



MEMORANDUM

TO: Obama-Biden Transition Team

FROM: Donald Murray, Senior Legislative Director, Justice and Public Safety

DATE: December 15, 2008

RE: NACo Justice Policy
Recommendations for the Department of Justice

1. **Byrne Justice Assistance Grant.** (See Larry Naake's letter of 12/8/08 to President-Elect Obama urging \$1 billion for Byrne JAG in the stimulus package). Byrne JAG is a good government, systematic approach to fighting crime.
2. **Jail Reentry.** The Second Chance Act includes jail re-entry throughout the legislation but some groups have emphasized only prison re-entry even though in the U.S. no one goes directly to prison. The balanced implementation of the Act is crucial. NACo has called for state-local government task forces in each state with a neutral mediator controlling the process for lowering jail as well as prison populations. County governments spend more than \$53 billion on criminal justice each year and billions more on health and human service programs. Nine million people exit county jails each year compared to 650,000 from prison.
3. **Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act Reauthorization.** (See Larry Naake's letter dated 7/30/08 to the leadership of the Senate Judiciary Committee). Title V, the prevention title is very poorly funded and the original emphasis on local advisory boards has virtually been abandoned. A greater emphasis should be given to early childhood education.
4. **The Mentally Ill in Jail.** NACo has called for a national commission appointed by the Attorney General of the U. S. to address the large numbers of non-violent persons with mental illness in county jails. The Commission should focus on intergovernmental solutions for providing comprehensive services in the community and involve representatives of general purpose governments, the mental health community and key representatives of the criminal justice community. Senator Joe Biden has endorsed the Commission concept and included draft legislation in his anti-crime package introduced in the 110th Congress.





5. **Increase Funding for State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP).** NACo favors increased appropriations for the SCAAP program which is designed to reimburse counties and states for the jail and prison detention costs of illegal immigrants who have committed crimes in the U.S. Securing the borders of the U.S. is a federal responsibility, yet only a small percentage of these costs are currently being reimbursed.