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June 11, 2008

TO: California Congressional Delegation

RE: Support H.R. 3546 to Reauthorize Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program

On behalf of California's 478 cities and 58 counties, the League of California Cities (League) and California State Association of Counties (CSAC) are writing to urge you to cosponsor H.R. 3546 to authorize the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program at fiscal year 2006 levels through 2012. This important legislation would expand federal resources to support local and state government crime fighting efforts by funding a broad range of law-enforcement programs from drug and gang task forces and community crime prevention and substance abuse treatment programs to prosecution initiatives that assist victims of crime.

The Byrne/JAG program is a critical and effective tool in state and local law enforcement efforts. According to data compiled by the National Criminal Justice Association for the 2004 grant year, task forces funded in part by Byrne/JAG grants were responsible for: 54,050 weapons seized; 5,646 methamphetamine labs seized; and \$250 million in cash and personal property seized, not including the value of narcotics seized. Unfortunately, federal funding for these justice assistance programs has been dramatically reduced in recent years with a correspondingly measurable impact. After years of steady decline FBI reports for 2005 showed a rise in violent crime in every region of our country—an overall increase of 2.5 percent, the largest reported increase in violent crime in the U.S. in 15 years.

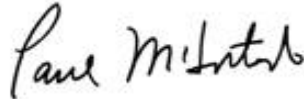
The Byrne/JAG program has a clear role to play in addressing America's growing violent crime problem. A national integrated threat demands a national integrated response, with state and local law enforcement leading the way and the federal government providing support to enable state and local leaders to leverage additional resources. A review of programs around the country reveals that some Byrne/JAG-funded task forces receive between \$30 and \$40 from State or local sources for every Federal dollar they receive. Passage of this important legislation will serve to expand these vital resources, enable greater federal, state and local law enforcement cooperation and help reverse the trend of increasing violent crime in California and the nation.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue for California. We look forward to working closely with you in advancing the legislation.

Sincerely,



Christopher McKenzie
Executive Director
League of California Cities



Paul McIntosh
Executive Director
California State Association of Counties