

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 26, 2017

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney  
Director  
The White House Office of Management and Budget  
725 17th St. NW  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Mulvaney:

We would like to make you aware of a unique situation affecting the law enforcement community in Louisiana and respectfully request your support to address this matter in fiscal year 2017 appropriations.

Many are aware that Louisiana has experienced catastrophic floods in both March and August of 2016, which have resulted in devastating losses for homeowners, communities and state and local government. It has been deemed the fourth most costly disaster in U.S. history and impacted more than 190,000 households. During this time local law enforcement worked the frontlines of this disaster and responded to the needs of their community by conducting search and rescue missions. All of this occurred in an environment of civil strife following the tragic attack on area law enforcement, which resulted in three lost lives, serious injuries and a community in turmoil. Officers already working long hours in response to public safety threats were only compounded with the flooding that then occurred shortly thereafter.

Compounding the effects of the July law enforcement shootings and the August flood, the Louisiana Capital Region is anxiously awaiting the results of the U.S. Department of Justice investigation into the shootings, and the department's decision to continue legal proceedings. No matter the department's decision, it will very likely lead to increased tensions and civil strife that absolutely require a prepared, focus law enforcement community available and capable of providing protection and security.

In response to the epic flooding, Congress acted by appropriating \$1.6 billion in HUD Community Development Block Grant funding for homeowners, which is truly appreciated by the people of Louisiana. This will begin to address the needs of the 190,000 families as they look to rebuild their lives and homes.

Unfortunately, none of these dollars will go to address the significant revenue shortfalls experienced by law enforcement this year and going forward into the next several budget cycles. Unique to Louisiana, a sheriff's office operates as an independent unit of local government. They are autonomous from other local and state governments and share no funding streams with local municipalities. As such, their budget relies solely on the collection of ad valorem taxes in the parish. Following the flood, the appraised value of homes in these communities was reduced

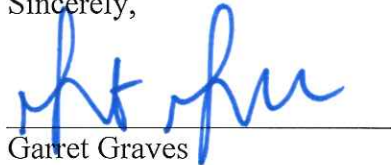
significantly and effectively reduced the only source of revenue for these law enforcement units. It is estimated that these revenue shortfalls will be as much as \$20 million across a couple of parishes, with the need for law enforcement public safety and protection not decreasing. Without the ability to raise revenue from other sources, the only option currently would be to enforce hiring freezes and reduce positions, which will ultimately compromise public safety.

We are respectfully asking that this committee respond to this situation by providing the necessary funding to address these shortfalls through several possible measures:

- The Bureau of Justice Assistance Program: We are asking that the necessary funding of \$20 million be appropriated to the Bureau of Justice Assistance Program so that these dollars can be allocated to local units of government in Louisiana to provide the necessary operating expenses and manpower for these local law enforcement units to provide public safety services. Following Hurricane Katrina, the Department of Justice administered necessary funds to local law enforcement units as the Department has a better understanding of the unique needs of law enforcement.
- FEMA interagency transfer to the Department of Justice: We are asking that \$20 million made available under the Stafford Act, following the August disaster declaration, be transferred to the Department of Justice to be administered by the Department in aiding local law enforcement units to address their revenue shortfall and providing the necessary manpower.

We realize that as decisions are made and priority is given to available dollars for this appropriations measure, we ask that you consider the unique situation that these law enforcement units are currently facing. In July, resources and manpower were stretched thin as law enforcement maintained public safety in the aftermath of July shootings. In August, resources and manpower were stretched beyond capacity as they provided lifesaving rescue and recovery missions. Today, Louisiana awaits a decision to be released by the Department of Justice regarding July's shooting, making it absolutely critical that sheriffs have all necessary manpower available. The revenue shortfalls absorbed solely by these law enforcement units cannot be ignored. Respectfully, we ask that you take these factors into consideration as you appropriate dollars for the remainder of the 2017 fiscal year.


Sincerely,



Garret Graves  
Member of Congress



Steve Scalise  
Member of Congress



Cedric Richmond  
Member of Congress



Ralph Abraham, M.D.  
Member of Congress



Clay Higgins  
Member of Congress



Mike Johnson  
Member of Congress