



Department of Justice

STATEMENT OF

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIME, TERRORISM,
HOMELAND SECURITY, AND INVESTIGATIONS
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

FOR A HEARING CONCERNING

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PRESENTED

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Statement of Alan R. Hanson
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Chairman Gowdy, Ranking Member Jackson Lee, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to discuss the oversight of the Department of Justice's three grant-making components: the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW), and the Office of Justice Programs (OJP). My name is Alan Hanson and I am the Acting Assistant Attorney General for OJP. Prior to joining OJP in January of this year, I spent most of my career working in Congress for Members with oversight responsibilities of federal agency programs, so I share your commitment and vigilance when it comes to ensuring that these programs are managed effectively. I can assure you that this commitment is also shared by the leadership of the COPS Office and OVW.

As the Committee knows, the mission of all three of the Department's grant-making components is to provide leadership, resources, and solutions for creating safe, just, and engaged communities for all Americans. Testifying before you today is a valuable opportunity to discuss the impact of our work.

This Administration is focused on reducing violent crime in America's communities. That's good news for all of us who care about public safety and effectively supporting law enforcement officers and victims of crime. It is also important to underscore that, for our Attorney General, the safety of our communities, and of those who protect them, is paramount.

Under Attorney General Sessions, the Department is working to fulfill its original, core mission – to uphold the rule of law and ensure that justice is administered and enforced fairly and impartially. To that end, the Attorney General has made it clear that he's willing to do what it takes to help communities nationwide reduce crime and violence. And having worked very closely with Jeff Sessions during his time in the Senate, I can tell you that those are not empty words.

In his short time in office, the Attorney General has already set up a task force on crime reduction and public safety. The task force, created pursuant to a presidential Executive Order,¹ is charged with developing strategies to reduce crime, including ways to improve existing laws and policies that address public safety and crime reduction. As part of this effort, the Department will host a National Summit on Crime Reduction and Public Safety at the end of June. The summit will provide an opportunity for us to hear from representatives from state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies; law enforcement organizations; community advocacy

¹ Presidential Executive Order on a Task Force on Crime Reduction and Public Safety (Feb. 9, 2017) <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/02/09/presidential-executive-order-task-force-crime-reduction-and-public>

groups; organizations for victims of violent crime; and academia on local strategies that work and develop action plans on how we at the federal level can best support those efforts.

President Trump also signed an Executive Order,² “Preventing Violence Against Federal, State, Tribal and Local Law Enforcement,” directing the Justice Department to take the lead in developing a strategy to reduce violence against law enforcement officers and signaling the Department’s strong commitment to supporting officers at the federal, state, local, and tribal levels.

The Department’s grant programs collectively are vital to the Administration’s efforts. Indeed, in line with the Department’s goals, OJP, which awards a wide range of grants to support local, state, and tribal law enforcement departments, prosecutors’ offices, court and corrections systems, juvenile justice agencies, and victim service programs, in addition to serving as the Justice Department’s research and statistical arm, is exploring how existing grants, training and technical assistance, and research programs can better ensure officer safety and bolster law enforcement efforts aimed at bringing order to high-crime communities. OJP will devote its resources to support programs and efforts designed to reduce crime, strengthen law enforcement, improve officer safety, expand services for victims of crime, enforce victims’ rights, and promote proven options like drug courts for individuals with substance addictions who are responsible for low-level, non-violent offenses. OJP will also advance aggressive strategies aimed at stopping the exploitation of children and the trafficking of people for sex and labor. Further, OJP will work to help law enforcement disrupt gang activity and discourage young people from becoming involved with gangs.

Likewise, the COPS Office, which assists state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies in enhancing their effectiveness and advancing public safety through the implementation of community policing strategies, will continue to advance the work of the National Officer Safety and Wellness Group, which brings together representatives from law enforcement, federal agencies, and the research community to focus attention on this critical aspect of public safety and highlight best practices on officer safety and wellness topics. The COPS Office is also proud to have established and continue to manage the National Blue Alert Network, a system designed to rapidly disseminate information to law enforcement, the media, and the public to aid in the apprehension of violent criminals who pose a risk to law enforcement. Furthermore, to support the Attorney General’s priority goal of reducing violent crime, especially gun violence, the COPS Office has structured this year’s COPS Hiring Program so that applicants choosing “violent crime” as their problem/focus area under the program will receive additional consideration for funding.

And OVW, whose mission is to provide federal leadership in improving our national response to sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking, will continue to assist communities across the country in creating programs, policies, and practices aimed at holding offenders accountable and supporting victims. With funding authorized by the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and subsequent legislation, service providers, law enforcement,

² Presidential Executive Order on Preventing Violence Against Federal, State, Tribal, and Local Law Enforcement Officers (Feb. 9, 2017) <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/02/09/presidential-executive-order-preventing-violence-against-federal-state>

prosecutors, and court personnel reach hundreds of thousands of victims every year. VAWA discretionary grants support more than 50 specialized law enforcement and 50 specialized prosecution units that focus on the crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. In any given year, VAWA-funded law enforcement officers respond to more than 150,000 calls for service, investigate over 150,000 complaints, and refer over 70,000 cases to prosecutors. VAWA grants and subgrants also support more than 300 prosecutors annually, and prosecution of the majority of more than 200,000 cases referred to them for consideration. OVW grantees and subgrantees obtain convictions in roughly three-quarters of the sexual assault cases they charge.

As the Subcommittee is aware, although the nation's overall rate of violent crime remains at historically low levels, violent crime is a significant problem in certain geographic regions and large metropolitan areas. When faced with this reality, those of us charged with protecting public safety cannot afford to be complacent, so acting decisively at all levels — federal, state, local, and tribal — to keep our citizens safe is our priority. The Department's grant-making components, along with other federal agencies, victims, and stakeholder groups across the country, have an obligation to ensure our grant programs address crime and issues of public safety, support law enforcement, and ultimately make a difference in the lives of all Americans.

Given these critical priorities, the Department's grant-making components manage large portfolios of grants made to communities across our country. OJP, COPS and OVW have a combined active portfolio of approximately 11,000 awards totaling \$12 billion.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 alone, OJP awarded more than 3,000 grants and cooperative agreements, totaling \$3.9 billion. Currently, OJP provides essential stewardship of almost 7,200 active grants totaling nearly \$10 billion. In FY 2016, COPS awarded 320 grants and cooperative agreements totaling more than \$171 million to state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies, as well as to law enforcement stakeholders such as nonprofit institutions, institutions of higher education, community groups, and faith-based organizations. In FY 2016, OVW made 766 awards totaling over \$452 million to states, territories, local governments, tribal governments, courts, non-profit victim services providers, colleges and universities, homeless service providers, and other community-based programs. Nearly 40 percent of this funding is awarded to states under OVW's STOP Violence Against Women Formula Grant (STOP) and the Sexual Assault Services Formula Grant Programs, and is then subawarded to police, prosecutors, courts, and victim service providers, including rape crisis centers.

The role of the Department's grant-making components in preventing waste, fraud, and abuse of the billions of taxpayer dollars it manages each year is critically important. To enhance the Department's efforts to effectively manage funds, OJP, the COPS Office, and OVW have improved our internal controls and risk management tools and strengthened our oversight and monitoring activities. The grant-making components fulfill their oversight responsibilities through a multipronged approach that includes a thorough pre-award risk analysis before grant awards are made; routine review of grantee progress and financial reports, financial and programmatic monitoring; grantee audit resolution assistance; training and technical assistance; and targeted outreach to high-risk or at-risk grantees, meaning grantees that have a higher chance

of not complying with the administrative, programmatic or financial requirements of their award.

OJP's Office of Audit, Assessment, and Management (OAAM) works to improve and enhance programmatic oversight for OJP's bureaus and program offices, as well as the COPS Office and OVW. OAAM's mission is to advance the integrity and effectiveness of justice programs, operations, and investments. To accomplish that goal, OAAM works continuously to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of justice programs and operations by ensuring oversight and review of critical grants, financial management, IT infrastructure, contracts, and human resources administration. OAAM has a strong relationship with the Department's Office of the Inspector General (OIG). The OIG independently conducts extensive audits of DOJ grant recipients and recommends program improvements.

As the Subcommittee is aware, the Administration released the President's FY 2018 Budget two weeks ago. The request for OJP firmly reflects the Department's priorities by proposing funding for new and existing programs that are aimed at violence reduction and officer safety. OJP requests a total of \$1.3 billion in discretionary funding for FY 2018, which includes, for example, \$70 million for a new Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) Block Grants program. The PSN Block Grants program will build on the work of the Department's to create safer neighborhoods through sustained reductions in gang violence and gun crime. Also, OJP requests \$5 million for the National Crime Reduction Assistance Network, which will build on the work of the Violence Reduction Network, and support the Public Safety Partnership program to leverage the Department's resources to help build the capacity to reduce violence in U.S. cities with the highest violent crime rates. Further, OJP requests \$100 million in FY 2018 for programs authorized under the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, including \$20 million for the Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Program, to respond to the growing problem of abuse and misuse of heroin and prescription opioids.

Each OJP bureau and program office plays a key role in advancing the Department's crime fighting agenda. OJP's Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) focuses on enhancing law enforcement efforts to reduce crime and make communities safer. This is accomplished by supporting law enforcement training, developing comprehensive strategies to address the rapidly expanding opioid epidemic, addressing sexual assault and sexual harassment in confined facilities, and offering training and technical assistance for communities.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) focuses on programs which serve to improve the juvenile justice system in a manner that enhances public safety, holds youth involved in the justice system appropriately accountable, and provides treatment and rehabilitative services for juveniles. On May 24th, the Department commemorated Missing Children's Day — an observance first proclaimed by President Reagan in 1983 — to honor the heroic and exemplary efforts of agencies, organizations, and individuals to protect children.

OJP's Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) is charged with administering the Crime Victims Fund (CVF). Through OVC, the CVF supports a broad array of programs and services that focus on helping victims in the immediate aftermath of crime and continuing to support them as they rebuild their lives. The CVF is distributed to states, tribes and local communities to

support victim assistance and compensation programs. This includes providing aid to victims of domestic and international terrorism, supporting victims in tribal communities, and training thousands of victim service providers and criminal justice and allied professionals. Every year, OVC can access up to \$50 million from the VOCA Emergency Reserve to fund emergency expenses and other services for victims of terrorism and or mass violence, both within the U.S. and abroad. This program, known as the Antiterrorism Emergency Assistance Program, helps jurisdictions that have been overwhelmed by a mass violence or domestic terrorism incident. In addition to the CVF, OVC also administers programs to address human trafficking authorized under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, and the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. Several of these programs operate in coordination with law enforcement agencies.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), the principal statistical agency at DOJ, collects, analyzes, and produces timely and reliable statistics on crime and the operation of the justice system. Objective data are critical to inform policy-makers and practitioners in their development of effective law enforcement and victim service strategies.

Similarly, research and evaluation conducted by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) are critical to the development of evidence-based programs designed to reduce crime and violence and promote officer safety. NIJ sets the standards for criminal justice equipment, technology, and strategies from body armor to officer safety and wellness. NIJ conducts studies on the effectiveness of tools to protect law enforcement officers and first responders, such as increasing the roadside visibility of officers and their vehicles.

OJP also administers programs that provide support for oversight of registered sex offenders. OJP's Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking (SMART) implements important programs that help protect our children under the Adam Walsh Act and International Megan's Law.

OJP has also strengthened its commitment to public safety and justice in Indian Country through the Department's Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation (CTAS). This collaborative effort with the COPS Office, OVW, and OJP support a wide range of criminal and juvenile justice needs in Indian Country. Through a single grant application, tribes can request funding in one or more purpose areas, including policing; courts; renovation of justice system facilities; alcohol and substance abuse treatment; juvenile justice programs; and victim services programs.

Similarly, the President's FY 2018 Budget request for the COPS Office maintains vital resources for law enforcement to assist in their efforts to advance public safety through community policing. The President's Budget requests \$218 million for the COPS Office, including \$207 million in grants for the advancement of community policing and the COPS Hiring Program (CHP) to support the hiring of sworn law enforcement personnel nationwide. As part of demonstrating their community policing plan, COPS Hiring Program applicants may choose from several crime problem areas, including homeland security and violent crime, to target funding to improve public safety in their communities.

COPS Office Community Policing Development (CPD) funding contributes to developing the capacity of law enforcement to implement community policing strategies, builds knowledge about effective practices and outcomes, and supports creative approaches to preventing crime and promoting safe communities. These funds also address the unique needs of targeted audiences and stakeholders, such as campus and school safety programs, tribal and Native American law enforcement, returning offenders, faith-based programs, and agencies implementing large technology initiatives. Relatedly, the COPS Office also continues to manage grant funding specific to Indian Country for tribal law enforcement needs, including hiring and training new community policing officers; training the existing force; and purchasing new equipment, technology, and vehicles. In addition, through its Anti-Heroin and Anti-Methamphetamine grant programs, the COPS Office supports state police agencies in investigating illicit drug activities. Also, the COPS Office is providing funding for Active Shooter Training designed to increase law enforcement and public safety by providing funds for the delivery of scenario-based training that prepares officers and other first responders to safely and effectively handle active shooter and other violent threats.

The President's FY 2018 Budget request for OVW maintains funding at near historic levels. With this funding, OVW will continue to emphasize: (1) reducing the violent crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking, (2) supporting essential services for victims, (3) reaching underserved communities, and (4) ensuring meaningful evaluation of its programs and implementation of evidence-based practices. One recent example of OVW's focus on identifying and replicating evidence-based practices that reduce violence is its Domestic Violence Homicide Prevention Demonstration Initiative. OVW supported 12 sites to examine their current response to domestic violence homicides and near homicides and to receive training and technical assistance on implementing lethality assessment models that have successfully reduced domestic violence homicides in other jurisdictions. Of those sites, four have been chosen to participate in a rigorous NIJ evaluation of the models. The FY 2018 Budget request would identify ongoing funding for this initiative, as well as authorize a set-aside from OVW's Arrest Program to be used to develop a new Domestic Violence Firearm Lethality Reduction Initiative.

As I have become familiar with the programs supported by the Department and hear about the impact these programs have on states, local communities, and tribes, it is clear to me that law enforcement professionals and community leaders across the nation are doing the good work that needs to be done. Last month Americans came together to commemorate Police Week, when we honored those law enforcement officers who risk their lives every day to keep us safe, and sadly those who sacrificed their lives and wellbeing to protect us. It is our privilege at the Department to call these brave men and women our partners.

Thank you again for this opportunity to address the Committee, and I look forward to addressing your questions.