

United States Senate

May 16, 2018

The Honorable Jeff Sessions
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Sessions,

I am writing to follow up our discussion at the hearing of the Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Subcommittee on April 25, 2018, where you expressed your willingness to work with me to direct additional resources and support to Baltimore City to address violent crime.

Last year, Baltimore City experienced its most violent year on record. The Mayor and the City have launched an initiative to reduce the violence and federal support could significantly strengthen their efforts.

I appreciate your efforts to coordinate support for communities through the creation of the Public Safety Partnership Program, which aims to work with local jurisdictions to identify and implement community-based, data-driven methods of violence reduction. The Department of Justice's ("DOJ") August 2017 letter to Baltimore City on the Public Safety Partnership Program correctly states that "[the City] has levels of violence that exceed the national average, [...] is ready to receive the intensive assistance the Department is prepared to provide, and [...] is taking steps to reduce its violent crime."

Unfortunately, Baltimore City was not included as an initial site for the PSP program. A line of questioning in the August 2017 letter regarding immigrant detention policies has led many to believe that DOJ was imposing additional conditions related to the interaction between the Baltimore City Detention Center and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

While I oppose the additional immigration-related requirements that DOJ has imposed for receipt of PSP support and Byrne-JAG funds, that is not the issue in the case of Baltimore City. As I mentioned at the hearing, the correction and detention facilities in Baltimore City are operated by the State of Maryland, not by the City nor the Baltimore City Police Department. The City does not have the authority to set immigration-related detention policies at those facilities.

STATE OFFICES

ROCKVILLE OFFICE
111 ROCKVILLE PIKE
SUITE 960
ROCKVILLE, MD 20850
PHONE (301) 545-1500
FAX (301) 545-1512

ANNAPOLIS OFFICE
60 WEST STREET
SUITE 107
ANNAPOLIS, MD 21401
PHONE (410) 263-1325

CAMBRIDGE OFFICE
204 CEDAR STREET
SUITE 200C
CAMBRIDGE, MD 21613

BALTIMORE OFFICE
1900 NORTH HOWARD STREET
SUITE 100
BALTIMORE, MD 21218
PHONE (667) 212-4610
FAX (667) 212-4618

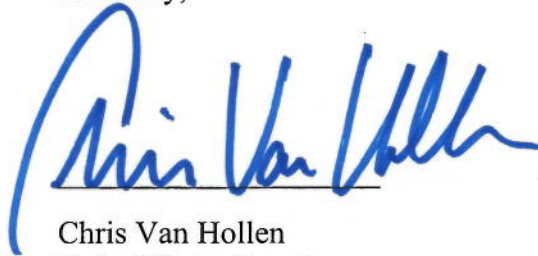
HAGERSTOWN OFFICE
32 WEST WASHINGTON STREET
SUITE 203
HAGERSTOWN, MD 21750
PHONE (301) 797-2826

LARGO OFFICE
1101 MERCANTILE LANE
SUITE 210
LARGO, MD 20774
PHONE (301) 322-6560

I appreciate your commitment to reevaluate Baltimore's qualifications for inclusion in the Public Safety Partnership Program, which provides intensive capacity building training and technical assistance. I also hope to work with you to provide federal funding resources for other violence reduction efforts in Baltimore, which should be centered on evidence-based programs with cooperation from law enforcement, social service government agencies, and non-profit service providers. Federal grant funding, from Byrne-JAG to Second Chance reentry programs to youth mentoring, is critical to leverage state and local resources and implement a comprehensive solution.

I look forward to working with you and your team to provide federal support to assist in Baltimore's community-driven violence reduction initiatives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Chris Van Hollen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator