

Lawmakers call out Sessions for holding city violence prevention funds

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WASHINGTON - Fifty-three members of the United States House and Senate are calling out Attorney General Jeff Sessions for holding critical violence prevention funds used by American cities hostage to the Trump Administration's extreme immigration



agenda.

The Department of Justice has placed new and onerous conditions on local law enforcement's access to federal funding through the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne-JAG) program, forcing cities to choose between redirecting already scarce resources from local policing efforts to enforcing federal immigration laws. The lawmakers are demanding an explanation, including the statutory authority for the Department's new conditions, which will hurt the ability of local governments to fight violent crime in their communities.

"These conditions are an unwarranted, coercive effort to leverage communities' longstanding reliance on Byrne-JAG funds in furtherance of the Trump Administration's mass-deportation agenda. By forcing local law enforcement to choose between redirecting resources from policing efforts to immigration enforcement or else sacrificing violence prevention funds that the Justice Department itself has described as "critical" and "necessary," these new Byrne-JAG conditions will undermine the ability of local law enforcement agencies to combat gun violence in communities like Chicago and Baltimore," the lawmakers wrote.