

**May 31, 2019**

**ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL FILES AMICUS BRIEF TO PROTECT CRITICAL LAW ENFORCEMENT FUNDING**

***Federal Government Punishing 'Sanctuary Cities' by Cutting Funds for Byrne-JAG Grants to Combat Drug Trafficking***

**Chicago** — Attorney General Kwame Raoul, along with a coalition of 15 attorneys general, filed an amicus brief to protect states and localities from efforts to punish so-called “sanctuary” jurisdictions by putting immigration-related conditions on the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant program (Byrne JAG), a federal law enforcement grant allocated to states and localities for law enforcement efforts.

“Placing immigration-related conditions on funding for law enforcement is unconstitutional and jeopardizes public safety,” Raoul said. “By treating this important funding as a bargaining chip, the federal government is withholding millions of dollars that law enforcement depends on to prevent crime.”

Raoul and the coalition filed the brief in support of the state of California and the city and County of San Francisco in their lawsuits against the federal government for the denial of Byrne JAG grants and Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Anti-Methamphetamine and Anti-Heroin grants - programs that provide vital assistance for local law enforcement efforts, including efforts to address the trafficking and sales of illicit drugs.

The Byrne JAG program is a federal grant program that provides grants to states and localities according to a mandatory statutory formula. Congress designed Byrne JAG to give states and localities a reliable source of law-enforcement funding, while also giving them maximum flexibility to decide how to use the funds in accordance with state and local law-enforcement policy. The COPS Anti-Methamphetamine and Anti-Heroin Task Force Programs were established by Congress in 2014 and 2015, to support state and local law enforcement efforts to curb the production of methamphetamine, and the trafficking and sale of methamphetamines, heroin, and opioids.

In July 2017, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) announced that it was imposing new immigration-related conditions on Byrne JAG funding and COPS Anti-Methamphetamine and Anti-Heroin funding, including the requirement to certify compliance with a federal law that prohibits state and local governments from restricting when and how their employees may communicate with federal immigration authorities about the citizenship or immigration status of any individual.

This amicus brief follows Attorney General Raoul’s recent lawsuit against U.S. Attorney General William Barr for placing illegal conditions on Illinois’s receipt of Byrne JAG funding. This was the second lawsuit the Attorney General’s office has filed after the federal government attempted to place illegal conditions on Byrne JAG funding. The office sued DOJ in 2018 after the department first placed illegal immigration-related conditions on the state’s 2017 Byrne JAG funding. The Attorney General’s office obtained a permanent injunction against the conditions and secured the funds for Illinois.

Joining Raoul in filing the brief were the attorneys general of Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington.