

January 2, 2018

The Honorable Robert Goodlatte
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
2141 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Goodlatte and Nadler,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations – we write to express concern with an adopted provision to H.R. 4477, the Fix NICS Act, which was incorporated into H.R. 38, the Conceal Carry Reciprocity Act of 2017. While we appreciate the committee’s efforts to reauthorize the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), authorizing these agencies at much lower levels than in recent years would have a detrimental impact on their ability to carry out their important research and evaluation missions.

As Chairman Goodlatte noted in his remarks during the bill’s markup, NIJ research works to “advance our understanding of crime” and “provides objective and independent knowledge and tools to reduce crime and promote justice.” NIJ also works to make the results of this research available to state and local officials and the public, allowing justice and law enforcement professionals to facilitate the adoption of best practices.

As one of the thirteen principal federal statistical agencies, the BJS is vital to the Department of Justice and the country as a whole, thanks to its mission to “collect, process, analyze, and disseminate accurate and timely information on crime and the administration of justice and to assist States and localities to improve criminal justice record-keeping.” The proposed cut in BJS’ authorization comes just as the National Academy of Sciences’ *Panel on Modernizing the Nation’s Crime Statistics* is about to release its second and final report pointing out the shortcomings in the current set of social indicators of criminal and juvenile justice and their cost to the nation. At precisely the moment when the inadequacy of current measures of crime is being delineated, it is disheartening to see a recommendation to cut the nation’s investment in maintaining a robust set of tools by which the performance of the criminal and juvenile justice systems can be monitored and improved, thereby restoring public confidence that justice is being served. BJS data provide a strong foundation for DOJ policy development and program administration, contributing significantly to enhancing the safety of our country and its people.

Objective research grounded in sound and comprehensive data is needed now more than ever, and yet the proposed authorization levels would represent more than a thirty percent cut to these two agencies and would impair the progress of important research that is critical to federal, state, and local justice systems. We hope that you will consider reversing these cuts to the NIJ and BJS authorization levels in future conference negotiations. Please use our organizations as a resource on these issues as the bill progresses. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Consortium of Social Science Associations

American Statistical Association

American Political Science Association

American Education Research Association

American Sociological Association

American Psychological Association

Society for Personality and Social Psychology

Society for Social Work and Research

American Anthropological Association

Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics