

CALIFORNIA STATEWIDE LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSOCIATION

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May 28, 2014

The Honorable Darrell Steinberg
President Pro Tempore
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Toni Atkins
Speaker
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 219
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Bob Huff
Minority Floor Leader
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 305
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Connie Conway
Minority Floor Leader
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 3104
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Leaders:

On behalf of California Statewide Law Enforcement Association and our 7,000 public safety professionals, I am writing to support funding of \$9.4 million for the California Department of Justice (DOJ) Multi-Jurisdictional Task Forces (MTF) and Special Operation Units (SOU). These important programs strengthen public safety in our state by providing unique capabilities, expertise, coordination and technology for criminal investigations. In our view, they are neither redundant nor duplicative of existing law enforcement services.

Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 5 included \$9.4 million to fund these programs in 2014-15 in its version of the state budget. The augmentation was not included in the Senate version.

The MTF program is among the most effective public safety initiatives ever implemented to combat organized crime in California. MTFs expand information sharing, and enhance case and institutional coordination, and are uniquely capable of apprehending violent criminals. MTFs support Correctional Realignment and provide resources to assist local law enforcement with Post Release Community Supervised (PRCS) inmates. Under the leadership of the California Attorney General's DOJ, MTFs are a proven investment in public safety and crime reduction.

Funding for MTFs is in serious jeopardy. The Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG), one of the most vital funding mechanisms for California law enforcement, has historically paid for MTFs. It is our understanding that the Board of State and

Community Corrections (BSCC), which distributes Byrne JAG funding, will significantly reduce, if not eliminate, funds for MTFs this year. Without an alternative source, most of California's MTFs will run out of funding on September 30, 2014. MTFs have suffered from severe budget cutbacks in recent years, falling from 55 in 2011 to just 17 today. Without funding, they will soon stop operating altogether.

The DOJ's Bureau of Investigation (BI) Special Operations Unit (SOU) is a unique and essential investigative team that uses the latest technology and advanced investigative techniques to stop violent criminals and organized crime. SOUs work closely with local law enforcement to take on complex criminal investigations that need additional staff or expertise.

Due to budget cuts, the DOJ has only been able to fund one SOU team, in Fresno. It simply cannot meet statewide demand – last year alone, it was unable to assist with 25 requests for help from agencies across California. As outlined in the Attorney General's recently released report *Gangs beyond Borders: California and the Fight Against Transnational Organized Crime*, (<http://oag.ca.gov/transnational-organized-crime>) the Golden State faces unique, evolving criminal threats. Street gangs, transnational gangs and gun, narcotic and human trafficking necessitate funding for 5 additional SOU teams in the Oakland Bay Area, Sacramento, Los Angeles, Riverside and San Diego.

MTFs and SOUs are critically important to local law enforcement as California combats violent and transnational crime. As local government focuses resources on Realignment, there is an even greater need for state help with major crime investigations.

MTFs and SOUs directly impact the safety of citizens. We strongly support funding for these two essential programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alan W B" followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Alan Wayne Barcelona
Special Agent, DOJ
President, CSLEA

cc: Chief Kent Shaw, California Department of Justice, Bureau of Investigation
Members, Budget Conference Committee