



# THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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July 23, 2011

The Honorable John Boehner  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Democratic Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Leader Pelosi:

Assembled in Los Angeles for the Summer Leadership of The U.S. Conference of Mayors, we write to urge that Congress provide at least current funding for the COPS Hiring grants next year. The bill reported out of the Appropriations Committee would eliminate the COPS Office and its programs entirely. At a time when cities are being forced to lay off police officers, these cuts to such a critical source of support for local police departments are unconscionable.

Among those departments which have applied for COPS grants in recent years, 11.6 percent have had to lay off sworn officers this year, up from 5.65 percent one year ago. Further 43 percent of these departments have had to impose hiring freezes on sworn officer positions, up from 26 percent one year ago. Over the last three years, the COPS Office has gotten requests to save almost 8,000 sworn positions that either had recently been cut or were about to be cut.

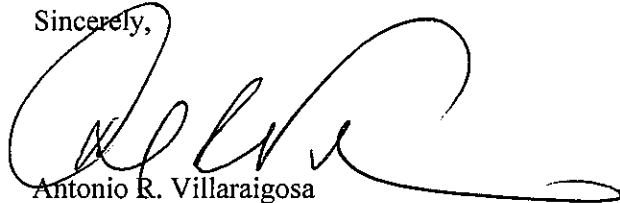
In the latest of round of COPS grants, the Office received \$2 billion in requests for just over 9,000 officers. If the agencies which applied for these funds had not had to limit their funding requests to 50 officers, the demand would have been much greater: \$5.3 billion in requests for 22,194 officers. With the funding available this year the COPS Office expects to make grants for 1,000 to 1,200 officers to approximately 400 departments. These are real jobs for real people who work every day to protect our cities and our residents.

Compounding the proposed cut in COPS funding are cuts and eliminations proposed for other programs which provide critical assistance to cities. The Byrne Justice Assistance Grant, which provides flexible funds to police departments which they can use to meet their greatest needs, would be funded at \$357 million, 16 percent below this year's level and 30 percent below last year's level. The State Criminal Alien Assistance Program, which provides reimbursement to state and local governments for some of the costs of incarcerating criminal aliens, would be eliminated. We urge that these programs be funded at least at this year's level as well.

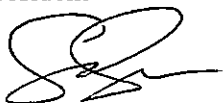
It is important to note that the Commerce, Justice, Science appropriations bill would cut state and local law enforcement programs disproportionately – by 39 percent. They would be reduced by \$1.1 billion next year, more than the total cut to the U.S. Department of Justice. While we understand the severe fiscal constraints facing the Committee, we are confident that needed funding reductions could be spread more equitably across the Commerce, Justice, Science spending bill.

It is ironic that these cuts are proposed at the same time that some cities are being forced to make cuts in public safety operations to balance their budgets. Public safety is the last thing we should be putting on the chopping block. The proposed cuts to the federal government's primary sources of support for local police departments are untimely and ill advised, and a threat to public safety.

Sincerely,



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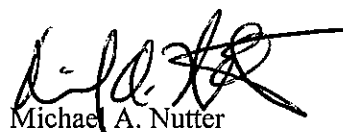
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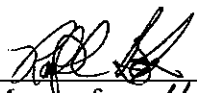
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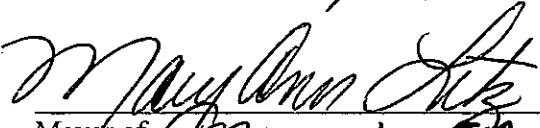
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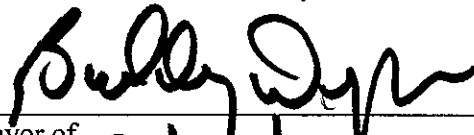
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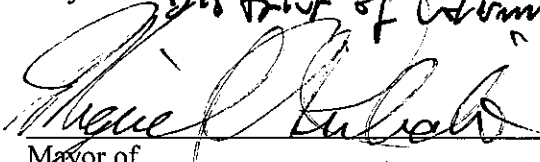
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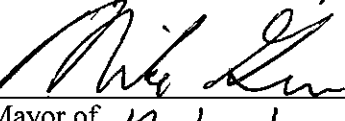
  
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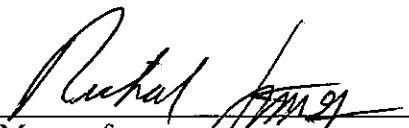
  
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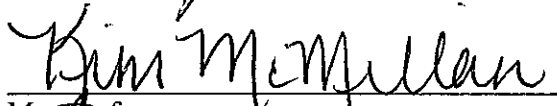
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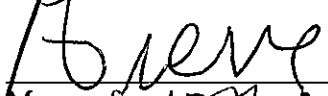
  
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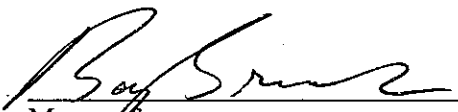
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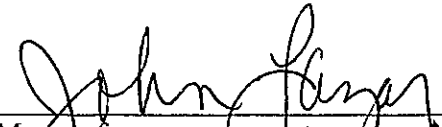
  
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