July 11, 2017

The Honorable Rodney P. Frelinghuysen Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Lowey,

I write to register the strong support of the nation’s mayors for the COPS Office and its programs and to urge you to amend the Commerce, Justice, Science appropriations bill reported out of subcommittee June 29 so that the Committee provides at least the funding levels proposed by President Trump.

The COPS Office and its programs are vital to the public safety of our cities. Throughout its nearly 23 years, the Office has advanced community policing by providing knowledge, assistance, and grant resources to the nation’s state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies:

- Its hiring grants have helped 13,000 state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies hire and redeploy approximately 129,000 officers, thereby strengthening police-community relations and improving public safety. Funding for the program has diminished significantly, however, and last year was sufficient for just 918 additional officers.

- Its Community Policing Development (CPD) Grant Program and Microgrants Initiative have supported training and technical assistance, the development of innovative community policing strategies, applied research, guidebooks, and best practices that are used and replicated by departments across the country.

- Its collaborative reform initiatives have helped mayors and law enforcement executives to assess individual agency needs and tailor effective technical assistance approaches.

When I became President of the Conference of Mayors two weeks ago, I released a Mayors’ Agenda for the Future. To ensure the safety and security of our communities, among other things that agenda calls for increasing the number of community policing officers on the streets and investing resources directly in cities to support police training in areas including implicit bias, de-escalation, and cultural sensitivity, hiring, technology and equipment, data collection and analysis, use-of-force policies, and officer safety and wellness. In addition, for nearly a year, Mayors have spoken with one voice on the need expand homeland security grants, tackle the opioid crisis and reform the criminal justice system.
The U.S. Conference of Mayors was involved in the creation of the COPS Office and its programs and has strongly supported them ever since. We have done this because ensuring safety and security is a top priority for mayors throughout the country, and the COPS Office has been critical to our ability to do that. It must continue to be able to play this important role. We urge you to provide funding for the Office and its programs in the FY 2018 appropriations bill you will markup on Thursday.

Sincerely,

Mitchell J. Landrieu
Mayor of New Orleans
President

cc. Members of the Appropriations Committee