

will continue to play an important role as Federal safety net for failed pension plans.

The bill also makes some important improvements to the defined contribution pension system. As Enron collapsed, many employees lost all of their retirement savings because they had heavily invested in their company's stock. I am pleased that Congress is finally acting to better protect employees by giving them more information about their investment options and more rights to diversify those investments.

I am also pleased that the legislation includes a provision to enable the UMWA's Construction Workers Pension Plan to excess assets to cover health care costs for retirees, just as many single-employer private pension plans already do. The Construction Workers Pension Plan currently has more than twice the assets needed to cover pension benefits, while retirees have been forced to pay large premiums for health coverage. With this change, the resources set aside to benefit retired construction workers can be used to best advantage—including helping to cover health care costs.

Yet while I believe there are many positive provisions in this bill, it is not a perfect bill. The bill calls for very difficult compromises. Companies are concerned that the funding rules will be difficult to live by. Workers are concerned that benefits may be limited if employers do not adequately fund the pension plans. I appreciate these concerns. And I am interested in improving this bill.

I had hoped to have the opportunity to support an amendment by Senators DEWINE and MIKULSKI to ease some of the funding requirements imposed on struggling employers. Without fundamentally upsetting the balance struck in this bill, the amendment would have made pension plans easier to maintain. Because a company's credit rating is an imperfect indicator of whether the pension plan is sound, I do not believe that we should impose strict new funding requirements on companies with lower credit ratings. I believe that the managers of this legislation have already crafted so many important improvements to the funding rules that the payments associated with low credit ratings are not necessary to guarantee appropriate pension contributions. Rather, the credit ratings rules may limit employers' willingness to offer such benefits.

The reforms contained in this legislation will dramatically improve the health of the Nation's pension system. Improved pension funding rules are necessary to protect the many workers who have been promised pension benefits, and to shore up the Federal pension insurer. As the final legislation is worked out with the House, I will be working with my colleagues to improve this bill even further.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on passage of the bill.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the next two votes be limited to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? The Chair hears none, and it is so ordered.

The question is on passage of the bill.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. CORZINE) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 97, nays 2, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 328 Leg.]

YEAS—97

Akaka	Dole	McCain
Alexander	Domenici	McConnell
Allard	Dorgan	Mikulski
Allen	Durbin	Murkowski
Baucus	Ensign	Murray
Bayh	Enzi	Nelson (FL)
Bennett	Feingold	Nelson (NE)
Biden	Feinstein	Obama
Bingaman	Frist	Pryor
Bond	Graham	Reed
Boxer	Grassley	Reid
Brownback	Gregg	Roberts
Bunning	Hagel	Rockefeller
Burns	Harkin	Salazar
Burr	Hatch	Santorum
Byrd	Hutchison	Sarbanes
Cantwell	Inhofe	Schumer
Carper	Inouye	Sessions
Chafee	Isakson	Shelby
Chambliss	Jeffords	Smith
Clinton	Johnson	Snowe
Coburn	Kennedy	Specter
Cochran	Kerry	Stevens
Coleman	Kohl	Talent
Collins	Kyl	Sununu
Conrad	Landrieu	Thomas
Cornyn	Lautenberg	Thune
Craig	Leahy	Vitter
Crapo	Lieberman	Warner
Dayton	Lincoln	Wyden
DeMint	Lott	
DeWine	Lugar	
Dodd	Martinez	

NAYS—2

Levin	Stabenow
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NOT VOTING—1

Corzine

(The bill will be printed in a future edition of the RECORD.)

DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE AND JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006—CONFERENCE REPORT—Resumed

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the conference report to accompany H.R. 2862, the Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Act. While I will be voting for this conference report, I have grave concerns regarding the cuts in the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grants Program.

The Byrne/JAG program is the primary Federal assistance program for

State and local law enforcement's counter-drug activities. This program is critical to fighting the domestic war on drugs. In my State of Iowa, this grant program funds highly successful drug task forces. I fear that without these grants, many of these task forces will disappear and the threat from methamphetamine will only grow larger.

I have a letter from Sheriff Thomas Faust, the executive director of the National Sheriff's Association. His letter raises many of the concerns I have already highlighted with regard to the JAG program. Sheriff Faust's letter warns that, "Cuts of this magnitude seriously inhibit law enforcement's abilities and endanger the safety and well being of our communities! In order to keep communities safe from crime and free of drugs, law enforcement must be given the resources they need! The fiscal year 2006 CJS appropriations bill does not provide for those resources."

While I have fears that these cuts in the JAG program will have grave results, because the conference report funds other critical programs, I will vote in support of the conference report.

I ask unanimous consent to print the above-referenced letter in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION,

Alexandria, VA, November 15, 2005.

DEAR SENATOR: On behalf of the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) and our 23,000 members, I am writing to express our extreme disappointment and concern over the lack of funding for the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grants Program (JAG) in H.R. 2862, the Science, State, Justice, Commerce and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill.

The JAG program, which was formed by consolidating the Edward Byrne Memorial Grant program and the Local Law Enforcement Block Grant program, is one of the primary federal assistance programs for state, tribal and local law enforcement agencies. State and local law enforcement agencies, including the 3,087 sheriffs' offices across the country, rely heavily on JAG funds for critical operational activities. JAG funds support many of our counter-drug activities, particularly drug task forces. Without these funds, our sheriffs will not be able to sustain the task forces or even fight the war on drugs!

Local law enforcement agencies from all across the country are already out-manned and out-gunned by the drug cartels and street gangs in our communities. Over the last several years we have been forced to deal with the loss of personnel, because of budget cuts to the COPS program. Now the COPS Universal Hiring Program has been zeroed out by Congress, thus abandoning an effective program, and the JAG Funds are being cut as well. These cuts will put an end to any progress that has been made and destroy any hope we might have of winning the war on drugs or ridding our communities of methamphetamine!

For more than a decade, the resources provided under the JAG program have allowed law enforcement agencies to expand their capabilities and make great strides in reducing the incidence of crime in communities across the nation. It is our belief that the lack of

federal support for local law enforcement will surely result in increased crime and drug abuse!

The conference agreement would provide just \$416 million for the Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grants, of which only \$321 million is available for local law enforcement assistance. We find this level of funding to be unacceptable and believe that Congress is failing to adequately recognize the mission of law enforcement!

Cuts of this magnitude seriously inhibit law enforcement's abilities and endanger the safety and well being of our communities! In order to keep communities safe from crime and free of drugs, law enforcement agencies must be given the resources they need! The FY06 SSJC appropriations bill does not provide for those resources.

At a time where law enforcement and securing the homeland should be of the highest priority, Congress has chosen to completely dismiss them as a priority! With the rise of terrorism, and the fact that methamphetamine use and abuse has risen to epidemic proportions, Congress should embrace law enforcement, support the JAG program and COPS Hiring Program, and increase their funding, not cut their funding!

Sincerely,

THOMAS N. FAUST,
Executive Director &
Retired Sheriff, Arlington County, VA.

Mr. HARKIN. This bill cuts over \$200 million from the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Program and over \$120 million from the COPS Program. These cuts follow on 3 previous years of cuts that have decimated these important and successful law enforcement assistance programs.

In 2002, Byrne was funded at \$994 million. Next year, it will be funded at only \$416 million—a 60 percent cut.

I am also dismayed that after my amendment to add \$34 million in funding to legal services programs passed the Senate, not a single dollar was included in the conference report. Meanwhile a study earlier this year found that over half those eligible for legal aid cannot receive the help they need with critical issues including custody, child support, housing, and more critically right now, navigating hurricane related bureaucracy.

These programs have now been cut so severely that law enforcement in my State will likely be left with no alternatives to layoffs. That simply isn't acceptable. While I will be voting for this conference report because I believe that the appropriators did the best they could within the situation they faced, I want to serve notice on the Senate that we must restore funding to local law enforcement grant programs and to legal assistance next year.

The fault for these drastic cuts to law enforcement programs lies directly with the President and with every Member of Congress who voted for his budget that cut \$1.3 billion in law enforcement funding. Appropriators only get a certain amount of money to work with, and that money is set by the budget. It was literally impossible for appropriators to restore all of the \$1.3 billion in direct help for law enforcement including over \$150 million in cuts to victims, over \$300 million in as-

sistance to States overwhelmed with illegal aliens, over \$150 million in cuts to juvenile justice programs, almost \$500 million in cuts to the COPS Program and \$800 million in cuts to the Byrne Program.

It is simply outrageous that 54 Members of this Senate voted not to restore this funding during the budget process and that all 55 Republicans voted for a budget that eliminated this funding. Any one of those 55 people who stands up here and complains about these cuts is a hypocrite because they allowed it to happen.

In my State of Iowa, these cuts that will mean a 42-percent reduction in the amount of Byrne funding available statewide from \$4.6 million last year, down from \$6.2 million the year before, to only \$2.6 million. We will receive only \$2.6 million to fund 25 drug task forces, 16 offender treatment programs, and 9 early intervention programs. These cuts will come as my State continues to be in the middle of a meth epidemic.

Our preliminary estimates are that this is going to mean the loss of 27 drug task force salaries and corresponding 1300 fewer arrests. It will mean layoffs. There are no longer any alternatives. It will also mean the loss of 22 Byrne funded programs including innovative and successful treatment programs. These cuts will lead to at least 1,200 fewer meth addicts in prison receiving drug treatment. The result will be to put addicts back on the streets where there crimes will escalate and drive up the costs of prosecuting and incarcerating them the next time around.

These cuts will be devastating. Between fiscal year 2003 and 2005 we had already slashed over \$1 billion in direct help to local law enforcement officers. How much more can we expect our law enforcement officers to take?

It is simply amazing to me that this administration and this Congress could be so foolish as to slash funds from programs that work. Between 1993 and 2003, violent crime in this country declined by more than 50 percent—from 49.1 to 22.3 incidents of violence per 1,000 persons. This is the exact same period of time when we provided over \$1 billion to the COPS and Byrne programs alone.

Even after cuts to the program, last year the Byrne Program funded 4,316 cops and prosecutors working on 764 drug enforcement task forces nationally. Byrne funding led to 130,000 drug arrests in 32 States, the seizure of 136 tons of illegal drugs, the confiscation of over 7,000 weapons, and the seizure of 7,691 meth labs. It is simply crazy that we are slashing over \$200 million from this program in this bill.

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I rise in support of the conference report accompanying H.R. 2862, the Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2006, but I do so with some reservations. To be sure, this bill funds many programs and agencies vital to the Na-

tion's security and economic strength, and the conferees should be complimented for drafting a balanced spending bill. However, this appropriations measure is also supposed to fund local law enforcement and juvenile crime prevention programs, and in the past, it did so successfully. Unfortunately, this year's version does not adequately fulfill the very important responsibility of supporting law enforcement and crime prevention programs.

Let us first consider the Edward J. Byrne Justice Assistance Grant Program. For more than 30 years, Byrne grants have paid for State and local drug task forces, community crime prevention programs, substance abuse treatment programs, prosecution initiatives, and many other local crime control programs. Talk to any police chief or sheriff back in your home State and they will tell you that the Byrne program is the backbone of Federal aid for local law enforcement. We should not walk away from a program with more than 30 years of success supporting our local police chiefs, sheriffs, and district attorneys.

Sadly, this conference report takes a step in that direction by providing a little more than \$416 million for the Byrne grant program. That number represents a cut of more than \$200 million from last year's level. Slashing the Byrne program in this manner will have a real and negative impact on local police departments, district attorneys, and community crime prevention programs.

The COPS program is another victim of this conference report. Though my colleagues should be commended for increasing the overall COPS Program from last year's level of \$388 million to \$478 million this year, I am discouraged that we have zeroed out the Universal Hiring Program completely this year. We should remember that just 3 years ago, the overall COPS program received more than a billion dollars, and \$330 million of that was for the hiring program which simply puts more cops on the streets. And that simply has led to a reduction in crime. Do we want to risk this success by abandoning a program that works?

Perhaps the biggest disappointment is how the title V Local Delinquency Prevention Program is treated in this appropriations bill. The title V program is the only Federal program solely dedicated to juvenile crime prevention, and the conference report dedicates \$65 million to it. But after one takes away all of the national earmarks that are housed in title V—all worthy programs that I support like the Gang Resistance, Education and Training, GREAT Program—title V is left with a mere \$5 million to spread across the entire country. That amount is not enough to build robust juvenile crime prevention programs. I should hope that in the future, we can, at a minimum, fund the title V program at the Senate-passed level of \$80

million and do so free of national program earmarks. To be sure, these other programs deserve federal dollars and should be funded as separate line items in order that title V can have sufficient program funds to operate successfully.

Make no mistake, juvenile crime prevention programs supported by title V are worth our support. According to many experts in the field, every dollar spent on prevention saves three or four dollars in costs attributable to juvenile crime. And who can put a dollar value on the hundreds, even thousands of young lives turned from crime and into productive work and community life by the juvenile crime prevention initiatives supported by title V? We can and must do better.

This conference report is the product of many long hours of negotiations and hard work. Subcommittee Chairman SHELBY and Ranking Member MIKULSKI and their staffs deserve praise for a balanced product. Indeed, this bill is the result of compromise and I will vote in favor of it. But I hope that next year we can do a better job at helping our overworked local police officers and giving a ray of hope for disadvantaged children who desperately need our help.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I rise today to voice my disappointment with respect to the funding level provided for Project Safe Neighborhoods in the fiscal year 2006 Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations conference report.

The President's Project Safe Neighborhoods has been one of the most incredibly successful crime prevention programs in our Nation. And today, we passed appropriations with tragically low funding for this important program that has been highly effective at removing from our streets criminals who use guns to carry out their crimes.

When I was Attorney General of Texas, I joined with then Governor Bush to launch Texas Exile. That program, modeled after the effective Project Exile in Richmond, VA, also was extraordinarily successful—providing local prosecutors with the funds to get more than 2,000 guns off the streets and to issue more than 1,500 indictments for gun crimes, resulting in almost 1,200 convictions in its first 3 years of existence alone.

And when President Bush came to Washington, he built upon our success in Texas by making Project Safe Neighborhoods one of his top priorities and launching the Project Exile program nationally—providing badly needed resources to jurisdictions throughout the country to combat gun related crimes.

And in the short time this initiative has been up and running, the results have been astonishing. Project Safe Neighborhoods' prosecution, prevention and deterrence efforts have helped fuel historical lows in gun crime across America as well as a 30-year low in the violent crime victimization rate. Over the past 4 years, Federal gun crime prosecutions have increased by 76 per-

cent—and virtually all of these criminals spend time in prison—for example, 94 percent in fiscal year 2004.

The administration has devoted over \$1.3 billion to implement Project Safe Neighborhoods since its inception in 2001. These funds have been used to hire almost 200 new Federal prosecutors dedicated to gun crime and provide grants to hire approximately 540 new State and local gun prosecutors.

While I appreciate any effort this body might take to embrace fiscal discipline—I question the efficacy of choosing to cut a program that literally is saving thousands of lives nationwide and making our society increasingly safer just as we are seeing the significant successes resulting from it.

The additional Federal funding for these State and local gun prosecutors, as well as the associated community outreach efforts and other important initiatives are critical to the success of the program and to the national reduction of violent crime.

That is why I was so concerned when I learned of the shortfall in this funding. None of the \$73,800,000 in grants for State and local governments requested by President Bush was included initially in either the House or Senate.

And I was not alone. Chairman SPEC-TER and Senators GRASSLEY, KYL, SES-SIONS and COBURN from the Judiciary Committee as well as Senators SANTORUM and LUGAR joined me in requesting full funding for the program in a letter dated September 8, 2005.

And, I must thank my colleague from Alabama, Senator SHELBY, as well as fellow Texan, Congressman JIM CULBERSON, and their respective staffs, for their help in achieving at least a minimal amount of funding of \$15 million that we were able to get into the conference report.

The Project Safe Neighborhoods program serves as a model of coordinated government efforts—with Federal, State and local governments sharing the burden of prosecuting criminals and coordinating their resources to do so. At a time when some Federal agencies struggle to coordinate efficiently with state and local governments—the Project Safe Neighborhoods program serves as a model of efficiency and effectiveness.

In closing, while I voted in favor of the appropriations conference report because of its many important programs—I remain committed to seeking full funding for Project Safe Neighborhoods next year and in the years to come and looking forward to working with my colleagues to ensure that we keep America's streets safe from violent gun-using criminals.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to the conference report to accompany H.R. 2862.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. CORZINE) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 94, nays 5, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 329 Leg.]

YEAS—94

Akaka	Durbin	McConnell
Alexander	Ensign	Mikulski
Allard	Enzi	Murkowski
Allen	Feingold	Murray
Bayh	Feinstein	Nelson (FL)
Bennett	Frist	Nelson (NE)
Biden	Graham	Obama
Bingaman	Grassley	Pryor
Bond	Gregg	Reed
Boxer	Hagel	Reid
Brownback	Harkin	Roberts
Bunning	Hatch	Rockefeller
Burns	Hutchison	Salazar
Burr	Inhofe	Santorum
Byrd	Inouye	Sarbanes
Cantwell	Isakson	Schumer
Carper	Jeffords	Sessions
Chafee	Johnson	Shelby
Chambliss	Kennedy	Smith
Clinton	Kerry	Snowe
Cochran	Kohl	Specter
Coleman	Kyl	Stabenow
Collins	Landrieu	Stevens
Cornyn	Lautenberg	Sununu
Craig	Leahy	Talent
Crapo	Levin	Thune
DeMint	Lieberman	Vitter
DeWine	Lincoln	Voinovich
Dodd	Lott	Warner
Dole	Lugar	Wyden
Domenici	Martinez	
Dorgan	McCain	

NAYS—5

Baucus	Conrad	Thomas
Coburn	Dayton	

NOT VOTING—1

Corzine

The conference report was agreed to.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote, and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

THE TAX RELIEF ACT OF 2005

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate begin consideration of S. 2020, the tax reconciliation bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2020) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to section 202(b) of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2006.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, before Senator BAUCUS and I give our opening statements, I yield 5 minutes to the Senator from South Carolina for a statement on another subject, and then I presume the Senator from New York wants to follow him for 5 minutes. So there will be 10 minutes before