

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 14, 2013

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski
Chairwoman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski and Ranking Member Shelby:

In light of the President's request for Congress to put 15,000 law enforcement officers on the street following the tragedy in Newtown, we are writing to request that the legislation that funds the Department of Justice for the remainder of Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 provide funding for the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) hiring grants at the highest possible level, and at no less than the \$215 million level included in the Senate Appropriations Committee-reported bill. The House of Representative's version of the bill included only \$40 million for this program, which would severely shortchange this vital program.

Following the horrific massacre in Newtown, Connecticut and other recent mass shootings, the President delivered recommendations to reduce gun violence in America. In calling on Congress to help communities keep 15,000 cops on the street, the President recognized that a significant step we can take to reduce gun violence is to keep police officers on the job. The COPS hiring program has been shown to help reduce violent crime, and we owe it to our communities to do everything we can to help slow the scourge of gun violence that has devastated so many.

The Department of Justice's COPS hiring program has been effective in reducing gun violence and increasing safety in our communities. Since its creation in 1994, the COPS program has put more than 123,000 community officers on the beat. When officers walk the streets, they establish partnerships with the community which in turn gives them greater ability to solve local crime problems. Officers on the ground in local communities also facilitate collaboration with parents, teachers, and other community members to keep at-risk youth from slipping into vicious crime cycles.

Recent gun violence tragedies in Newtown and throughout the country have underscored the need to put more officers on the beat, and we therefore ask that the final FY 2013 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill support the President's request to increase law enforcement officers by including as much funding as possible for the COPS hiring program.

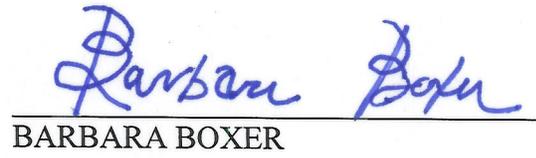
We are supported in this request by law enforcement organizations from across the nation, including the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, Fraternal Order of Police, International Union of Police Associations, Major County Sheriffs' Association, National Narcotics Officers

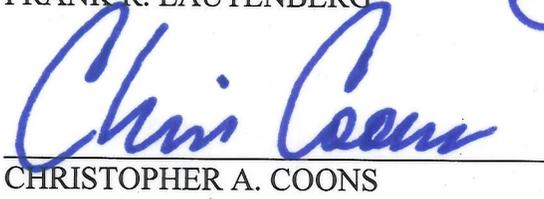
Association Coalition, and National Troopers Coalition. This request is also supported by the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

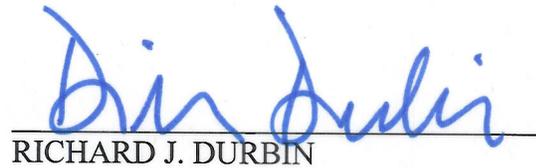
Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to continuing to work with you on these important issues during the FY 2013 appropriations process.

Sincerely,


FRANK R. LAUTENBERG


BARBARA BOXER

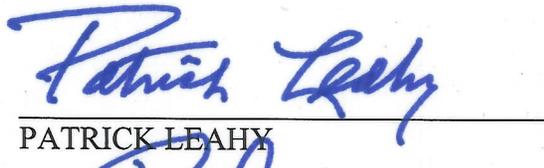

CHRISTOPHER A. COONS


RICHARD J. DURBIN

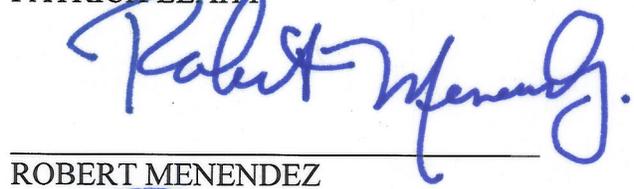

AL FRANKEN


TIM JOHNSON

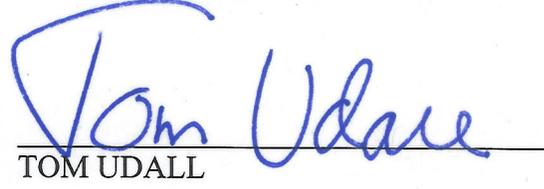

AMY KLOBUCHAR

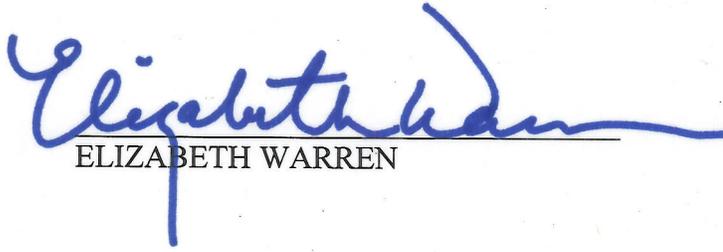

PATRICK LEAHY


CARL LEVIN


ROBERT MENENDEZ


JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER IV


TOM UDALL


ELIZABETH WARREN


SHELDON WHITEHOUSE