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June 7, 2004

The Honorable Frank Wolf
Chair
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State, and the Judiciary
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4610

The Honorable Jose Serrano
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State, and the Judiciary
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4610

Dear Mr. Chairman and Representative Serrano:

It is with great concern that I write to you regarding the Administration's proposed FY 2005 budget for juvenile justice programs under the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. The Administration's proposal would cut these vital programs by more than 40 percent. These programs -- including the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG), the Title V Local Delinquency Prevention Grant program (Title V), and the Delinquency Prevention Block Grant (DPBG) -- support effective local efforts that reduce crime and delinquency, save money and enhance public safety.

The American Bar Association has long supported both the reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act and adequate funding to facilitate ongoing implementation of the Act. Our position is based on the need to ensure that the administration of federal juvenile justice policy promotes public safety while protecting the rights of juveniles and ensuring a fair, humane and effective juvenile justice system. It is critical that the successful partnership with state-based juvenile justice professionals be maintained.

Federal funding for juvenile justice has been used for a variety of successful programs. For example, Title V funds have been used for numerous prevention programs and activities ranging from youth development initiatives

using mentoring to after school activities, tutoring, truancy and drop out reduction. The DPBG program helps to prevent juvenile delinquency by providing treatment, mentoring programs, counseling and other prevention/intervention strategies. Funding from the JABG program has allowed communities to form multi-agency partnerships promoting effective and enduring collaboration to combat juvenile delinquency.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has been and continues to be a vigorous and thoughtful advocate for policies that address the problems of children and families brought into contact with the justice system, while protecting community safety. To that end, the ABA urges you to restore funding for these important juvenile justice programs to their authorized or previous levels of \$350 million for JABG, \$95 million for Title V, and \$126 million for DPBG (the total of the five funding streams consolidated when DPBG was created in FY 2003).

If you have any questions or if we can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me or Elizabeth Gladden, Staff Attorney for the ABA Juvenile Justice Center, at 202/662-1508. Thank you for your consideration of these important issues.

Sincerely,

Robert Evans

cc: Members of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State and the Judiciary