

Washington, D.C. - Representative Lee Terry (NE-02) today offered an amendment to the Science/State/Justice/Commerce Appropriations Act (H.R. 2862) to protect the Byrne-JAG program that funds state and local drug enforcement task forces. The amendment gained the support of a bipartisan group of 175 Members of Congress, but unfortunately did not reach the necessary majority for passage.

"I was proud to support our state and local law enforcement by offering this amendment today," Terry said. "The state task forces we sought to preserve are the frontline defense against the scourge of methamphetamine and other illegal drugs in our communities. I was disappointed the amendment did not pass, but this fight is far from over. I will work with my colleagues to increase Byrne-JAG funds during conference negotiations. We cannot back down when lives are on the line and our local police officers need our help."

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H.R. 2862 reduces the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grants (Byrne-JAG) program by \$286 million - a 45% funding cut that endangers almost 400 state and local task forces, including at least 5 of 11 in Nebraska . These task forces are a primary source of funding for state efforts to curb the production and distribution of methamphetamine, and could not otherwise be funded due to limited local resources. The Terry amendment would have restored Byrne-JAG to its fiscal year 2005 level of \$634 million to ensure the Nebraska State Patrol has the resources it needs to combat drug-related crime.

Terry's Byrne-JAG Restoration Amendment was cosponsored by Congressmen Jim Ramstad (R-MN) and Bart Stupak (D-MI), Co-Chairs of the Congressional Law Enforcement Caucus, Rick Larsen (D-WA) and former sheriff Dave Reichert (R-WA), and Steve King (R-IA). Congressmen Tom Osborne (R-NE) and Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE) also supported the amendment.

Chairman Mark Souder (R-IN) of the House Government Reform Subcommittee on Crime also voted in favor of the Terry amendment. "Byrne grants are essential to state and local law enforcement's anti-drug efforts, and we need to ensure that these frontline officers have adequate resources to protect our communities," Souder said.

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Rep. Terry's floor statement and further details on the Byrne-JAG Restoration Amendment are available upon request. Rep. Terry also held a Special Order speech on the House floor last night to highlight the need to protect Byrne-JAG funding for local sheriffs and police chiefs. The text of his speech appears in the Congressional Record.

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