

**TESTIMONY OF ANN HARKINS
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
NATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL
HOUSE COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
FISCAL YEAR 2013 PUBLIC WITNESS HEARING**

Thank you, Chairman Wolf and Ranking Member Fattah, for the opportunity to testify before the Subcommittee today regarding Fiscal Year 2013 (FY13) funding for the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance. I am Ann Harkins, President and CEO of the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC), an organization which has provided practical information on proven and cost-effective crime prevention practices to local law enforcement, community leaders and citizens for almost thirty years. In Fiscal Year 2013, we respectfully urge the Subcommittee to appropriate \$25 million for the Byrne Memorial Competitive Grants Program, and \$15 million to continue the Economic, High-Technology, Cybercrime Prevention programs.

On behalf of the NCPC Board of Directors, its staff and the thousands of crime prevention practitioners across the country whom we represent, I want to express our gratitude to this subcommittee for funding these essential crime prevention programs in Fiscal Year 2012. Recent investments in both programs have enabled local law enforcement to remain flexible and adaptable as new crime prevention issues emerge, and we strongly support robust funding in FY13. We realize, of course, that in the present budget climate this Subcommittee has a duty to identify waste and reduce spending. As you undertake this important task, we urge you to consider not only the importance of the work done through both programs, but also the long-term savings that investment in prevention initiatives will achieve.

Within the funds for the Byrne Competitive Grants program, we respectfully request that the Subcommittee provide specific guidance to the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) to continue its historic support for two essential crime prevention functions. The first is ensuring the existence of an independent, non-governmental national repository and clearinghouse on best practices and evidence-based crime prevention. This function has been intended to ensure that state and local law enforcement have access to the best materials on effective crime prevention practices—to get the best possible outcomes from the Subcommittee's substantial investments in Byrne Justice Assistance Grants and in OJP's other state and local assistance programs. The second essential function is a strong national public service advertising campaign to reach the general public with evidence-based crime prevention messages. The Subcommittee has supported this function in the past because such a campaign has been shown to have tremendous impact in changing individual and collective behavior to prevent crime.

Finally, we want to applaud the Department of Justice for a well thought out, comprehensive grants program that supports the Intellectual Property Crimes Task Force. In the last few years OJP has awarded grants to state and local law enforcement to encourage strong investigations and effective prosecutions of Intellectual Property crimes which cost our economy 373,000 jobs and \$58 billion dollars per year, and pose serious threats to Americans' health and safety. Those local efforts are supported by grants to programs like the National White Collar Crime Center.

BJA and OJP had the wisdom to add a demand reduction component to this comprehensive effort. In partnership with both agencies, late last fall NCPC launched a public education campaign to increase public awareness of the consequences of purchasing counterfeit and pirated

products -- health and safety, support for organized criminal elements and job loss. We hope the Subcommittee will support this effort and encourage OJP to continue its wise approach of including demand reduction and public education in the Department's effort to fight Intellectual Property crime.

Background

NCPC is a private, non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization, whose primary mission is to be the nation's leader in helping people keep themselves, their families, and their communities safe from crime. We are funded through grants and contracts from the federal government and from various private sources. Through a variety of media and methods, NCPC enables communities and law enforcement to work together to create safe environments, especially for children and youth.

Established in 1980 by officials from nine states, the Department of Justice and other federal agencies, and private sources, the NCPC-led National Citizens' Crime Prevention Campaign and related initiatives have featured our beloved icon McGruff the Crime Dog® and his signature message that beckons all Americans to "Take a Bite Out of Crime®." McGruff and his message are recognized by 83% of adult Americans. An overwhelming 80% of kids would follow his advice on crime prevention. Over 90% of adults describe McGruff as informative, trustworthy and effective. Federal resources invested in the National Citizens' Crime Prevention Campaign have been well spent. For every dollar of federal investment, the Campaign generated \$100 or more worth of public service advertising. Over its history, the Campaign has produced \$1.4 billion worth of free advertising at very modest cost.

Since the inception of the Campaign, NCPC has maintained a close partnership with the Department of Justice (DOJ) and local law enforcement in creating cost-effective and award-winning public service advertising, launching groundbreaking and comprehensive support initiatives for crime-besieged cities, providing technical assistance, production and distribution of hundreds of ready-to-use publications filled with practical tips, expanding the reach of crime prevention tools through online resources, conducting conferences and training, and more.

Supporting Crime Prevention Practitioners

To the greatest extent possible, NCPC designs messages and trains law enforcement, community leaders and other individuals on crime prevention practices with proven outcomes based on the highest standards of research. NCPC's commitment to promoting the most effective crime prevention tools and messages is based on the organization's capacity to monitor crime prevention research and translate that research into practice.

NCPC administers two membership organizations. The Crime Prevention Coalition of America (CPCA) is an association of more than 400 local, state and federal crime prevention-related organizations representing thousands of constituents. The National Crime Prevention Association (NCPA) is a membership organization of approximately 1,400 individual crime prevention practitioners, mostly from law enforcement. Through Byrne Competitive Grant funding, NCPA is implementing a program under which, for the first time on a national level, qualified crime prevention practitioners can be certified as experts in the field. Both organizations provide resources, information on lessons learned and best practices, training, networking opportunities, and other crime prevention-related services.

Additionally, the National Training and Technical Assistance Partnerships grant was developed to address the nationwide gap in education opportunities for new law enforcement officers, which was a result of local department cuts in training budgets. NCPC has completed the training of consultants and experienced law enforcement officers who will in turn train their communities, thereby stretching this initiative's training dollars. NCPC has also completed five podcast interviews with experts in the field on topics such as Neighborhood Watch and Citizen Corps, crime-free multi-housing, and what a crime prevention officer is worth. Soon we will develop a toolkit for new officers, which will include PowerPoint presentations, fact sheets, inventories, and resources on basic crime prevention. In 2012, we will offer skill-building trainings on basic crime prevention in strategically selected regions across the country. The first, which was planned in concert with the United States Attorneys' Offices and The Police Officer Standards and Training Council, will have over 100 participants.

Recently, under the terrific leadership first of Laurie Robinson and now Mary Lou Leary, OJP has launched an excellent reference website for crime prevention practitioners, law enforcement officials, community planners, and citizens alike. The **crimesolutions.gov** website is historic in its wide-ranging collection of evidence-based programs that have been shown to reduce and prevent crime in communities across the nation. We hope that as the initiative evolves, OJP begins to address the differing capacities of communities to replicate these programs with fidelity to the original model.

National Crime Prevention Activities

NCPC works closely with state and local law enforcement and their national organizations to anticipate and respond to persistent crime challenges, emerging crime trends, and the changing crime prevention needs of communities and states nation-wide. Through a Byrne Competitive grant, NCPC is working with DOJ and a number of other partners to conduct a crime prevention awareness campaign to address the dangerous and costly problem of intellectual property crime such as pirating and counterfeiting. Our goal for the campaign is to engage the public in demand reduction and decrease threats to public health and safety and to increase awareness to the millions of jobs and ongoing detriment the economy faces from Intellectual Property theft.

Last fall the National Crime Prevention Council officially launched the Intellectual Property Theft public education campaign. This new campaign was the result of more than a year of extensive research, planning, outreach, and communication with the U.S. Department of Justice and several affected industries.

The Intellectual Property Theft campaign combines new technology and social media, such as mobile apps, with traditional media, such as television and radio, to reach an 18-30 year old audience – those who are most open to reducing their purchase of counterfeit products because of the health, safety, and economic harm caused by the theft of intellectual property.¹

NCPC is also tailoring other crime prevention information to “first timers,” the often overlooked population of young people ages 18-24; provide practical, ready-to-use resources on such emerging crimes as mortgage and foreclosure fraud and vacant property crime; and help keep senior citizens safe from abuse and telemarketing and other forms of fraud.

¹ <http://www.ncpc.org/getreal>

A traditional concept in crime prevention is the crime prevention “triangle.” Simply stated, in order for crime to occur, three elements must exist: desire, ability, and opportunity. Removing one element will prevent the crime. NCPC’s newest initiative, the Circle of Respect, is about reducing desire. Two years ago NCPC set out to work on a new crime prevention initiative that would “inspire us to live in ways that embody respect... where we live, learn, work and play.” That is our vision for the Circle of Respect. Lack of respect is contributing to online aggression and a new class of crime often called cyberbullying. A lack of respect is also contributing to traditional crimes like school violence and property theft among teens. At the end of the cyberbullying spectrum is “sexting”—the sending of inappropriate sexual images through electronic devices. Sexting and cyberbullying have demonstrated tragic consequences.

The Circle of Respect is a national initiative that will engage and challenge children, young people, adults, families, and communities to promote a culture of respect that transcends what has been a traditional tolerance of unacceptable behavior. Although the initial focus of the Circle of Respect will be on cyberbullying and bullying, as the initiative expands we will address such crimes as gang violence, vandalism, child abuse, workplace violence, abuse and fraud aimed at seniors, dating violence, and substance abuse. As the circle expands from *respect for self* to *respect in other aspects of our lives*, we aim to reduce the opportunities for crime to occur.

When McGruff and NCPC came on the scene 30 years ago, community groups and individual citizens thought that crime prevention was the sole responsibility of law enforcement. Working together with DOJ, local law enforcement and communities all across the nation, we have since then “moved the needle” such that today, we know that crime prevention is everyone’s business. McGruff has carried the message that all people—whether they are 7 or 107—can do their part to prevent crime and make America safer. Now, three out of four adults know they have a personal responsibility for helping to keep their communities safe from crime.

We have all seen recent surveys and reports indicating that crime, including serious, violent crime, is down all across the country and has been decreasing since the early 1990s. To be sure, many communities large and small have made terrific progress in combating crime. We can take solace in this encouraging news but this is no time to become complacent and let our guard down. For one thing, these data can be misleading. New forms of crime are growing, such as identity theft; mortgage and foreclosure fraud; and cyberbullying, “sexting” and other online crimes that are not captured in traditional surveys. New types of gangs and new forms of drug abuse are spreading. New technology has spawned new forms of intellectual property crimes that are not reflected in traditional crime statistics.

These distinct data sets, as well as their impacts on communities and the entire criminal justice system, must be captured adequately and thoroughly reviewed so that we can effectively deploy the tightening resources to combat crime.

Although crime is down nationally and in notable large cities such as New York City and Los Angeles, there are still cities, towns, suburbs and rural communities where this is not the case. Talk to victims and their families in various parts of the country and they will tell you that crime is not down in their communities.

Crime, of course, extracts a high cost from its victims. Crime also has a significant financial cost—approximately \$430 billion per year—borne by victims and their families, employers,

communities, and taxpayers. In 2005, governments at all levels spent more than \$200 billion for police, corrections and legal activities associated with crime—corrections alone costs \$68 billion annually. That same year crime victims incurred more than \$17 billion in costs. In 2007, consumers lost an estimated \$1.2 billion to fraud. There is also an unknowable opportunity cost both financial and social. All these costs have been trending upward and in the present economy we can ill afford them.

Crime Prevention in Fiscal Year 2013

Common sense, therefore leads to the conclusion that investment in crime prevention has never been more critical. There is no doubt that when individuals, community groups, and businesses work closely with law enforcement to help keep watch over their communities, crime is prevented. In an era of tightening budgets, investment in prevention initiatives reduces the need for government spending on intervention, treatment, enforcement, and incarceration. Credible studies conclude that crime prevention initiatives are cost effective; we can pay modest costs now or exorbitant ones later.

Though most crime prevention activities are local, the federal government sets the tone by promoting crime prevention strategies that work. It provides leadership through funding, education, technical assistance and support for state and local programs. Research and identification of what works, and translation and transmission of evidence-based best practices and lessons learned to and among the field require national leadership.

Appropriations of \$25 million in FY13 for the Byrne Competitive Grant program will provide BJA resources to fund important crime prevention programs along with the other authorized criminal justice programs. Within these activities, NCPC supports continuation of a national repository and clearinghouse for best practices and a continued evidence-based public education campaign. This is essential to identify and publicize the most effective forms of crime prevention so that taxpayer dollars are wisely spent. We suggest, therefore that the Subcommittee include report language directing OJP to fund—within the \$25 million appropriated for the Byrne Competitive Program—the activities of a national clearinghouse on best practices in crime prevention as well as a continued effective public service advertising campaign to reach the general public with evidence-based crime prevention messages.

Finally, we urge the Subcommittee to remain committed to the Economic, High-Technology, Cybercrime Prevention program with a \$15 million investment in FY13. DOJ and OJP are effectively working to address Intellectual Property crimes, particularly with regard to educating and engaging the public on the issue, and should be supported in their activities going forward.

Thank you again for allowing me to appear today and for your ongoing commitment to state and local crime prevention programs. NCPC is proud to have worked with Congress, DOJ, state and local law enforcement and other agencies, and the private sector in the past, and we believe we can be competitive going forward. As Congress works to prevent crime, please consider NCPC and McGruff as your active partners in empowering citizens and working with local law enforcement to build safer communities.