

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY FOR THE
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS
OFFICE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES
FISCAL YEAR 2009 BUDGET REQUEST
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, JUSTICE,
SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES
MARCH 11, 2008**

Chairman Mollohan, Ranking Member Frelinghuysen, and distinguished Members of the Committee: The Department of Justice appreciates the opportunity to testify before this Subcommittee regarding the Administration's proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 budget request for the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS). My name is Jeffrey L. Sedgwick, and I am the Acting Assistant Attorney General for OJP. I am honored to be here today with OVW Director Cindy Dyer, and COPS Director Carl Peed.

OJP, OVW and COPS work in close partnership with entities across the criminal justice spectrum, including states and local governments, Tribes, national law enforcement organizations, victim advocates, researchers, and many more. Together, we identify the most pressing challenges confronting the justice system and provide state-of-the-art knowledge, information sharing, training and coordination, as well as innovative strategies and approaches for dealing with these issues. Together we provide 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. Together we also offer guidance and resources for combating terrorism, one of the Department's highest priorities.

We are, and continue to be, committed to providing our state, local, and tribal criminal justice partners with the knowledge, tools, and abilities they need to successfully perform their jobs and make America's communities safer for our citizens. But we also recognize the need for spending restraint and that we must make tough choices. Resources are limited and we must adopt an approach that allows us to be adaptable and flexible. To do this we need to target resources to the areas with the greatest need and where they can do the most good. This year's budget request for more than \$1.6 billion, including the Crime Victims Fund and the Public Safety Officers' Death Benefits Program, will allow the Department to tackle our Nation's most pressing challenges and support top priority initiatives.

One of the most significant changes proposed in the Department's submission is the reorganization and consolidation of more than 70 existing grant programs into four distinct, multi-purpose grant programs. It's worth noting that all federally recognized

Indian tribes and Native American communities would be eligible to receive funding under these grant programs and would be encouraged to apply. In September 2007, OJP implemented a new Tribal Grants Policy, which will help Native communities seeking OJP resources through our competitive grant solicitation process.

The four proposed grant programs are 1) the Violent Crime Reduction Partnership Initiative; 2) the Byrne Public Safety and Protection Program; 3) the Child Safety and Juvenile Justice Program; and 4) Violence Against Women Grants. These four new discretionary grant programs would award funding through a highly competitive grant process.

Violent Crime Reduction Partnership

Between 1993 and 2005, the violent crime victimization rate declined nearly 60 percent. During the same period, property crime victimization rates declined by over 50 percent. While recent FBI Uniform Crime Reports data shows some recent fluctuation of crime rates, the violent crime rate during this Administration is still well below historical levels and lower than during the previous decade. Preliminary FBI data also point to a decline in violent crime for the first half of 2007. Despite these positive trends, many challenges still exist. Some regions and communities continue to experience increases in violent crime. As Attorney General Mukasey recently said, “The nature of crime varies not only from one city to another, but even from one block to the next. So it is at the block level that much of the work has to happen.”

The Department is following through on the Attorney General’s commitment to assist state and locals. We are working with our state and local partners to identify problems and develop meaningful strategies to reduce and deter crime. Through the Violent Crime Reduction Partnership Initiative, we have provided funds to states and localities for multi-level violent crime task forces to tackle the areas of greatest need. These task forces bring together state and local law enforcement agencies to address specific violent crime problems with focused strategies, including intelligence-led policing. In FY 2007, OJP awarded over \$75 million to 106 sites in 37 states through this program.

The President’s FY 2009 budget requests \$200 million for the Violent Crime Reduction Partnership Initiative. Funding would continue to be used to help communities address high rates of violent crime by forming and developing effective multi-jurisdictional law enforcement partnerships between local, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement agencies. These partnerships are designed to disrupt criminal gang, firearm, and drug activities, particularly those with a multi-jurisdictional dimension. Additionally, OJP will target this funding to respond to local crime surges it detects through its ongoing research.

Byrne Public Safety and Protection Program

This year, the President's budget proposal includes \$200 million for a simplified and streamlined grant program that would combine the funding streams of several programs into the new Byrne Public Safety and Protection Program.

In keeping with the Department's mission "to ensure public safety against threats foreign and domestic," this initiative consolidates OJP's most successful state and local law enforcement assistance programs into a single, flexible, competitive discretionary grant program. This approach would help state, local, and tribal governments develop programs appropriate to the particular needs of their jurisdictions. Through the competitive grant process, OJP would continue to assist communities in addressing a number of high-priority concerns, such as;

- 1.) reducing violent crime at the local levels through the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative;
- 2) addressing the criminal justice issues surrounding substance abuse through drug courts, residential treatment for prison inmates, prescription drug monitoring programs, methamphetamine enforcement and lab cleanup, and cannabis eradication efforts;
- 3) promoting and enhancing law enforcement information sharing efforts through improved and more accurate criminal history records;
- 4) improving the capacity of state and local law enforcement and justice system personnel to make use of forensic evidence, and reducing DNA evidence and analysis backlogs;
- 5) addressing domestic trafficking in persons;
- 6) improving and expanding prisoner re-entry initiatives; and
- 7) improving services to victims of crime to facilitate their participation in the legal process.

In addition to state, local and tribal governments, non-government entities will also be eligible for funding under this program.

Child Safety and Juvenile Justice Program

The Department remains committed to fighting child pornography and obscenity, and to protecting children from trafficking and other forms of exploitation. OJP continues to provide leadership, coordination, and resources to prevent and respond to juvenile delinquency and victimization. We support states and communities in their efforts to develop and implement effective prevention and intervention programs as well as improve the juvenile justice system.

In FY 2007 alone, investigations funded through the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force program led to 2,350 arrests and nearly 10,500 forensic investigations.

Additionally, OJP's AMBER Alert program is a proven success and has helped rescue more than 389 children nationwide. More than 90 percent of those recoveries

have occurred since AMBER Alert became a nationally coordinated effort in 2002. With 50 statewide AMBER plans in place, and expansion of the program into Indian Country, we are meeting President Bush's goal of a National AMBER Alert network. As the National AMBER Alert Coordinator, I am committed to ensuring that we have a strong and seamless network in place to protect our children.

To further our commitment to protecting our Nation's most vulnerable population, the FY 2009 budget includes \$185 million for the new Child Safety and Juvenile Justice Program. The new initiative consolidates existing juvenile justice and exploited children programs, such as the ICAC Task Force program, into a single, flexible grant program. The new Child Safety and Juvenile Justice Program would focus on key priorities including reducing juvenile delinquency and crime, improving juvenile justice systems, helping child victims, promoting school safety, and reducing incidents of child exploitation and abuse, including those facilitated by the use of computers and the Internet. The initiative would also support state, local and tribal community efforts to develop and implement effective, coordinated prevention and intervention juvenile programs that protect public safety, hold offenders accountable, and provide treatment and rehabilitative services tailored to the needs of juveniles and their families.

Prevention and Prosecution of Violence Against Women and Related Victim Services Program

The Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) administers financial support and technical assistance to communities around the country that are creating programs, policies, and practices aimed at ending domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. Its mission is to provide national leadership to improve the Nation's response to these crimes through the implementation of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). In 2003, Congress established OVW as a separate and distinct office within the Department.

Currently OVW administers one formula grant program and eleven discretionary grant programs. These grant programs fund States, local governments, tribal governments, and nonprofit organizations to help communities across America develop innovative strategies to respond to violence against women. With OVW funding, communities are forging effective partnerships among federal, state, local and tribal governments, and between the criminal justice system and victim advocates, and are providing much-needed services to victims. Taken together, these programs address a host of different issues that communities face in responding to violence against women, including: the unique barriers faced by rural communities; the importance of training police, prosecutors, and court personnel; the critical need of victims for legal assistance, transitional housing, and other comprehensive services; and the high rate of violence against women in Indian country.

For Fiscal Year 2009, the President's Budget requests \$280 million for OVW, which would remain a separate office within the Department of Justice. This request

proposes to consolidate funding from a myriad of programs into a single, flexible program. This new approach will allow OVW—working with its partners—to better tailor the resources delivered to a given community to sustain domestic violence prevention efforts, protect and restore victims, and hold perpetrators accountable for their crimes.

COPS Office

The FY 2009 President's Budget proposes to merge the COPS Office with the Office of Justice Programs (OJP). Community Policing Development Program funds from the COPS Office have helped state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies reduce crime through improved partnerships with the communities they serve, with techniques that are designed to solve problems, and by offering new ways to modernize and transform their law enforcement agencies.

Merging COPS staff with OJP will allow for better coordination of training and other assistance for state and local law enforcement. The COPS staff in OJP would be responsible for administering almost 7,000 active grants and for managing the Community Policing Development (CPD) Program, for which \$4 million is requested as a separate, standalone program under OJP's State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance appropriation.

Other OJP Programs

There are several ongoing initiatives within OJP which I would like to highlight, specifically the Regional Information Sharing System and the efforts of the Office for Victims of Crime, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, and the National Institute of Justice.

As I noted at the outset, one of the Department's highest priorities is the prevention, investigation, and prosecution of terrorist activities against U.S. citizens and interests. The Department plans to support anti-terrorism and other law enforcement efforts through the Regional Information Sharing System (RISS). This year, we have requested \$34.2 million in total funding for this important initiative. This funding will be used to provide increased intelligence and forensic services for State and local law enforcement. RISS is comprised of six regional intelligence centers operating in mutually exclusive geographic regions that include all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and U.S. Territories. These regional centers facilitate and encourage information sharing and communications to support member agencies' investigative and prosecution efforts by providing investigative support and training, analytical services, specialized equipment, secure information sharing technology, and other services to over 6,000 municipal, county, state, and federal law enforcement agencies nationwide.

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) will continue to provide federal leadership in assisting victims of crime and their families. The President's \$590 million request will allow OVC to provide federal funds in the form of formula grants to the states to support victim compensation and assistance programs across the Nation. OVC provides training for diverse professionals who work with victims' rights and services, and educate the public about victim issues. OVC also enables victims of federal crimes to participate fully in the criminal justice process. It distributes funds to nonprofit organizations, federal, and military criminal justice agencies, and tribal governments to support both training for service providers and direct services for victims, including crisis counseling, temporary shelter, and travel expenses incurred in going to court.

As you are aware, I also have the honor of serving as Director of OJP's Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), which continues its mission to collect, analyze, publish, and disseminate information on crime, criminal offenders, victims of crime, and the operation of justice systems at all levels of government. This data is critical to federal, state, local, and tribal policymakers in combating crime and ensuring that justice is both efficient and evenhanded. BJS is midway through a long-term effort to review and redesign its statistical products in order to make them as useful as possible to the criminal justice community. We are working with the National Academy of Sciences to examine the ways that BJS statistics are used by Congress, executive agencies, the courts, state and local agencies, researchers, and others. Through this process we hope to determine the impact of BJS programs and how they can be improved.

In FY 2009, the President is requesting \$53.0 million in total funding for BJS, which will support collecting and analyzing statistical data on crime, criminal offenders, and the operations of justice systems at all levels of government. BJS also provides financial and technical support to state governments to develop capabilities in criminal justice statistics, improve criminal history records, and implement crime identification technology systems.

OJP's National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is dedicated to the mission of advancing scientific research, development, and evaluation to enhance the administration of justice and public safety. One of NIJ's highlights from last year was its the launch of the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, a new national database for matching unidentified human remains with records of missing persons. For Fiscal Year 2009, the Department is requesting \$34.7 million for NIJ. This funding will support research and development programs, demonstrations of innovative approaches to improve criminal justice, development and testing of new criminal justice technologies, evaluation of the effectiveness of justice programs, and dissemination of research finding to practitioners and policymakers.

Mr. Chairman, the FY 2009 budget proposal would enable the Department to continue to work with our state, local, and tribal partners to more effectively target federal assistance to areas with the greatest need. It would strengthen our mission of providing 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. Thank you again for inviting us to testify on the President's proposed Fiscal Year 2009 budget request. Ms. Dyer, Mr. Peed and I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you or other Members of the Subcommittee may have. Thank you.