Dear Chairman Moran and Vice Chairwoman Shaheen:

We write to thank you for your strong and consistent support of the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) program in the past. We write to ask that you maintain funding for the program in the fiscal year 2020 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS) appropriations bill.

As thoughtful stewards of taxpayer money, we must continually assess where federal support is necessary and appropriate. It is clear to us that the strong foundation of federal, state, and local partnerships built from the Byrne JAG program remains as vital as ever as our nation continues to battle the opioid and heroin epidemic.

One of the highest responsibilities of government is to protect its citizens and ensure public safety. We are concerned that regional, national and international gangs and drug trafficking organizations are increasingly driving the crime on our streets, embedding criminal activity deeper into our rural communities, and driving a dangerous new wave of heroin and fentanyl addiction across the country. Byrne JAG-funded programs facilitate cross-governmental intelligence and information sharing on terror and criminal threats, drug and human trafficking organizations, and sexual predators. This collaboration is essential to address today’s criminal networks that cross city, state and even international boundaries.

Nationwide, the overall crime rate is at its lowest level since the 1960s due in part to advances in policing, information technology, offender management, and cross-jurisdictional coordination supported by the Byrne JAG program. However, violent crime is on the rise again, reminding us that we must never become complacent when it comes to the safety of our citizens. Federal support for Byrne JAG and state and local law enforcement is our first line of defense against criminals and the Byrne JAG program is vital in combating crimes of all types.

Through Byrne JAG, the Department of Justice (DOJ) plays a crucial role in spurring innovation and testing cost-effective, evidence-based approaches to fighting crime and reducing recidivism. With over 18,000 law enforcement agencies in the U.S., cross-jurisdictional learning and coordination cannot happen effectively without federal support.

Furthermore, crime prevention and control can be truly successful only when the criminal justice system is in balance, with all of the parts functioning effectively. Byrne JAG’s flexibility allows
state and local governments to target their most pressing needs in law enforcement, prevention, pretrial services and treatment, courts, corrections, crime victims’ services, prosecution and defense, and post-incarceration reentry services. Byrne JAG also leverages the massive investment that already occurs regularly in these programs at the state and local level.

We know of your steadfast commitment to the Byrne JAG program in years past, and we ask for your continued support in the fiscal year 2020 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS) appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

Chuck Grassley
CHARLES E. GRASSLEY
United States Senator

John Cornyn
JOHN CORNYN
United States Senator

James M. Inhofe
JAMES M. INHOFE
United States Senator

Bill Cassidy, M.D.
BILL CASSIDY M.D.
United States Senator

Thom Tillis
THOM TILLIS
United States Senator

Edward J. Markey
EDWARD J. MARKEY
United States Senator

Brian Schatz
BRIAN SCHATZ
United States Senator

Maria Cantwell
MAYA CANTWELL
United States Senator

Martin Heinrich
MARTIN HEINRICH
United States Senator

Mazie K. Hirono
MAZIE K. HIRONO
United States Senator

Angus King, Jr.
ANGUS S. KING, JR.
United States Senator

John Hoeven
JOHN HOEVEN
United States Senator
M. MICHAEL ROUNDS  
United States Senator

RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
United States Senator

JOHNNY ISAKSON  
United States Senator

CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY  
United States Senator

MARSHA BLACKBURN  
United States Senator

CATHARINE CORTEZ MASTO  
United States Senator

KEVIN CRAMER  
United States Senator

TINA SMITH  
United States Senator

MARTHA MCSALLY  
United States Senator

KAMALA D. HARRIS  
United States Senator

THOMAS R. CARPER  
United States Senator

DIANNE FEINSTEIN  
United States Senator

TIM KAINE  
United States Senator

ROBERT MENENDEZ  
United States Senator

CHRIS VAN HOLLEN  
United States Senator

SHELDON WHITEHOUSE  
United States Senator