

CUTS TO BYRNE/JAG IN THE FY08 OMNIBUS

ESTIMATED IMPACT ON ARIZONA

BYRNE/JAG FUNDING SLASHED IN FY08 OMNIBUS FUNDING BILL

- The FY08 omnibus appropriations bill cut the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne/JAG) program by 67%, from \$520 million (in FY07) to \$170 million in FY08. This is an all-time low for a program that has received \$500 million consistently since 1997.
- This was a drastic behind-the-scenes cut; the FY08 House-passed bill provided \$600 million; the Senate bill provided \$660 million.
- Arizona's state-funded programs expect to see a decrease from \$5.6 million in FY07 to an estimated \$1.7 million in FY08.

ABOUT THE BYRNE/JAG PROGRAM IN ARIZONA

Byrne/JAG is a comprehensive criminal justice grant program that allows states flexibility in determining funding priorities. In Arizona, the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission allocates the funding according to a statewide strategy that also incorporates state and local dollars to maximize the use of public dollars to combat drugs, gangs and violent crime.

Funded programs include:

- 16 narcotics task forces (comprised of a total of 200 personnel for all areas)
- 15 tandem prosecution programs
- Funding to the courts (including the probation departments) to correspond with the increased caseload
- Funding to the state and municipal crime labs to assist with lab work for drug analysis and other related costs
- Funding for criminal history records improvement projects.

The results of the work performed by the funded programs included:

- Seizing 276,906 pounds of marijuana, 83,656 marijuana plants, 421 pounds of methamphetamine, 1,899 pounds of cocaine and 15,200 grams of heroin
- Discovery and dismantling of 16 methamphetamine labs
- Arrest of 5,220 drug offenders.

WHAT IS AT STAKE FOR ARIZONA?

- Drastic funding cuts have a disparate impact on rural counties, which comprise most of the land mass in Arizona. The loss of Byrne funding would result in dismantling of several rural task forces, leaving tens of thousands of miles without coordinated narcotics intervention efforts. Given Arizona's unwanted role as a major trafficking corridor for narcotics smuggled from international origins, the loss of these task forces have implications nationally, not just for Arizona.
- Because the multi-jurisdictional task forces often include local, state, federal law enforcement officers in co-located settings, reducing or losing these task forces will result in a loss of shared intelligence. Again, given that Arizona is ground zero for much of the nation's international drug and human trafficking, this has national implications.
- The year 2007 was one of the deadliest for law enforcement officers in recent history, with 194 officers killed in the line of duty. Five officers in Arizona died, and 2008 opened with the death of a federal law enforcement officer in Yuma. At a time when crime rates and officer fatalities are on the rise, cutting criminal justice funding is counter-productive and erodes the government's primary responsibility to the citizenry: public safety.
- The state of Arizona is in fiscal crisis—the state legislature is trying to counter a \$1 billion shortfall in revenue. Subsequently, state dollars distributed with Byrne/JAG funds under a state-wide strategic plan are at risk of being swept into the general fund by the legislature, further crippling the state's enhanced drug and gang enforcement program.