



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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February 8, 2011

David Boies, Co-Chair
Theodore B. Olson, Co-Chair
Task Force on Preservation of the Justice System
American Bar Association
321 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60654-7598

Dear Mr. Boies and Mr. Olson:

I write to express the strong interest of The U.S. Conference of Mayors in the work of the Task Force on the Preservation of the Justice System. Mayors are well aware that the nation's courts, along with other components of the justice system, are severely underfunded and that this problem has been exacerbated in recent years by the economic crisis that has gripped the nation. The involvement of former Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer in the work of your Task Force assures us that the interests of the nation's mayors will be well represented.

While the primary role that city governments play in the justice system is in the prevention and investigation of crimes and the enforcement of laws through their police departments, an underfunded court system impedes these efforts. Police make arrests, but justice is not served unless a strong prosecution is mounted and the individual charged has access to a speedy trial and an adequate defense. Those who are convicted and serve time also must have access to an adequately funded probation and parole system to manage their successful reentry to our communities. These and the other components of the criminal justice system must be adequately funded.

While much attention is paid to the federal deficit, state and local governments face serious fiscal problems – and do not have the option of running a deficit. Their leaders have had to make hard decisions to cut programs and services because they are required to balance their budgets. For city officials, the situation is particularly bad: Problems created by a decline in local revenues have been compounded by federal and state funding cuts.

Two-and-a-half years ago our Conference convened a National Forum on Crime which brought together mayors and police chiefs to develop an anti-crime agenda for the next President of the United States. That agenda calls for dependable federal support for local law enforcement, greater support for crime prevention efforts, reasonable changes in laws and regulations to keep guns out of the hands of criminals, and increased efforts to successfully control gangs and drugs.

The mayors and police chiefs also called for changes in the justice system that will make it a more just system – which is what your Task Force is all about. We look forward to reviewing the work of the Task Force when it is completed and presenting it to the mayors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Cochran". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tom Cochran
CEO and Executive Director