

116TH CONGRESS } HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES { REPORT
1st Session } 116-101

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES
APPROPRIATIONS BILL, 2020

JUNE 3, 2019.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of
the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. SERRANO, from the Committee on Appropriations,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

together with

MINORITY VIEWS

[To accompany H.R. 3055]

The Committee on Appropriations submits the following report in
explanation of the accompanying bill making appropriations for
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies for the fiscal
year ending September 30, 2020, and for other purposes.

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and heroin abuse and notes that funds within this account may be used for the implementation of medication-assisted treatment to help maintain abstinence from all opioids and heroin. The Committee notes that Byrne/JAG funding can be used for pursuit technology and training to reduce deaths and injuries during high-risk vehicle events. The Committee recognizes the importance of de-escalation training and cultural sensitivity training and diversity in hiring in local law enforcement to ensure that law enforcement reflects the communities they serve. The Committee notes that Byrne/JAG funds may be used for these purposes and encourages the Department to award funds for these purposes.

The Committee encourages the Byrne/JAG program to provide additional resources to those communities that are taking part in programs that seek to lower homicide rates through data and performance measurement analysis. The Committee notes that Byrne/JAG funding may be used for mindfulness training for police officers. The Committee advises that some Byrne/JAG funds be directed to provide newer, more efficient forensics testing tools for rural jurisdictions. The Committee requests additional consideration be given to applicants who seek to hire service-connected disabled veterans. The Committee encourages the Department to support the use of these grant funds for the purchase of fentanyl detection equipment. The Committee supports awarding School Resource Officer grants to communities that are experiencing high levels of youth suicide, especially in smaller towns with limited resources.

The Committee supports the use of grant funding for the acquisition of operational management software to track mission critical assets. Tracking and managing resources, including radio communications equipment, mobile technology, and protective equipment enables and improves local law enforcement preparedness and operational planning. The Committee notes that Byrne/JAG funds may be used for these purposes and encourages the Department to award funds for this purpose. The Committee is aware of existing community partnerships with local law enforcement to link video monitoring technology to reduce emergency response time and increase collaboration between community partners and law enforcement. The Committee notes that Byrne/JAG funds may be used for these purposes and encourages the Department to award funds for this purpose. The Committee is aware of the value to law enforcement of gunfire detection and location technology and recommends Byrne/JAG funds be awarded for this purpose.

Emmett Till unsolved civil rights grants.—The recommendation includes \$2,000,000 in grants to state and local law enforcement agencies for the expenses associated with the investigation and prosecution of criminal offenses involving civil rights, as authorized by the Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crimes Reauthorization Act of 2016 (Public Law 114–325).

Puerto Rico plebiscite.—In the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (Public Law 113–76), the Committee provided funding for the Department of Justice to help oversee and administer a plebiscite to ‘resolve Puerto Rico’s future political status.’ The Committee believes that to accomplish this goal, the current territorial/Commonwealth status should be excluded from any future plebiscite, since it fails to address key inequities. Despite previous requests to use this funding to help administer such a plebiscite, the Department

did not certify yet a plebiscite ballot to obligate this funding. The Committee believes that the Department has a responsibility to address issues of democratic representation and equality in Puerto Rico and the other territories of the United States, including addressing questions of political status. Therefore, the Committee instructs the Department to expeditiously act upon any request for this funding from the Puerto Rico State Elections Commission, and to notify the Committee of any requests for this funding. The Committee instructs the Department, within 45 days of enactment of this Act, to provide the Committee, as well as the Puerto Rico State Elections Commission, with a report regarding the acceptable versions of voter education materials, plebiscite ballot formats, and related materials that would allow the Department to obligate this funding for a future plebiscite.

Immigration Representation Pilot.—The recommendation includes \$10,000,000 for the OJP to establish a competitive grant pilot program for legal representation of immigrants who seek asylum and other forms of legal protection in the United States after entering at the southwest border. The Committee recognizes the compelling need to ensure due process for the growing number of immigrants who seek asylum and who must navigate a complex legal system for processing of asylum claims. Legal representation, which many asylum seekers do not currently have, will ensure that the system works more efficiently, cases are processed more quickly, and the legitimacy of asylum claims are correctly determined. Grants, including subgrants, shall be made to nonprofit organizations that are qualified legal services providers. The Committee expects that the pilot program will support direct representation, including pro bono representation where possible, of immigrants currently detained by ICE at one or two small or medium-sized detention facilities, immigrants released into the local communities around those facilities, and immigrants released from those facilities to one or two high-release cities. Grant awards should take into consideration continuity of representation to help ensure individuals are represented until their cases are complete. Within 90 days of enactment of this Act, the OJP shall submit a report to the Committee on the implementation of this program.

Smart Prosecution.—The Committee notes that throughout much of the United States local prosecutors' offices carry attorney caseloads well above recommended levels, lack critical support staff, and rely on outdated information technology to manage their caseloads. The Committee is concerned these conditions can negatively impact victims, criminal defendants, and public safety. The Committee recommendation includes no less than \$2,000,000 from amounts provided for a competitive program dedicated to State and local prosecutor office modernization and caseload reduction.

Sexual assault kit backlog grants.—The recommendation includes \$49,000,000 for grants to address the sexual assault kit (SAK) backlog. The Committee encourages stakeholders and local law enforcement to continue working with Federal law enforcement to resolve this important issue. The Committee also directs the Department to do everything in its power to bring perpetrators to justice. The Committee also encourages OJP to increase its efforts to ensure that strong research and program evaluations are undertaken utilizing independent evaluators with the experience and skills to