

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1806

May 10, 2024

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
H-305, the Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

I am requesting \$4,000,000 in funding for a Capital Region Fentanyl and Violent Crime Surge Task Force in Fiscal Year 2025. The entity to receive funding for this project is the East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office (EBRSO), located at 8900 Jimmy Wedell Drive, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70807. The East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office plans to use the funding to continue to lead a cross-jurisdictional task force of law enforcement officers who will be equipped with the necessary training and technology to combat fentanyl trafficking and violent crime in the Capital Region.

This project is a suitable use of taxpayer funds because high crime and the proliferation of deadly drugs like fentanyl have a negative economic impact on the entire nation. High crime rates discourage businesses from making investments, which affects economic opportunity and increases community reliance on government assistance. The Drug Enforcement Administration has referred to fentanyl as "the single deadliest drug threat our nation has ever encountered." Traffickers have created national distribution networks, and the impact is felt in my home state of Louisiana; the CDC ranks Louisiana as the third highest in opioid overdose-related deaths. Although the EBRSO's task force will focus on a specific region, apprehending individuals who commit violent crimes and traffic lethal substances will benefit the entire nation.

The project has a Federal nexus because the funding provided is for purposes authorized in section 501 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. § 10152). Section 501(a) authorizes grants to States and units of local government "to provide additional personnel . . . contractual support, [and] training . . . for criminal justice[,]" and specifically

includes programs for drug enforcement. This project would officially create a partnership between East Baton Rouge's Sheriff's, the District Attorney's office, and law enforcement from surrounding parishes to address drug trafficking and violent crime. Thus, this project fits squarely within the authorized uses of funds under the Act.

I certify that I have no financial interest in this project, and neither does anyone in my immediate family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Garret Graves", with a stylized, cursive script.

Garret Graves
Member of Congress