

May 14, 2025

The Honorable Pam Bondi
Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Attorney General Bondi:

On April 30, 2025, I joined 29 of my Democratic colleagues to request information on, and the immediate restoration of, hundreds of grants terminated by the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs on April 22.¹ I write today to emphasize that these cuts jeopardize many state and local grantees' work to treat substance-use disorder, help at-risk kids, and enact proven criminal justice reforms.

DOJ has suggested that this work does not align with the Trump Administration's priorities.² I find it hard to believe that combatting the opioid epidemic, reducing juvenile crime and delinquency, and helping states save money and reduce recidivism are not priorities for any Administration seriously committed to public safety. As Ranking Member of the Judiciary Committee subcommittee responsible for oversight of DOJ grant programs, I urge DOJ to swiftly reinstate these grantees' funding so they can continue to serve the American people.

Combatting the Opioid Epidemic

DOJ terminated several grants that fund the Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program (COSSUP). Created in 2016 as part of my and former Senator Rob Portman's Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, Congress designed COSSUP to address the opioid epidemic through evidence-based best practices in the areas of prevention, treatment, law enforcement, and recovery. In 2018, Congress doubled down on its bipartisan commitment to this work by reauthorizing and expanding COSSUP as part of the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act—signed into law by President Trump.³

Since its inception, COSSUP has funded family and drug courts to help people dealing with substance-use disorder, law enforcement and first-responder programs to connect low-level and non-violent drug offenders with treatment and social services, and plans to tackle the opioid

¹ Letter from Sen. Cory A. Booker et al. to Hon. Pamela J. Bondi, Att'y Gen., & Maureen A. Henneberg, Deputy Assistant Att'y Gen., Office of Justice Programs (Apr. 30, 2025), <https://www.booker.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/20250501dojgrantterminationletter.pdf>.

² Peter Eisler & Sara N. Lynch, US Cancels Hundreds of Grants for Police, Crime Victims, Justice Dept Documents Show, Reuters (Apr. 23, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-justice-department-cancels-hundreds-grantspolice-crime-victims-2025-04-23/>.

³ SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act § 8091, 34 U.S.C. § 10261(a)(27).

epidemic in hard-hit rural communities.⁴ Through COSSUP, in 2021 and 2022 alone, more than 59,000 members of the public were trained on the use of Naloxone, more than 32,000 people were enrolled in substance-use treatment programs, and more than 94,000 people were enrolled in recovery-support services.⁵

By terminating funding for the organizations that provide expert training and assistance to run these programs, DOJ has jeopardized the hard-fought progress our country has made in the fight against the opioid epidemic.

Reducing Juvenile Crime and Delinquency

DOJ also terminated numerous grants to reduce juvenile crime by helping young people in the juvenile justice system. Many of these grants are administered by DOJ's Office on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), which Congress established through the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act that Senate Judiciary Chairman Grassley and I have championed. OJJDP "provides national leadership, coordination, and resources to prevent and respond to youth delinquency and victimization."⁶

As part of that mission, OJJDP awarded nearly \$400 million in grants in Fiscal Year 2023 to combat substance use among kids, assist victims of child abuse, and find and protect missing and exploited children.⁷ DOJ further terminated grants outside of OJJDP that help state and local communities tackle juvenile justice problems. These include grants to study the causes of and solutions to juvenile crime and to facilitate kids' reentry from the juvenile justice system into school and their community.

During your confirmation process, you assured me in writing that you "appreciate the need for programs to prevent delinquency and improve juvenile justice systems."⁸ Now, under your leadership, DOJ has gutted many of those programs, including work by a Children's Hospital to train stakeholders in 13 states on responding to child abuse.⁹ I urge you to live up to your promise to the Senate Judiciary Committee and restore funding for these programs to serve our nation's youth.

⁴ U.S. Dep't of Justice, *Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program (COSSUP)*, <https://bja.ojp.gov/program/cossup/about>.

⁵ U.S. Dep't of Justice, *Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program Key Performance Indicator Report: Calendar Years 2021-2022*, <https://bja.ojp.gov/doc/cossup-kpi-report-2021-2022.pdf> (archived at <https://web.archive.org/web/20241130100348/https://bja.ojp.gov/doc/cossup-kpi-report-2021-2022.pdf>).

⁶ U.S. Dep't of Justice, *Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention*, <https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/>.

⁷ U.S. Dep't of Justice, *Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention: Funding*, <https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/funding#4-0>.

⁸ Questions for the Record to Pamela Jo Bondi, Senate Committee on Judiciary, *The Nomination of the Honorable Pamela Jo Bondi to be Attorney General of the United States*, at 44, 119th Cong. (Jan. 16, 2025).

⁹ Sara Tiano, *Trump Administration Guts Funding For Children's Advocacy Centers in Western U.S.*, The Imprint (May 2, 2025), <https://imprintnews.org/child-welfare-2/trump-administration-guts-funding-for-childrens-advocacy-centers-in-western-u-s/260872>.

Improving State Criminal Justice Systems

Finally, DOJ terminated essentially all funding for the Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI), a longstanding bipartisan program to assist states with enacting cost-saving criminal justice reforms. JRI helps states reinvest these savings into proven, cost-effective justice programs, including for victims of crime, law enforcement crisis intervention training, and data collection to track crime trends. As of 2018, JRI helped states save an estimated \$3.2 billion.¹⁰ Additionally, in the 44 states that have used JRI, crime rates dropped an average of 38 percent from 2008 to 2023, and recidivism rates dropped an average of 10 percent from 2008 to 2019.¹¹

DOJ's terminations undercut Congress's bipartisan commitment to JRI's primary training and technical assistance organizations. In Arkansas, Oklahoma, Minnesota, New Hampshire, and North Dakota, a loss of \$2.5 million in JRI funds will undermine those state leaders' prioritization of reducing recidivism and justice-system costs. DOJ also terminated JRI grants that help law enforcement and justice system leaders in roughly 2,000 counties track data trends. Ending these grants jeopardizes public safety and balloons costs for Republican and Democratic state governments. DOJ should reverse course and restore these grants to improve justice systems everywhere.

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These grants may represent only a portion of the funding DOJ terminated, but they are emblematic of the nonpartisan and life-saving services that DOJ's unilateral decision has imperiled. Large, bipartisan majorities in Congress have repeatedly demonstrated their support for these programs, which assist state and local governments, nonprofit organizations, and individuals in virtually every state. I again urge you to reinstate these grants before more harm is done to communities across the country.

Sincerely,



Sheldon Whitehouse
Ranking Member
Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on
Federal Courts, Oversight,
Agency Action, and
Federal Rights

¹⁰ *About JRI*, Justice Reinvestment Initiative, <https://justicereinvestmentinitiative.org/about-jri/>.

¹¹ *Id.*