

**TESTIMONY OF ANN HARKINS
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
NATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL
HOUSE COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
FISCAL YEAR 2014 PUBLIC WITNESS HEARING**

Thank you, Chairman Wolf and Ranking Member Fattah, for the opportunity to testify before the Subcommittee today regarding Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14) 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). In Fiscal Year 2014, we respectfully urge the Subcommittee to appropriate \$25 million for the Byrne Memorial Competitive Grants Program and \$15 million for the Economic, High-Technology, Cybercrime Prevention program.

NCPC has provided practical information on proven and cost-effective crime prevention practices to local law enforcement, community leaders, and citizens for more than 30 years. These activities have been supported through our longstanding effective partnerships with this Subcommittee and the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs (OJP). We hope that the difficult cuts via sequestration to law enforcement programs can be restored in Fiscal Year 2014, and offer our thoughts as to how to best utilize limited resources.

Within the funds for the Byrne Competitive Grants program, we respectfully request that the Subcommittee provide specific guidance to OJP to continue its historic support for two essential crime prevention functions. The first is ensuring the existence of independent, non-governmental national repositories of best practices and evidence-based crime prevention. This ensures 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 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 education campaign to reach the general public with evidence-based crime prevention messages—a tactic which has been shown to have tremendous impact in changing individual and collective behavior to prevent crime.

We also want to applaud the Department of Justice for a well thought out, comprehensive grants program that supports the Intellectual Property Crime 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 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.

The Department also wisely included a demand reduction component to this comprehensive effort. In partnership with both the Department of Justice and law enforcement agencies, late in 2011 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 this sensible approach of including demand reduction and public education in the effort to fight Intellectual Property crime. Grants through the Economic, High-Technology, Cybercrime Prevention program can continue this important purpose.

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. Through different 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, the Ad Council, and private philanthropists, 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®."

- 83 percent of adult Americans recognize McGruff.
- More than 80 percent of kids would follow his advice on crime prevention.
- Over 90 percent of adults describe McGruff as informative, trustworthy, and effective.
- And 72 percent think he's cool.

Federal resources invested in the National Citizens' Crime Prevention Campaign have been well spent. For every \$1 of federal investment, the Campaign generated \$100 or more in donated media. Over its history, the Campaign has produced \$1.4 billion worth of donated advertising. 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 education campaigns, launching groundbreaking and comprehensive support initiatives for crime-besieged cities, providing training and technical assistance, producing and distributing hundreds of ready-to-use publications filled with practical tips, expanding the reach of crime prevention tools through online resources, conducting conferences, and more. Our goal is to give people the tools they need on the ground and in the field.

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), an association of more than 400 local, state, and federal crime prevention-related organizations representing thousands of constituents, and the National Crime Prevention Association (NCPA), a membership organization of approximately 1,400 individual crime prevention practitioners, mostly from law enforcement.

Through Byrne Competitive Grant funding, NCPA has implemented the first national-level crime prevention specialist certification. To date, Virginia is leading the field with over half of those certified nationally belonging to the Virginia Crime Prevention Association (VCPA). I was pleased to attend the VCPA's conference last week.

With additional support from BJA, NCPC provides National Training and Technical Assistance to address the nationwide gap in education opportunities for new law enforcement officers, which was a result of local department cuts in training and crime prevention budgets. NCPC has trained consultants and experienced law enforcement officers who, in turn, train their communities, thereby stretching this initiative's dollars and impact. NCPC has also recorded or released 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, and resources on basic crime prevention. In 2012, we offered skill-building trainings on basic crime prevention in strategically selected regions across the country. We are in the process of planning the first regional training, which will be held in June in North Miami Beach.

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 nationwide.

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.¹ We are also working with law enforcement to bring the consequences of IP theft to the forefront for the public. Through focus groups and survey assessments NCPC uncovered that consumers do not expect to get caught. They do not believe that law enforcement is overly concerned about this problem because if law enforcement were concerned, the public would be more aware of the crime and subsequent IP prosecutions. In order to educate the public, we need to encourage and equip those officers and agencies who understand the impact to talk about IP investigations and arrests in the same way they would about a big drug bust or capture of a violent criminal.

We are also working on several other public education campaigns to help people protect themselves, particularly from fraud. On April 10th, NCPC will host a virtual conference for consumers and organizations that support them in avoiding and recovering from mortgage fraud. This exciting event will be fully online and freely accessible. It will provide valuable information to homeowners on how to protect themselves against mortgage scams. For law enforcement and direct service organizations, this is a wonderful opportunity to learn how to better serve the victims of such scams. This complements our individual- and community-focused work on foreclosure fraud and vacant property crime.

Additionally, we are tailoring crime prevention information to the overlooked population of young people ages 18 to 24. As teens and young adults leave their homes to pursue education and employment for the "first time," they are often the victims of criminals and scams that prey on their inexperience. That is why we are developing programs to help "first timers" protect themselves as they handle their first credit card, first apartment, first car, first college campus, first vacation on their own, and first job.

¹ <http://www.ncpc.org/getreal>

On the other end of the spectrum, we are providing practical, ready-to-use resources on crimes against senior citizens. Senior citizens are vulnerable to telemarketing and financial fraud that threaten their financial stability. We are also educating the public on the underreported crime of elder abuse. An alarming number of senior citizens are physically, emotionally, sexually, or financially abused—frequently by people they trust. We are striving to ensure that people of all ages can speak out and act to prevent abuse and victimization and live in safe communities.

Three 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 cyberbullying. A lack of respect is also contributing to crimes like school violence and property theft among teens. Studies show that young people join gangs because it’s the only place they get respect. Technology may contribute as well—“sexting”—the sending of inappropriate sexual images through electronic devices—is rampant among young people. Sexting and cyberbullying have demonstrated tragic consequences.

The Circle of Respect is a national initiative that engages and challenges children, young people, adults, families, and communities to promote a culture of respect that transcends what has been a traditional tolerance of unacceptable behavior. Also, to provide a platform for young people to speak on their own behalf, the Circle of Respect website will host VOICES—a user-generated site for teens to speak about personal experiences of respect within their families, peers, and communities. We will use their submitted artwork, poetry, short stories, music, and films to guide development on respect-centered materials for other youth, service providers, and crime prevention practitioners.

Although the initial focus of the Circle of Respect is 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.

These projects illustrate the breadth of NCPC’s work. Today, in addition to continuing our work on Lights, Locks, and Alarms, we also provide tips and tools on intellectual property crime, cyberbullying, and identity theft. We work with every demographic from young children to seniors. And we use every medium available to us—from training to Twitter—to educate crime prevention practitioners and the public about personal and community safety.

When McGruff and NCPC came on the scene 32 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 “moved the needle” so 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. That’s what “Take A Bite Out of Crime” means. Now, three out of four adults know they have a personal responsibility for helping to keep their communities safe from crime.

New forms of crime are growing, such as identity theft, mortgage and foreclosure fraud, and cybercrimes of every stripe, and we must effectively deploy our tightening resources to combat crime. Crime extracts a significant financial cost—approximately \$3.2 trillion per year²—borne by victims and their families, employers, communities, and taxpayers. In 2011, governments at all levels spent more than \$236 billion for police protection, correctional facilities, and legal and judicial costs—corrections alone costs \$81 billion annually.³

In 2010 violent crimes (murder, rape, assault, and robbery) cost Americans \$42 billion.⁴ In 2011, consumers lost an estimated \$1.5 billion to fraud.⁵ 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 2014

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 FY14 for the Byrne Competitive Grant program will provide BJA continued resources to fund important crime prevention programs along with the other authorized criminal justice programs. The investment in national training, education, and technical assistance can help other law enforcement investments stretch further.

Finally, we urge the Subcommittee to remain committed to the Economic, High-Technology, Cybercrime Prevention program with a \$15 million investment in FY14. 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 continues its work 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.

² http://www.centre.edu/cost_of_crime.pdf

³ Ibid.

⁴ http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2012/06/pdf/violent_crime.pdf

⁵ <http://www.ftc.gov/sentinel-annual-reports/sentinel-cy2011.pdf>