

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

October 24, 2017

The Honorable Jeff Sessions  
Attorney General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Attorney General Sessions:

We are deeply concerned about the delay in the disbursement of Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program funds for community policing to the state of Connecticut and its cities. We are writing to express our concerns regarding this apparently unjustified delay – which undermines the efforts of Connecticut’s state and local law enforcement officials to keep our citizens safe – and to demand an explanation.

As you know, the Department of Justice was scheduled to disburse around \$2.6 million in critical community policing JAG funds to Connecticut by September 30. These funds include approximately \$1.7 million for the state of Connecticut and \$900,000 for Bridgeport, Danbury, Hamden, New Haven, Norwalk, Stamford, West Haven, and nine other municipalities. The Department has missed the deadline and provided no explanation for the delay.

The JAG program is among the leading federal sources of law enforcement assistance. Police departments in our state rely on these funds to keep officers in neighborhoods, keep communities safe, and ensure that our criminal justice system operates smoothly and effectively. Given the importance of these resources, grant awards are generally processed months in advance so that funds are paid out as soon as possible. Given the Trump administration’s promise to strengthen law enforcement, we are puzzled as to why the Department would interrupt such a critical pipeline of resources.

Some reports suggest that this delay is a result of Connecticut’s immigration laws and policies. If true, this delay would be illogical and potentially illegal. As you know, on October 12, your Department affirmed Connecticut’s compliance with federal immigration laws, writing that it has “found no evidence” of violations of 8 U.S.C. 1373. Even if the Department determined that Connecticut was out of compliance with federal immigration laws, it would be violating a court order if it continued to deny the state federal grants. Two district court judges have issued separate nationwide injunctions blocking the Department from denying federal funding to so-called sanctuary jurisdictions, with the latest one pertaining specifically to the JAG program.

Given this disturbing and potentially illegal delay of JAG funds, we request that you respond to the following questions within 10 days.

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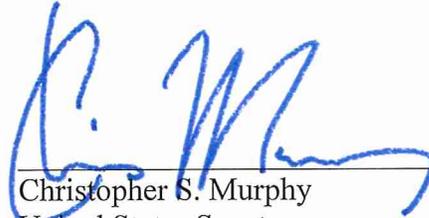
- Why did the Department delay disbursement of around \$2.6 million in JAG funds to Connecticut?
- Under what legal authority are you withholding JAG funds?
- Which Department officials were involved in the decision to delay disbursement of JAG funds? When was the decision made?
- Why did your Department fail to provide an explanation of the delay to state and local governments?
- Do you intend to disburse JAG funds to Connecticut and its municipalities? If so, when do you intend to complete the disbursement?

To provide your response, or if you have any questions, please contact Sam Simon in Senator Blumenthal's office at [sam\\_simon@judiciary-dem.senate.gov](mailto:sam_simon@judiciary-dem.senate.gov).

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senate



Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senate



Rosa DeLauro  
United States House of Representatives



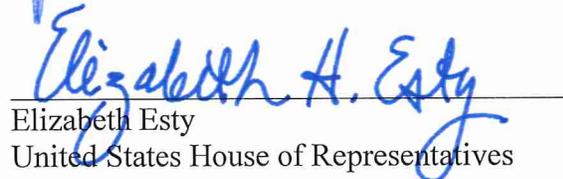
John B. Larson  
United States House of Representatives



James Himes  
United States House of Representatives



Joseph Courtney  
United States House of Representatives



Elizabeth Esty  
United States House of Representatives