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August 10, 2017

The Honorable Jeff Sessions  
Attorney General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Sessions:

I am responding to a letter sent from the Department of Justice (DOJ) to the City of Stockton, CA, indicating that the agency may withhold Public Safety Partnership (PSP) funding if the city does not notify the Department of Homeland Security regarding the detainment of, and other actions related to, undocumented persons.

The federal government creates and administers grant programs such as PSP to help cities fight crime, keep communities safe, and enhance connections between the public and law enforcement. DOJ grants are essential to supplement local and state funding levels, and to help regions that grapple with high rates of crime. Stockton, and the three other cities identified by DOJ, have worked hard to lower crime rates and have had successes, in part, due to funding from the Department of Justice.

The PSP grant was designed to help cities combat violent crime. The crime rates in the four cities identified by DOJ are largely attributed to local gangs, not undocumented individuals. The August 3<sup>rd</sup> letter recognizes that each of these four cities have a higher than average crime rate and that they have been actively working to reduce crime. That is the only criteria needed to receive PSP funding, which should not be dependent upon questions unrelated to that grant's primary goal.

The Department of Justice's mission statement says that it shall work to "...ensure public safety...[and] provide federal leadership in preventing and controlling crime." I wholly agree with this mission; yet, withholding PSP funding, coupled with proposed budget cuts to Byrne Justice Assistance grants and other programs, sends the wrong message to our local law enforcement officers who are working every day to protect our neighborhoods and communities. The City of Stockton was one of the hardest hit areas following the economic recession and was ground zero for the housing crisis. Its residents, local leaders, and law enforcement officials have worked tirelessly to bring the city back from that point.

The Stockton Police Department has been recognized nationally for its innovative and effective approaches to combating crime. Withholding funds and future assistance to our region threatens any progress that's been made. I urge the Department of Justice to continue its stated goals of working with non-federal partners to improve public safety across the country and continue funding local law enforcement agencies in need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jerry McNerney", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jerry McNerney  
Member of Congress