

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 30, 2025

The Honorable Pamela J. Bondi
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Maureen A. Henneberg
Deputy Assistant Attorney General
Office of Justice Programs
U.S. Department of Justice
999 North Capitol Street, NE
Washington, DC 20531

Dear Attorney General Bondi and Deputy Assistant Attorney General Henneberg,

On April 22, the Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office of Justice Programs (OJP) notified hundreds of grant recipients across the country, without warning, that their funding had been terminated, effective immediately. Many of these grants are authorized by Congress and support programs that have enhanced public safety in communities rural and urban, affluent and poor, Democratic and Republican. While this Administration continues to market itself as the administration of law and order and public safety, DOJ has decided to defund programs that prosecutors, police and sheriff's departments, judges, mental health service providers, academics, and more depend on to advance the Department's longstanding "core mission of keeping Americans safe and vigorously enforcing the law."¹

Congress worked with President Reagan to create the OJP in the Justice Assistance Act of 1984 to "strengthen the nation's capacity to address public safety needs by supporting law enforcement, prosecution, and public defense agencies, as well as courts, corrections, reentry, and crime reduction programs in state, local, and Tribal jurisdictions."² As DOJ's largest grantmaking component, OJP over the last several decades has supported crime victim assistance and compensation programs, juvenile justice and child protection activities, sex offender management efforts, criminal justice research, and crime statistics collection.³ These programs deliver critical resources to state, local, and community advocates who help people with addiction and protect kids, veterans, and victims of crime across the country.

¹ *The Nomination of the Honorable Pamela Jo Bondi to be Attorney General of the United States*: Hearing Before the Senate Comm. on the Judiciary, 119th Cong. (Jan. 15, 2025), available at https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-01-15_-_opening_statement_-_bondi.pdf.

² Office of Justice Programs, U.S. DEP'T OF JUST. (last visited Apr. 28, 2025) <https://www.justice.gov/doj/office-justice-programs>.

³ *Id.*

Based on public reporting, outreach from grantees, and a DOJ Justice Management Division (JMD) spreadsheet (Encl. 1), it appears that the Department defunded at least 365 public safety grants on April 22, 2025.⁴ A review of this information reveals that these grants provide support for victims of crime and resources for communities to ensure public safety.

For example, with these grant terminations, the Department has:

Defunded Programs that Support Victims of Crime

Victims of crime often have many needs ranging from trauma treatment and medical issues to legal assistance and housing. Funding for programs to provide these resources when people are most vulnerable has long had bipartisan support. On April 22, DOJ revoked nearly \$3 million from the National Center for Victims of Crime, which funds crime-victim hotlines and counseling for crime victims, including resources to help victims find safe housing and victims' compensation programs.⁵ The group warned that losing these funds would result in the immediate closure of "a 100% federally funded national hotline that has served tens of thousands of crime survivors since 2015, including more than 16,000 in the last year alone."⁶ In another example of the Administration's haphazard and rash actions to decimate the federal government, only to later reverse course,⁷ DOJ reportedly restored the grant two days later (along with six other victims service grants) after the public backlash.⁸ Other terminated grants included a program that serves victims of crime, primarily children, in New York, a training program for local agencies to respond to victims of elder and child abuse in Virginia, and counseling and treatment programs in Missouri.

Defunded Programs that Combat Rape in Prisons

In 2003, Congress unanimously passed the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), which was signed into law by President George W. Bush, to "eradicate prisoner rape in all types of correctional facilities in this country."⁹ The law requires the Attorney General to make grants to states "for personnel, training, technical assistance, data collection, and equipment to prevent and prosecute prisoner rape."¹⁰ On April 22, the PREA Resource Center notified PREA auditors that DOJ "terminated all funding for the PREA Resource Center (PRC) and its activities, including support for all audit functions, effective

⁴ Peter Eisler & Sarah Lynch, *US Cancels Hundreds of Grants for Police, Crime Victims, Justice Dept Documents Show*, REUTERS (Apr. 23, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-justice-department-cancels-hundreds-grants-police-crime-victims-2025-04-23>.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Ken Dilanian & Laura Strickler, *Justice Department Cutting Grants that Help Crime Victims*, NBC NEWS (Apr. 24, 2025), <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/justice-department/justice-department-cutting-grants-help-crime-victims-rcna202785>.

⁷ Cecelia Smith-Schoenwalder, *Full Speed, Then Reverse: Trump's Biggest U-Turns So Far*, US NEWS (Feb. 27, 2025), <https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2025-02-27/trumps-biggest-policy-reversals-so-far>.

⁸ Sarah N. Lynch & Peter Eisler, *US Justice Dept Grant Cuts Valued at \$811, People and Records Say*, REUTERS (Apr. 24, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-justice-dept-grant-cuts-valued-811-million-people-familiar-say-2025-04-24/#:~:text=The%20365%20competitive%20grants%20being,the%20time%20of%20the%20cuts>.

⁹ *Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Overview*, U.S. DEP'T OF JUST., (date modified Apr. 21, 2025), <https://bja.ojp.gov/program/prea/overview>.

¹⁰ *Prison Rape Elimination Act*, Pub L. 108-79, 117 Stat. 972 (2003) (codified as amended at 34 U.S.C. § 30301 *et seq.*).

immediately” and that they “are working on an orderly shutdown of the Online Audit System (OAS) and notice to affected parties.”¹¹

Defunded Programs that Assist People with Mental Health Disorders

In 2021, an OJP study reported that about 43 percent of individuals incarcerated in state prisons and 23 percent of individuals incarcerated in federal prison had a history of mental health issues, and that 27 percent of individuals incarcerated in state prisons and 14 individuals incarcerated in state prisons had been diagnosed with major depressive disorder.¹² On April 22, DOJ terminated funding for the Cumberland County, New Jersey Prosecutor’s Office Mental Health Collaboration grant to “divert defendants who have been diagnosed with a mental health disorder and have been charged with low-level offenses . . . from court and instead offer treatment and necessary supports.” The Cumberland County Prosecutor’s Office was in year two of a three-year grant that had served over 150 people and funded the salaries of three employees.

Defunded Programs that Reduce and Prevent Violence

In June 2023, Congress passed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act which provided millions of dollars for grants to support comprehensive, evidence-based violence intervention and prevention through partnerships among residents, local government agencies, victim service providers, law enforcement, hospitals, researchers and other community stakeholders. On April 22, DOJ rescinded funding for all seven of New Jersey’s funded community violence intervention programs, which had contributed to the 55 percent decrease in homicides and 35 percent reduction in shooting victims in Newark between 2013 and 2022.¹³ UTEC, a nonprofit in Lowell, Massachusetts, suffered a similar fate, losing \$2 million aimed at community violence prevention and intervention mid-cycle. Youth Alive in Oakland, California, also lost \$2 million intended to reduce gun violence in areas with high concentrations of shootings,¹⁴ and a violence intervention program in Connecticut lost \$1 million to reduce youth violence through conflict resolution.

Defunded Programs that Support Successful Reentry

Ninety-five percent of people incarcerated in state and federal prisons will return to society one day,¹⁵ and preparing people for successful reentry has been found to reduce recidivism. Indeed, Attorney General Bondi acknowledged the importance of reentry

¹¹ Email from PREA Resource Center to PREA Auditors (Apr. 23, 2025).

¹² BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS, INDICATORS OF MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS REPORTED BY PRISONERS: SURVEY OF PRISON INMATES, 2016, (June 2021) <https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/indicators-mental-health-problems-reported-prisoners-survey-prison-inmates#:~:text=About%2043%25%20of%20state%20and,most%20common%20mental%20disorder%20reported>.

¹³ Doug Linkhart, *Newark, New Jersey: Using Community Engagement to Improve Public Safety*, National Civic League, <https://www.nationalcivicleague.org/ncr-article/newark-new-jersey-using-community-engagement-to-improve-public-safety/#:~:text=Newark's%20police%20department%20and%20community,Newark%20between%202013%20and%202022>.

¹⁴ Aben  Clayton, ‘Like a Slap in the Face’: Trump Officials Cut Hundreds of Millions to Combat Gun Violence and Opioid Addiction, (Apr. 24, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/apr/24/trump-administration-funding-gun-violence-opioid-addiction>.

¹⁵ BUREAU OF JUSTICE STATISTICS, REENTRY TRENDS IN THE UNITED STATES, (Apr. 2004), <https://bjs.ojp.gov/content/pub/pdf/reentry.pdf>.

services in her Senate confirmation hearing, saying that “we must do everything we can when people are in prison to rehabilitate them for when they get out. And that is why reentry is so vital.”¹⁶ Yet on April 22, DOJ pulled funding for vital reentry programs in California, Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Missouri, and more.

These examples offer only a sample of the critical funding that DOJ abruptly terminated. Grants that fund many other important initiatives have also been affected, such as: programs to combat opioid and substance use and reverse overdoses in Illinois, Florida, Michigan, and North Carolina; programs to combat hate crimes in Colorado, the District of Columbia, Georgia, Minnesota, Nevada, and Oklahoma; programs that include school bullying prevention in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Texas; programs that partner with sheriff’s offices and police departments in Louisiana, Michigan, Virginia; and programs for crime prevention and substance use prevention specifically in rural areas.

The magnitude of these defunding measures, Congress’ role in authorizing and appropriating grant funds, and the negative impacts that the sudden termination of funding will have on public safety in communities across the country, requires the immediate review of the processes and decisions that led to the cancellation of these critical grants. To facilitate this review, please provide the following information **no later than May 6, 2025**.

1. A DOJ JMD spreadsheet (Encl. 1) lists 365 grants that were terminated on April 22.
 - a. Does this spreadsheet represent the entire universe of grants that were terminated?
 - b. Are there grants that were terminated that are not reflected on the list? If so, provide the information in every column for these grants.
2. Which grants that were terminated on April 22 have since been restored? For each grant restored, please provide the reason for its restoration.
3. How were the grants that were terminated chosen? What were the factors considered in making the determination to terminate? Where the affected grantees were state or local jurisdictions, did the political party of state or local officials in those jurisdictions influence the determination to terminate?
4. Were there entire categories of grants that were terminated? If so, provide the categories.
5. What is the legal basis for terminating grant funds that are statutorily required?
6. Has DOJ reallocated the funds it rescinded on April 22? Provide any specific programs or purposes to which these funds will be reallocated.

¹⁶ *The Nomination of the Honorable Pamela Jo Bondi to be Attorney General of the United States: Hearing Before the Senate Comm. on the Judiciary*, 119th Cong. (Jan. 15, 2025), available at https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-01-15_-_opening_statement_-_bondi.pdf.

7. Will DOJ terminate any more grants, from any of its funding components, that have been obligated or are in cycle? If so, provide the grant-making component and the grants that will be terminated or are under consideration to be terminated.
8. Was former Tesla employee turned-DOGE staffer Tarak Makecha solely responsible for selecting which grants to terminate? Provide the names of all individuals within DOJ who reviewed or approved the cancellation of the grants.
9. Did any White House officials review the grants to be terminated or otherwise have any involvement in the decision to terminate the grants? Provide their names.

Additionally, we advise that the Department restore immediately the grants terminated on April 22. The cursory termination of these programs imperils the public safety of the victims and communities that rely on these critical resources.

Please confirm receipt of this letter.

Sincerely,



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



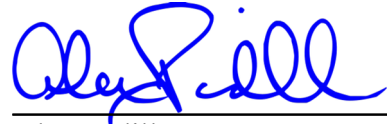
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



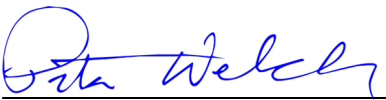
Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



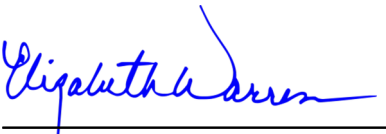
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Peter Welch
United States Senator



Andy Kim
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



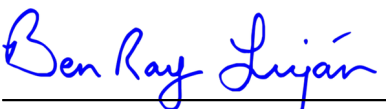
Ruben Gallego
United States Senator



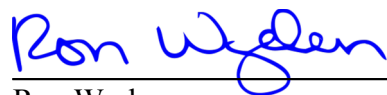
Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



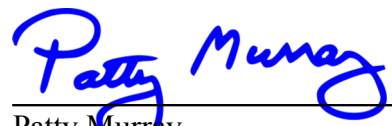
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



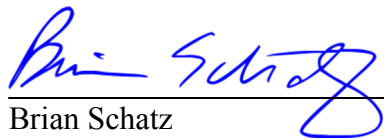
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



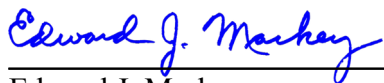
Patty Murray
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



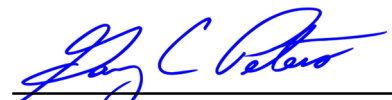
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator

Cc: Susie Wiles, White House Chief of Staff