

Lawmakers file amicus brief against Sessions' efforts to block Byre-Jag funds from American cities

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WASHINGTON - Twelve members of the United States Senate and 33 members of the United States House filed a Congressional amicus brief in the appeal of the case *City of Chicago v. Sessions*, which is the lawsuit that the City of Chicago brought in August seeking a preliminary injunction to stop Attorney General Jeff Sessions and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) from blocking critical violence prevention funds from American cities in order to boost the Trump Administration's extreme immigration



agenda.

In July, DOJ attempted to place 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 or else

sacrificing vital violence prevention funding. In September, a federal district court judge granted the City's request for a preliminary injunction against the enforcement of these conditions, holding that the conditions exceeded the Attorney General's statutory authority and violated the separation of powers doctrine. DOJ appealed the case to the U. S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. The members of Congress filed their brief in support of affirming the judgment of the district court.

"Congress established this grant program to provide states and localities with funding to determine what programs and approaches to law enforcement and public safety will work best in different communities around the country. The grant conditions at issue in this case undermine Congress's carefully considered plan in establishing this grant program, as well as fundamental constitutional principles that give Congress, not the executive branch, the power to make laws establishing conditions on the receipt of federal financial assistance," the lawmakers wrote.

The amicus brief is signed by U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Jack Reed (D-RI), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI); and U.S. Representatives Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), Karen Bass (D-CA), Michael E. Capuano (D-MA), David Cicilline (D-RI), Yvette Clarke (D-NY), Steve Cohen (D-TN), Val Butler Demings (D-FL), Mark DeSaulnier (D-CA), Theodore E. Deutch (D-FL), Eliot L. Engel (D-NY), Luis V. Gutiérrez (D-IL), Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX), Pramila Jayapal (D-WA), Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY), Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr. (D-GA), Ro Khanna (D-CA), John Lewis (D-GA), Ted W. Lieu (D-CA), James P. McGovern (D-MA), Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), Tom O'Halleran (D-AZ), Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ), Bill Pascrell, Jr. (D-NJ), Mike Quigley (D-IL), Jamie Raskin (D-MD), Cedric L. Richmond (D-LA), Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA), Janice D. Schakowsky (D-IL), Brad Schneider (D-IL), Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (D-VA), Albio Sires (D-NJ), and Eric Swalwell (D-CA).