



August 11, 2025

The Honorable Bernie Moreno  
United States Senate for Ohio  
284 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jon Husted  
United States Senate for Ohio  
304 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Moreno and Senator Husted:

For the last several years, the bipartisan coalition of mayors that makes up the Ohio Mayors Alliance has stressed the importance of improving public safety. We have also been advocating for increased funding to support local efforts to attract, hire, retain, and support our local first responders.

As we have said many times before, public safety is job one for mayors. It is foundational to all the work that cities do, and vital to building strong communities for residents and visitors to live, work, and play. We appreciate the renewed interest in local public safety efforts, and we welcome the opportunity to work together to bolster local law enforcement and crime prevention strategies in our communities.

It's important to first understand that cities spend the largest share of their budgets on public safety. For many cities across Ohio, including communities like Cincinnati, this can be as much as two-thirds of a city's total general revenue fund budget. The 31 largest cities in Ohio that comprise the Ohio Mayors Alliance collectively spends nearly \$3 billion annually on police and fire payroll alone.

Local public safety costs have also increased in recent years as cities have been working to boost first responder salaries, embrace new technology to help prevent and solve crime, and increase the number of public safety personnel working in our communities. These investments have made an impact. While there is much more work to do, Ohio cities and communities throughout the state and nation are seeing meaningful reductions in violent crime.

Given the extraordinary costs to cities and local taxpayers, state and federal partners can and should play an important role in supporting these efforts. While no community, urban, suburban, or rural, wants to see the ugly, senseless violence displayed in the viral video from Cincinnati on July 26, we welcome the opportunity to work with you on the important issue of public safety in our communities. As such, we recommend the following to help support our efforts to improve local public safety:

**1. Increase Federal Funding for the COPS Hiring Grant Program**

The COPS Hiring Grant remains one of the most vital federal investments in public safety and community policing across the country. For decades, this program has helped local law enforcement agencies recruit, hire, and retain officers—particularly in communities struggling with budget constraints or experiencing rising public safety needs. With many cities facing officer shortages and

financial constraints, the need for sustained federal funding has never been more urgent. Congress should not just preserve the COPS Hiring Program—it should substantially increase funding for it.

## **2. Restore and Maintain Key Funding Provisions of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act**

Approved with bipartisan support in 2022, this federal law provided important investments in gun safety, violence intervention, school safety, and mental health supports. However, earlier this year, the Department of Justice ended approximately \$158 million in grants that supported many successful violence intervention programs. Restoring these grants and maintaining the core provisions of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act is critical, and doing so will help reduce violent crime and improve public safety in our communities.

## **3. Strengthen Federal Law Enforcement Agencies that Support Local Public Safety**

Local partnerships with federal law enforcement agencies like the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) have also helped cities reduce violent crime, improve case closure rates, and strengthen public safety. This has been done through the use of new gun crime intelligence tools such as the National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN) and eTrace. Losing these important crime-data tools will make it harder to investigate and prosecute shootings, break up gun trafficking networks, and reduce violent crime in our communities. We must work together to prevent funding cuts to ATF and other important federal law enforcement agencies.

## **4. Establish a Dedicated State Fund to Support Public Safety and Local First Responders**

Lastly, at the state level, Ohio cities have seen over a decade of funding cuts, starting in 2012 when the Local Government Fund was cut in half. Because public safety is the largest expenditure for Ohio cities, every dollar cut from LGF effectively reduced funding for local first responders. The need to restore these critical funds is why last year the Ohio Mayors Alliance proposed the creation of a new, dedicated state fund to support public safety and our local first responders. This was not included in the recent state budget, but we will continue to advocate for this fund and communicate the impact that state budget cuts to local governments have on critical services like public safety. We look forward to any potential collaboration that might support these efforts.

Thank you for your time and attention to these matters. We hope to work with you and find common ground on efforts to support our communities and increase local public safety. Thank you again.

Respectfully submitted from the Ohio Mayors Alliance Board of Directors:

**Mayor Justin Bibb**  
City of Cleveland

**Mayor Tito Brown**  
City of Youngstown

**Mayor Tim DeGeeter**  
City of Parma

**Mayor Christina Muryn**  
City of Findlay

**Mayor Peggy Lehner**  
City of Kettering

**Mayor Mitch Rhodus**  
City of Fairfield

**Mayor Sharetta Smith**  
City of Lima