

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

November 6, 2017

The Honorable Jeff Sessions  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Sessions:

We write to express concerns about the Department of Justice's (DOJ) delay in disbursing Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) funds for Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17) to the State of New Jersey and its municipalities; and we urge your department to disburse these funds as soon as possible. Additionally, we request a briefing from your staff with a full explanation for the delay.

Byrne JAG is a critical federal funding stream for state and local law enforcement. These community policing grants provide law enforcement in our state with the needed resources to prevent and reduce crime and terrorism. This includes funding for the implementation of state and local initiatives, technical assistance, training, personnel, and equipment.

As you know, DOJ was scheduled to disburse approximately \$4 million in Byrne JAG funds in New Jersey. To date, the DOJ has not disbursed these funds and has not provided a public explanation for the delay. It is essential the grant awards are processed in a timely manner. Typically, these grants are processed months in advance to ensure the funds are received without delay. However, that has not been the case for FY17. We are concerned that additional delays in providing these funds will undermine state and local law enforcements' efforts to keep our communities safe.

We understand the cause of the delay is related to DOJ's efforts to leverage Byrne JAG to punish states and local governments for their immigration laws and policies. This threatens critical law enforcement resources in order to force a policy change that will decrease cooperation between the immigrant community and law enforcement and make our communities less safe. Forcing local law enforcement to enforce federal immigration law also redirects precious resources used to combat truly violent crime. Further, the DOJ would potentially be in violation of a court order prohibiting the agency from withholding funds based on these criteria. While we understand that DOJ is appealing this decision, communities across our state remain more at risk every day because these funds are being held up.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. To schedule the briefing we are requesting on this issue, please contact Dylan Sodaro ([Dylan.Sodaro@mail.house.gov](mailto:Dylan.Sodaro@mail.house.gov)) in Rep. Pascrell's office.

We look forward to working with you to support local law enforcement and ensure they have the resources needed to keep communities safe.

Sincerely,



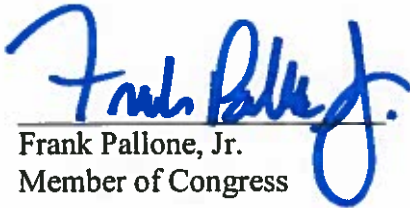
Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Robert Menendez  
Senator



Cory Booker  
Senator



Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Albio Sires  
Member of Congress



Donald Payne, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer  
Member of Congress