



ARIZONA SHERIFFS ASSOCIATION

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THE ARIZONA SHERIFFS ASSOCIATION IS THE ONE UNITED CREDIBLE VOICE REPRESENTING LAW ENFORCEMENT AND PUBLIC SAFETY FOR THE COUNTIES OF ARIZONA

December 7, 2015

The Honorable John McCain
United States Senator
241 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP)

Dear Senator McCain:

On behalf of the Arizona Sheriff's Association, we would like to thank you for your support in restoring funding for the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) in the Fiscal Year 2016 at \$950 million a year for the next five years.

As you know, in addition to traditional law enforcement duties, Arizona sheriffs are also charged with oversight and management of the county jails. The SCAAP is very important to sheriffs across the United States. SCAAP is a formula grant program that reimburses state and local governments for costs incurred for incarcerating undocumented aliens that have committed criminal acts. Under the law that created SCAAP, the federal government is required to take all criminal aliens into federal custody. If that is not possible, which has been the case since the program was created, the law calls for the federal government to compensate state and local governments for their incarceration costs.

In this tough economic climate, it is important to recognize the vital role that SCAAP funding plays in compensating local law enforcement for fulfilling what is essentially a federal function. State and county governments are estimated to spend billions to incarcerate undocumented criminal aliens, yet they are reimbursed under SCAAP for less than 10 percent of these expenses.

As Arizona Sheriffs, we are concerned that funding for SCAAP has declined significantly despite soaring state and local detention costs, as well as dramatic increases in the number of jurisdictions applying for the program. Since fiscal year 2000, SCAAP has been cut by 70 percent. This financial decrease continues to place a huge financial burden on the local sheriffs. Between 2009 and 2014, Arizona Sheriffs have had a SCAAP deficit of \$226,445,617.00. During this same time period, Arizona Sheriffs have been awarded \$19,176,997.00. The return rate for the incarceration of illegal-criminal aliens is just less than 5 cents on the dollar.

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In light of the continued cuts to the program's funding level, increasing incarceration costs, and a growing pool of applicants, it is imperative that Congress increase resources for SCAAP. Without sufficient SCAAP funding, state and local governments must shoulder the burden, which in turn will force many of our local law enforcement agencies to cut other essential public safety functions, including deputy sheriffs, police officers, anti-gang violence units, and county attorneys.

SCAAP is meant to be a true partnership between the Federal government and local law enforcement because it provides much needed resources at the local level, and also provides important information to the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security on foreign nationals who may pose a threat to national security.

This is not a Republican or Democratic issue, but rather one that affects many of the local jurisdictions represented equally by our Congress. By law, it is the responsibility of the federal government to provide funding for SCAAP and we appreciate your consideration of our concerns.

Again, thank you for your support. We appreciate you working with us on this bipartisan issue.

Sincerely,



Leon N. Wilmot
Yuma County Sheriff
President, Arizona Sheriffs Association
Association



Chris Nanos
Pima County Sheriff
Vice President, Arizona Sheriffs