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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wisconsin Department of Justice Joins Multistate Coalition to Protect Law Enforcement Funding

Trump Administration Threatening More than \$6 Million in Wisconsin

MADISON, Wis. — The Wisconsin Department of Justice (WI DOJ) has joined a coalition in filing an updated and amended [lawsuit](#) over the illegal imposition of immigration-enforcement conditions on Congressionally authorized public safety grants, including grants intended to keep communities safe and fight crime.

“Threatening to cut funding that supports law enforcement if states don’t agree to unlawful conditions is an abuse of the Trump administration’s authority,” said AG Kaul. “This funding should be distributed to the states, not improperly used as a bargaining chip.”

Last year, the Trump administration — disregarding the clear letter of the law and intent of Congress — declared that states would be unable to access Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds unless they agreed to the administration’s extreme immigration demands. WI DOJ and the multistate coalition [succeeded](#) in getting the federal government to remove those conditions on over \$1.3 billion of VOCA funds, including more than \$24 million in federal funding for victim service programs in Wisconsin.

However, this year, the U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ) has applied these illegal conditions to new grants, including funds dedicated to law enforcement and juvenile justice. Altogether, the illegal conditions threaten more than \$6 million across the affected grant programs.

Among the affected programs is the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Formula Grants (known as the Byrne JAG Program). The Byrne JAG Program was named after a rookie New York City Police Department officer who was ambushed in his patrol car while protecting a witness in a drug case in 1988. For decades, regardless of which political party held power, the Byrne JAG Program has been the leading federal source of criminal justice funding to state and local governments. Wisconsin is at risk of losing a \$3.2 million JAG award for the coming year.

Wisconsin is also at risk of losing approximately \$2.1 million in funding through the Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program (SCIP) and more than \$800,000 through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

The SCIP grant is intended to assist state and local efforts to reduce violent crime and gun-related violence.

The OJJDP Title II Formula Grants Program supports statewide and local delinquency prevention and juvenile justice system improvements.

Civil immigration enforcement is a federal responsibility and not a state government responsibility. The Trump administration's unlawful attempts to coerce states into doing their bidding conflict with core principles of American governance – the separation of powers and federalism. The administration's actions violate the Administrative Procedures Act and the Spending Clause of the U.S. Constitution in multiple ways.

As such, the coalition is requesting that the court declare the Trump administration's actions unlawful and permanently enjoin any implementation or enforcement of these illegal conditions.

Joining the Wisconsin Department of Justice in filing this lawsuit are the attorneys general of California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and the District of Columbia, as well as the governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.