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COSSA Statement in Support of the *Improving Justice Programs through Science Act of 2019 (S. 2286/H.R. 3989)*

The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) supports the *Improving Justice Programs through Science Act of 2019* (S. 2286 and H.R. 3989) as introduced by Senator Brian Schatz and Representative Madeleine Dean. The bill would reestablish the Science Advisory Board within the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) at the Department of Justice, the charter of which lapsed in 2018 under the Trump Administration. As an organization that works to promote and advance the role the social and behavioral sciences play in informing policy, COSSA recognizes that having an active science advisory body within the Department of Justice will help ensure criminal justice policies are backed by evidence.

Since its 2010 authorization, the OJP Science Advisory Board worked with staff at the Department of Justice to create guidelines for implementing and evaluating efforts to reduce crime, strategies to address diminishing response rates to critical Department of Justice surveys, and methods for police departments to better communicate with the communities they serve. As the government responds to complex and shifting dynamics in the legal landscape, including implementing criminal justice reform legislation, addressing the challenges of the opioid epidemic, and understanding the impact of new technologies on crime and policing, it is more important than ever that the Department of Justice have ready access to scientific expertise. The *Improving Justice Programs through Science Act* would help to restore science and evidence to its rightful place in helping to guide criminal justice policy.

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The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) is a nonprofit advocacy organization working to promote sustainable federal funding for social and behavioral science research and federal policies that positively impact the conduct of research. COSSA serves as a united voice for a broad, diverse network of organizations, institutions, communities, and stakeholders who care about a successful and vibrant social science research enterprise. The COSSA membership includes professional and disciplinary associations, scientific societies, research centers and institutes, and U.S. colleges and universities.

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