

**Senator Byron L. Dorgan**  
**Chairman, Democratic Policy Committee**  
**Opening Remarks**

**“An Oversight Hearing on Reduced Federal Funding For Law  
Enforcement and the Rise in Violent Crime”**

**Monday, July 10, 2006**

Over the last five years, the Bush Administration and the Republican leadership here in Congress have repeatedly cut federal funding for local law enforcement programs, including the successful COPS and Byrne Memorial Grant programs.

Today the Democratic Policy Committee is holding an oversight hearing on the impact of those cuts, and whether they have contributed to a nationwide increase in violent crime — which rose last year at the fastest rate since 1991, according to the Department of Justice.

At that time, fifteen years ago, the country was in the midst of a crime wave. Violent crime had already increased by 139 percent over the previous 25 years, but experts feared it would get worse still.

Future Bush Administration official John DiIulio, then a criminologist at Princeton University, even warned about a generation of “super-predators” who would do “homicidal violence in wolf packs” on our streets. Here’s what he wrote in the *Weekly Standard* in the mid-1990s:

“The youth crime wave has reached horrific proportions from coast to coast...But what is really frightening everyone from DAs to demographers, old cops to old convicts, is not what’s happening now but what's just around the corner: namely, a sharp increase in the number of super crime-prone young males.”

But then something changed. From 1994 through 2000, federal and local government responded with tough, smart programs that made a difference. Between 1994 and 2001:

- the violent crime rate in the United States dropped 29 percent, the most sustained, dramatic decline in 40 years; and
- the murder rate dropped 37 percent.

This historic drop in crime coincided with innovative federal programs, enacted during the Clinton Administration, that were designed to strengthen crime-fighting at the local level.

One of the centerpieces of this strategy was the Community Oriented Policing Services program, or COPS, which was proposed by the Clinton Administration and passed by Congress in 1994.

COPS program funding put more than 94,000 police officers on the street and was widely credited not only with getting more officers on the beat, but with encouraging departments across the country to increase contact between beat cops and the neighborhoods they serve.

An October 2005 report by the Congress's independent watchdog, the Government Accountability Office (GAO), concluded that the COPS program reduced crime. The GAO found that, for every dollar in COPS hiring funds spent per resident, crime decreased by 30 incidents per 100,000 residents.

Another important source of support for local law enforcement has been the Local Law Enforcement Block Grant Program, passed in 1996, and the Byrne Memorial State and Local Law Enforcement Assistance Grant Program, both of which provide assistance to state and local law enforcement, including funding to hire additional officers.

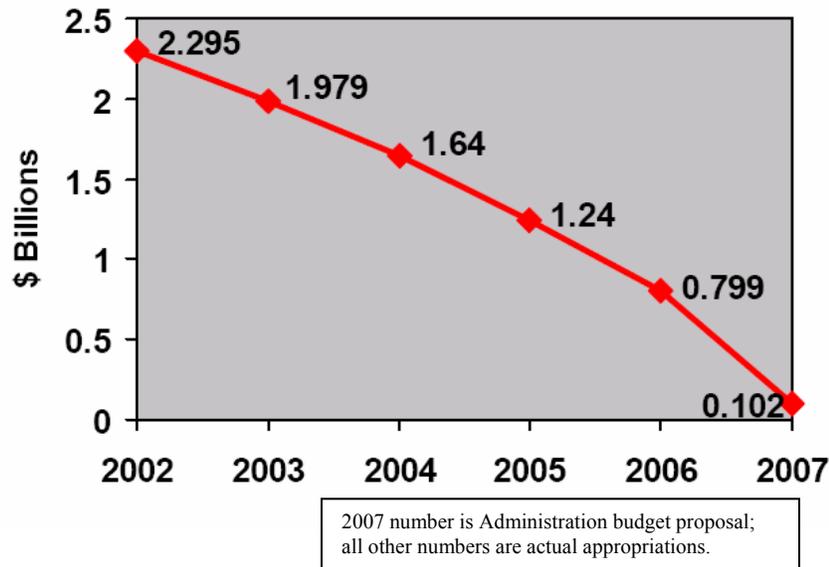
The Bush Administration's response to the strong evidence of the effectiveness of these programs was curious — and tragic. The Administration decided to eliminate the programs.

Starting with the 2003 budget, the President's budgets have zeroed out COPS funding designated for hiring law enforcement officers, the core of the program, and Congressional appropriations for the program have plummeted.

In 2005, the Bush Administration proposed that the Local Law Enforcement and Byrne Memorial grant programs be consolidated into a single program — but when Congress agreed to this consolidation, the Administration then proposed zero funding for the newly-consolidated program in its 2006 and 2007 budgets.

The overall effect of these actions has been a drastic decline in the amount of total federal support through the Department of Justice for state and local law enforcement: from \$2.3 billion in 2002 to a proposed \$102 million in 2007.

### DOJ Grants Guaranteed For Law Enforcement



These funding cuts, coming at the same time that many officers who serve as military reservists have been called to active duty, has created a critical shortage of officers in police departments across the country — a “cop crunch.”

The recent increases in violent crime foreshadow a troubling trend, a backsliding into the “bad old days” of the 1980s and early 1990s, when we were losing the war on crime.

It is our job here in the Congress to fight as hard as we can to preserve initiatives that are critical to *hometown security* — and to continue to support our frontline law enforcement officers.

Today, we will hear from a distinguished panel of witnesses who will discuss the impact of these cuts and how they have contributed to recent increases in violent crime.

**Ted Kamatchus** is Sheriff of Marshall County, Iowa, and President of the National Sheriffs' Association. Sheriff Kamatchus will discuss the impact of reduced federal funding on the efforts of local law enforcement.

**Brian O'Keefe** is Deputy Chief of the Milwaukee Police Department, where he leads the Criminal Investigation Bureau.

**Timothy Dolan** is Interim Chief of the Minneapolis Police Department. A former member of the department's SWAT team, he has been with the MPD for more than 20 years.

**Gary Hagler** is Chief of the Flint (MI) Police Department. He is a 20-year veteran of the Flint Police Department, where he has held every rank.

**James Allen Fox**, a Professor of Criminal Justice at Northeastern University, has been described by *USA Today* as “arguably the nation's foremost criminologist.”

I thank all the witnesses for appearing today, and I look forward to their testimony.