forces, drug courts, drug education and prevention programs, and many other efforts to reduce drug abuse and prosecute drug offenders. These programs have been very important to Wisconsin law enforcement efforts.

But these programs have not been sufficiently funded for several years. Adequate federal funding for COPS, Byrne, and other such programs is essential to the stability

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and success of police departments across Wisconsin and across the country. In conversations with me about the rise in the violent crime rate, law enforcement officials in my state have, more than anything else, emphasized the importance of adequately funding these programs. Yet your Administration has, over the past seven years, consistently sought to severely cut or even eliminate funding for these critical programs. While law enforcement agencies have been tirelessly fighting to control the rising violence problem, the Administration has been undermining these efforts by cutting the very funds that helped lead to the law enforcement successes and accompanying low crime rates of the 1990s.

As you prepare your proposal for the FY 2009 federal budget, I ask you to support restoring funding for these important federal crime-fighting grant programs back to the levels that our state and local law enforcement partners need. Specifically, I ask that you include in your budget proposal the authorized amount of \$1.05 billion for the COPS program, and \$1.095 billion for the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant program. The federal government cannot afford to ignore either the recent startling increase in violent crime, or our responsibility to share the burden of fighting it. I would be happy to work with you to ensure that this spending is provided in a fiscally responsible manner.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Russell D. Feingold". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Russell D. Feingold
United States Senator