



Department of Justice

STATEMENT

OF

**REGINA B. SCHOFIELD
ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE, DRUG POLICY
AND HUMAN RESOURCES
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

CONCERNING

**“FY 2007 DRUG CONTROL BUDGET AND THE BYRNE GRANT,
HIDTA, AND OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT PROGRAMS: ARE WE
JEOPARDIZING FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL COOPERATION?”**

PRESENTED ON

MAY 23, 2006

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Mr. Chairman, Mr. Cummings, and Members of the Subcommittee: I am Regina B. Schofield, Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs (OJP). I am pleased to be here today on behalf of the Department of Justice to talk about the President's Fiscal Year 2007 Drug Control budget and his larger budget request. I commend the Subcommittee for its attention to addressing drug abuse prevention, treatment and enforcement issues. Your deep concern over these issues is shared by this Administration, specifically by the Department of Justice.

The President's budget recognizes that the threat of illegal drugs and drug abuse is grave and affects not only the health and wellbeing of our communities and families, but even our national security, as drug trafficking is linked to the financing of certain terrorist groups. I realize that much of the Subcommittee's focus today is on the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program. The President's budget does not include funding for JAG. I recognize the concern this raises among Members of Congress, law enforcement, and other interested parties. The decision to eliminate JAG was not made lightly. Given the current

fiscal restraints we are all facing and the need to focus resources on combating terrorism, the choice we made, while difficult, was necessary.

I would hope that the JAG decision would be looked at in the context of our overall budget request. The Department of Justice's portion of the President's budget includes over \$1.2 billion in discretionary grant assistance to state and local governments, including \$66.6 million to strengthen communities through programs providing services such as drug treatment; \$44.6 million to fight terrorism; \$88.2 million to combat crime and violence; \$214.8 million for law enforcement technology; and \$209 million to support drug enforcement.

Since the passage of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, OJP and its predecessor agencies have effectively provided federal leadership in developing the nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, improve the criminal and juvenile justice systems, increase knowledge about crime and related issues, and assist crime victims. From its inception, OJP has devoted substantial resources and programming to support state and local efforts to break the cycle of drug abuse and crime. We view our core mission to be that of promoting and supporting federal, state and local cooperation to address these vital issues.

OJP and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) support state and local law enforcement primarily through direct grant funding for state and local projects; training and technical assistance to help state and local jurisdictions build their crime fighting capacity and leverage resources; and development of cross-jurisdictional resources.

The budget request features investments in programs that are well known to this Subcommittee, including the Drug Court Discretionary Grant Program and the COPS

Methamphetamine Program.

For Fiscal Year 2007 we have requested a \$59.3 million increase for the Drug Court program, for a total of \$69.2 million. The Drug Court Discretionary Grant Program provides financial and technical assistance to states, state courts, local courts, units of local government, and Indian tribal governments to plan, implement, and enhance their drug courts.

Drug courts use the coercive power of the court to effectively integrate substance abuse treatment, mandatory drug testing, sanctions and incentives, and transitional services for non-violent, substance-abusing offenders. As you may be aware, drug courts started at the grassroots level in Florida, well before federal funding became available, and have grown to over 1,600 operating drug courts across the country today, with many more in the planning stage.

In Fiscal Year 2005 we funded 65 drug court projects. Also, through our Drug Court Planning Initiative, we provided training to an additional 215 communities across the country. In addition, we continued to provide funds to the National Institute of Drug Abuse to support the “E-Court-Web Project,” which we expect to be completed this year. The project will enable drug courts to report critical data, including recidivism and graduation rates, directly to our Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA).

In Fiscal Year 2006, due to a significant decrease in funding, we will be funding fewer drug court programs. But we will continue to provide training and technical assistance. We will also continue, through our National Institute of Justice, to support an extensive evaluation of 29 drug court projects. The \$69.2 million we requested for Fiscal Year 2007 would allow us to provide funding for more than 100 drug courts and provide training for hundreds more.

The COPS Methamphetamine Program has provided a unique mix of direct funding, training, and technical assistance across the wide range of law enforcement activities. Since 1998, COPS has invested more than \$385 million nationwide to combat the spread of methamphetamine, and has developed a problem-solving guide to help law enforcement develop proactive prevention strategies and to improve the overall response to clandestine drug labs. The \$40 million requested for FY 2007 is intended to support state and local clandestine lab clean-up efforts.

The President's FY 2007 budget request includes other programs that relate to our nation's capacity to combat illegal drug use and drug abuse. We are requesting \$29.8 million for the Southwest Border Prosecution program, which provides funding for local prosecutors' offices in the four states along the Southwest Border (California, New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas) for the costs incurred in processing, detaining, and prosecuting drug cases and other cases referred from federal arrests or federal investigations. Drug cases constitute about 30 percent of the cases referred by federal authorities. We are also requesting \$10.7 million, more than doubling the current funding level, for the Domestic Cannabis Eradication and Suppression Program, which was recently moved from the Drug Enforcement Administration to OJP.

The Fiscal Year 2007 budget request includes \$9.9 million, a \$2.5 million increase from Fiscal Year 2006, for continuation of the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, which helps states, local, and tribal governments prevent and detect the diversion and abuse of pharmaceutical controlled substances. At the conclusion of Fiscal Year 2005, 23 states had implemented monitoring programs with the support of this initiative. Forty-two jurisdictions

have received technical assistance that would help in establishing programs. We are also developing a model system that would enable states to easily share prescription drug monitoring information with each other.

As you may be aware, there is a particular need to address the high level of alcohol and substance abuse among Native Americans, which creates both significant law enforcement and health problems in tribal communities. The Department is again requesting that several tribal grant programs, including the Indian Alcohol and Substance Abuse Program, the Indian Country Prison Grants Program, and the Tribal Courts Program, be consolidated into a single tribal law enforcement grant program. This will enhance tribal communities' flexibility to address their unique law enforcement needs, including combating alcohol and drug abuse. For Fiscal Year 2007, we have requested \$31.1 million for this new competitive program, which would be administered by COPS in consultation with OJP.

As important as direct program funding may be, we believe that the Department makes a tremendous impact on the safety of America's communities through the training and technical assistance we provide, as well as the insightful research and statistical information developed to inform criminal and juvenile justice practitioners and policy makers,. Training and technical assistance play a key role in enhancing practical operating capability in the field. This knowledge can also be the key to helping states and localities leverage, or even save, limited training dollars.

For example, BJA supports the Center for Task Force Training (CenTF). BJA developed and implemented the CenTF Program to increase the effectiveness of multi-jurisdictional narcotics task force management and enforcement efforts throughout the nation.

The program's objectives are to develop and refine curricula, deliver training, produce multimedia resources, and develop and maintain an informational Web site and Web-based resource center. CenTF provides training to law enforcement on drug task force management, investigation, and rave/club drug response. CenTF courses, including Narcotics Task Force Management and Methamphetamine Task Force Management, address basic investigative techniques and task force management issues such as personnel selection, handling confidential informants, and raid planning. The methamphetamine course also provides information specific to the chemicals required to manufacture methamphetamines, exposure risks, and suggestions on handling meth lab seizures. In 2005, more than 1,400 narcotics officers and task force commanders received this training, bringing the total number of task force commanders trained to 5,583.

In response to law enforcement demand, we more than tripled the number of methamphetamine training courses offered nationwide during 2004 and 2005, for a total of up to 12 courses offered in addition to three narcotics training courses. In Fiscal Year 2006, BJA will place emphasis on extending this training to tribal law enforcement officers throughout the U.S. Attorney General Gonzales recently announced that OJP will develop a new methamphetamine investigation training specifically tailored to tribal law enforcement. This new course will provide tribal law enforcement what they need to know to conduct successful and safe methamphetamine investigations. CenTF will deliver the training in ten locations throughout the U.S. in 2006 and 2007. We expect that several hundred tribal law enforcement officers will receive training through this initiative. Already, in the short time since the Attorney General's announcement, we have received many calls from tribal and non-tribal law

enforcement offering to host a CenTF methamphetamine course. While a goal of this training is to improve tribal law enforcement's methamphetamine investigations, we will also emphasize coordinating these investigations with relevant non-tribal enforcement.

We have received many reports of the effectiveness of CenTF. Last year, OJP told the Subcommittee how a St. Tammany Parish (Louisiana) Sheriff's Office credited the BJA Methamphetamine Investigation Management Workshop for helping make the largest methamphetamine bust in the history of southeastern Louisiana. These kinds of success stories continue and we continue to get very strong reviews from trainees as well.

This spring OJP, through our Office for Victims of Crime, will develop a National Drug Endangered Children Resource Center, which will provide critical information to the federal government, states, and local communities on how to best help children hurt by drugs, including methamphetamine. This effort will help drug enforcement officers and child welfare workers aid children found in environments where drugs are manufactured, sold, or used. The Resource Center will also raise awareness of these children's needs and provide a forum for leading experts and researchers to propose solutions.

In addition to direct funding and training and technical assistance, OJP supports state and local law enforcement through cross-jurisdictional efforts that can best be accomplished through federal capabilities. For example, the Regional Information Sharing Systems (RISS) program is made up of six regional intelligence centers that serve member state and local agencies in their respective geographic areas. The RISS centers facilitate and encourage information sharing and support to more than 7,300 city, county, state, tribal, and federal member agencies. RISS provides secure communications capabilities and other support, such

as investigative analysis products, specialized surveillance equipment loans, and confidential funds for undercover operations. RISS operates and maintains the only secure, nationwide information sharing system, known as RISSNet, available to state, federal, and tribal law enforcement agencies, which is controlled by its member agencies.

Officers accessing the RISSNet secure communications network can also access a number of High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTAs), a national gang intelligence data base (RISSGang), the National Drug Intelligence Center, as many as 23 state justice systems, and the National Virtual Pointer Index System, which is an all crimes deconfliction system. RISS's ATIX (Automated Trusted Information Exchange) allows non-traditional groups of users, such as medical facilities, limited access to the RISS Network in order to improve interagency communications, information sharing, and dissemination of threat information.

From 2003 through 2005, member agency investigations supported by RISS Center services resulted in over 14,000 arrests, seizure of \$124 million in narcotics, and \$46 million in seized currency and property. In 2005, RISS played a key role in establishing our National Sex Offender Public Registry, a Web site that enables law enforcement and citizens to search already existing state and territory public sex offender registries. RISS also provided logistical support to law enforcement in areas damaged by Hurricane Katrina.

The President's Fiscal Year 2007 budget includes \$39.7 million for RISS, virtually maintaining the Fiscal Year 2006 funding level. The money will be used to provide increased intelligence and forensic services for state and local law enforcement. We anticipate that by the end of Fiscal Year 2007, more than half of the nation's 17,784 state and local law enforcement agencies will be RISS members.

OJP's Community Capacity Development Office administers Operation Weed and Seed (Weed and Seed), which is a cross-jurisdictional strategy that aims to prevent, control and reduce violent crime, drug abuse and gang activity in designated high-crime neighborhoods across the country. Weed and Seed sites range in size from several neighborhood blocks to a few square miles.

The strategy involves a two-pronged approach: law enforcement agencies and prosecutors cooperate in "weeding out" violent crime and drug abuse; and "seeding" by bringing human services to the area to facilitate prevention, intervention, treatment and neighborhood revitalization. A community oriented policing component bridges the weeding strategies. The President's 2007 Budget seeks \$49.3 million for the initiative, virtually maintaining the Fiscal Year 2006 funding level.

Weed and Seed's approach of coordination and collaboration across disciplinary and jurisdictional lines enables communities to craft local strategies to prevent substance abuse.

We know that we cannot effectively combat substance abuse without also reducing gang activity and gun violence. Through our Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) Initiative, we have awarded more than \$250 million since 2001 to the 94 U.S. Attorneys Districts. The U.S. Attorneys, working with local law enforcement and other officials, tailor their PSN strategy to fit the districts' unique violent crime problems. Violent gang members and criminals who use guns are prosecuted under federal, state or local laws, depending on which jurisdiction can provide the most appropriate punishment. Each district engages in deterrence and prevention efforts through community outreach and media campaigns, and ensures that law enforcement and prosecutors have the training necessary to make the program work.

Since 2001, PSN funds have helped hire more than 500 state and local gun crime prosecutors. At the national level, we have also trained more than 19,000 law enforcement officers and others across the nation in appropriate gun crime investigation methods. Grants also support locally-based training for thousands more officers, prosecutors and community members. This year we will award an additional \$10 million in state and local grants for gun crime reduction efforts under PSN.

The President's 2007 Budget expands the PSN program to include a focus on gangs. In parallel with this new focus, on February 15, 2006, Attorney General Gonzales announced the award of approximately \$30 million in state and local grants and training and technical assistance to support Project Safe Neighborhoods efforts to combat gang violence. These efforts under PSN will complement other Department anti-gang initiatives, such as the Attorney General's comprehensive Anti-Gang Initiative, which will focus anti-gang resources on prevention, enforcement and offender reentry efforts in six sites throughout the country: Los Angeles, Tampa, Cleveland, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Milwaukee and the "222 Corridor" that stretches from Easton to Lancaster in Pennsylvania. The Department is committing \$15 million to support this comprehensive initiative.

The President's proposed FY 2007 budget requests \$395 million for PSN, including \$59 million for the critical State and Local Gun Violence Assistance program, which supports PSN's law enforcement and community partners in their efforts to combat violent gangs and gun crimes.

Overall, while the budget request reflects reductions and elimination of some grant programs that provide direct funding to state and local agencies, we believe the investments

we are proposing represent a continued commitment to the success of state and local programming, while mindful of our dual goals of public safety and economic prosperity. Through careful planning and close coordination on the federal, state, and local level we can make the most out of the resources that are available – not just working harder, but working smarter.

As you may be aware, before starting at my current position, I had a long career at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Through my work there I learned of the devastating impact of substance abuse on our children, families, and communities. My time at OJP has reinforced that understanding. I want to assure the Subcommittee that I share its commitment to eliminate the scourge of illegal drugs and drug abuse. In doing so I am also expressing the continued commitment of the Administration, specifically the Department of Justice, to work with our state and local partners. Together, we can take on substance abuse, gun violence, gang violence, and other crimes. Together, we can make America safer for all of us.