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***PAST NYS DAA PRESIDENT**

May 1, 2003

Honorable Frank Wolf

Chairman, Commerce, Justice, State and Judiciary Subcommittee
United States House of Representatives
241 Cannon Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Full funding in Federal Fiscal Year 2004 for Byrne, LLEBG and SCAAP programs

Dear Congressman:

I write as President of the New York State District Attorneys Association which represents all 62 District Attorneys in New York. We are a diverse group composed of Republicans and Democrats, large and small jurisdictions, rural and urban counties. Yet all of us have benefitted greatly from the availability of funding under the Police Officer Edward Byrne Memorial Grant Program (Byrne) and the Local Law Enforcement Block Grant Program (LLEBG) and our counties have benefitted from the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP). Reduction or elimination of these funds would significantly hamper our ability to investigate and prosecute criminal activity in our counties. Consequently, I write to urge the subcommittee to fully fund each of these programs in Federal Fiscal Year 2004.

The Byrne program, named for a New York City police officer shot to death while guarding a witness in a drug case, provides seed funding for innovative local efforts by State and local police, prosecutors, defense and forensic examiners aimed at violent and drug-related crime. During Federal Fiscal Year 2002, New York State received \$27.5 million in Byrne monies. These monies supported, among other things, multi-jurisdictional drug enforcement task forces targeting mid to upper level dealers, drug interdiction programs at major points of entry; and local community drug and crime enforcement efforts featuring collaboration among police and community organizations. These programs have had great success in reducing crime, interdicting drugs and dismantling criminal organizations.

In addition, Byrne funding supports many creative programs aimed at reducing and preventing drug use, juvenile crime and violent crime, providing drug treatment, expediting case processing, improving criminal justice records, and enhancing forensic laboratory capabilities in DNA identification, evidence collection and new technologies. Prosecutors have utilized this funding to implement drug treatment alternative sentencing

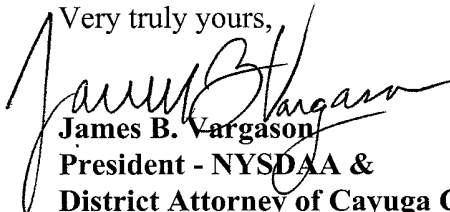
COURTHOUSE ANNEX, 154 GENESEE STREET
AUBURN, NEW YORK 13021
TEL. (315) 253-1391 FAX (315) 253-1521

programs, enhance prosecution of cases involving drugs in schools and combat youth gangs. And we have benefitted from the programs funded by Byrne monies and operated by police and crime labs. For example, the expansion of the City and State DNA databases have enabled us to solve many serious violent crimes and bring successful prosecutions against those who committed them. Byrne funding also supports critical witness protection and crime victim assistance efforts.

The Local Law Enforcement Block Grants Program funds outstanding programs aimed at enhancing the adjudication of violent offenders. By focusing resources on the small group of violent and habitual offenders who are responsible for a significant number of serious felonies, this program has enabled prosecutors to dedicate experienced attorneys to these cases and provide them with the investigative and support services they need to build strong cases and bring successful prosecutions. In addition, this funding supports drug court programs, crime prevention efforts and other programs to improve public safety. The State of New York and local jurisdictions in New York received \$24.9 million from the LLEBG program in 2002 which provided assistance to 85 counties and towns.

SCAAP monies reimburse State and local governments for a portion of the expenses incurred in connection with the incarceration of illegal aliens who have committed crimes and are in local jails. Clearly, State and local governments will continue to incur these significant costs in the future for services which will have to be performed. Consequently, we fear that the expense of maintaining these prisoners will drain state and local budgets of resources needed urgently by local law enforcement.

In the last few years, New York State has made remarkable progress in reducing crime and improving the quality of life of all of its residents. In our view, it would be a serious mistake to cut funding for the very programs which have proven so successful in producing these dramatic reductions. We urge you to fully fund these vital grant programs in Federal Fiscal Year 2004 at the same level they were funded in 2002 -- \$500 million for Byrne, \$400 million for LLEBG and \$565 million for SCAAP. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Very truly yours,

James B. Vargason
President - NYSDAA &
District Attorney of Cayuga County

cc: Honorable James Walsh
Honorable Nita Lowey
Honorable Maurice Hinchey
Honorable John Sweeney
Honorable Jose Serrano

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*PAST NYS DAA PRESIDENT

May 1, 2003

Honorable Ernest Hollings

Chairman, Commerce, Justice, State and Judiciary Subcommittee
United States Senate
125 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

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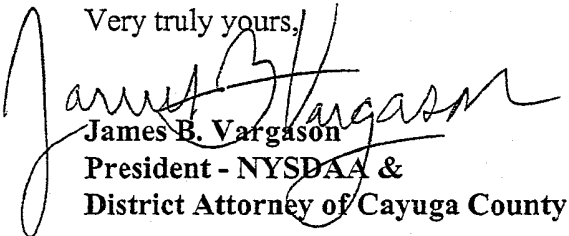
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cc: Honorable Charles Schumer
Honorable Hillary Clinton