



AMERICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION
Promoting the Practice and Profession of Statistics®

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March 24, 2026

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chair, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chair, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Grace Meng
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science, and
Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science, and
Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs Rogers and Moran and Ranking Members Meng and Van Hollen,

I write in support of investments to better inform government policy and funding decisions addressing crime, law enforcement safety, judicial process, and related issues through research insights and more relevant and timely statistics. Specifically for fiscal year 2027 (FY27), we request that you fund the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) at \$42 million and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) at \$48 million and increase the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) research and statistics set-aside to 3%. We also request that you maintain NIJ budget authority by not specifying funding amounts for individual research topics. Both agencies are well positioned to make high-impact investments that will deepen our understanding of criminal justice issues and, through responsible use of taxpayer funding, help make our country safer and more just.

NIJ is the largest US federal funder of research in the forensic sciences. Because of its research support, the research community has gained a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of traditional forensic examination approaches, developed algorithmic and software tools to assist examiners by providing quantitative support for their conclusions, made

scientific breakthroughs that allow for analysis of more complex samples, and provided databases as resources for the forensic community. These contributions are essential to reducing errors and improving the reliability of forensic tools used throughout the criminal justice system.

The 2009 National Academies of Sciences report “[Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward](#)” highlighted gaps in various forensic science disciplines. This report concluded, “With the exception of nuclear DNA analysis, however, no forensic method has been rigorously shown to have the capacity to consistently, and with a high degree of certainty, demonstrate a connection between evidence and a specific individual or source.” In the last 17 years, NIJ has supported research aimed at addressing critical gaps in knowledge about the reliability of forensic methods commonly used as evidence in criminal courts, including on fingerprints, firearms, handwriting, bloodstain pattern, and tire treads.

Unfortunately, due to a 43% loss of purchasing power since FY19, NIJ has had to steadily cut back funding of forensic science. Since peak funding in FY15 of nearly \$30 million for forensic science research and development, funding fell to [\\$13.6 million in FY24](#). Additionally, funding for forensics science research through the Debbie Smith DNA Backlog Grants program that was coordinated by NIJ was discontinued in FY20. The three measures requested here—funding the NIJ at \$42 million in FY27, restoring the OJP research and statistics set-aside to 3%, and maintaining NIJ budget authority—will bring needed investments in forensics science research. Allowing NIJ leadership to exercise its expert judgment in allocating research funds, while taking into account congressional priorities, would further ensure essential programs such as forensic science research receive the support they need.

BJS in the Department of Justice provides objective, reliable, and trustworthy statistics on a variety of justice-related issues, including “crime, criminal offenders, victims of crime, and the operation of justice systems at all levels of government.”¹ These data are critical to federal, state, and local policymakers as well as criminal justice researchers in understanding and combating crime and ensuring the justice system is both efficient and evenhanded. Established in 1979, BJS produces core statistical resources across nine primary areas: corrections; courts; crime type; criminal justice data improvement program; employment and expenditure; federal processing of criminal cases; Indian country justice statistics; law enforcement; and victims.

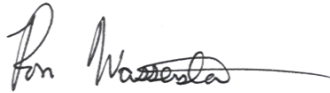
The need for objective, reliable statistics on crime and our criminal justice system are now as important as ever. Despite its broad charge, BJS is among the smallest of the 13 principal federal statistical agencies by budget, with a FY26 level of \$33 million (approximately \$55

¹ From BJS mission statement: <https://bjs.ojp.gov/about>.

million with the OJP set-aside.) Further hampering its ability to fulfill its mission and meet demand for criminal justice statistics, BJS has been flat funded for more than a decade, resulting in a 39% loss of purchasing power since 2012 and more since the late 2000s. For details, please see the graphs below.

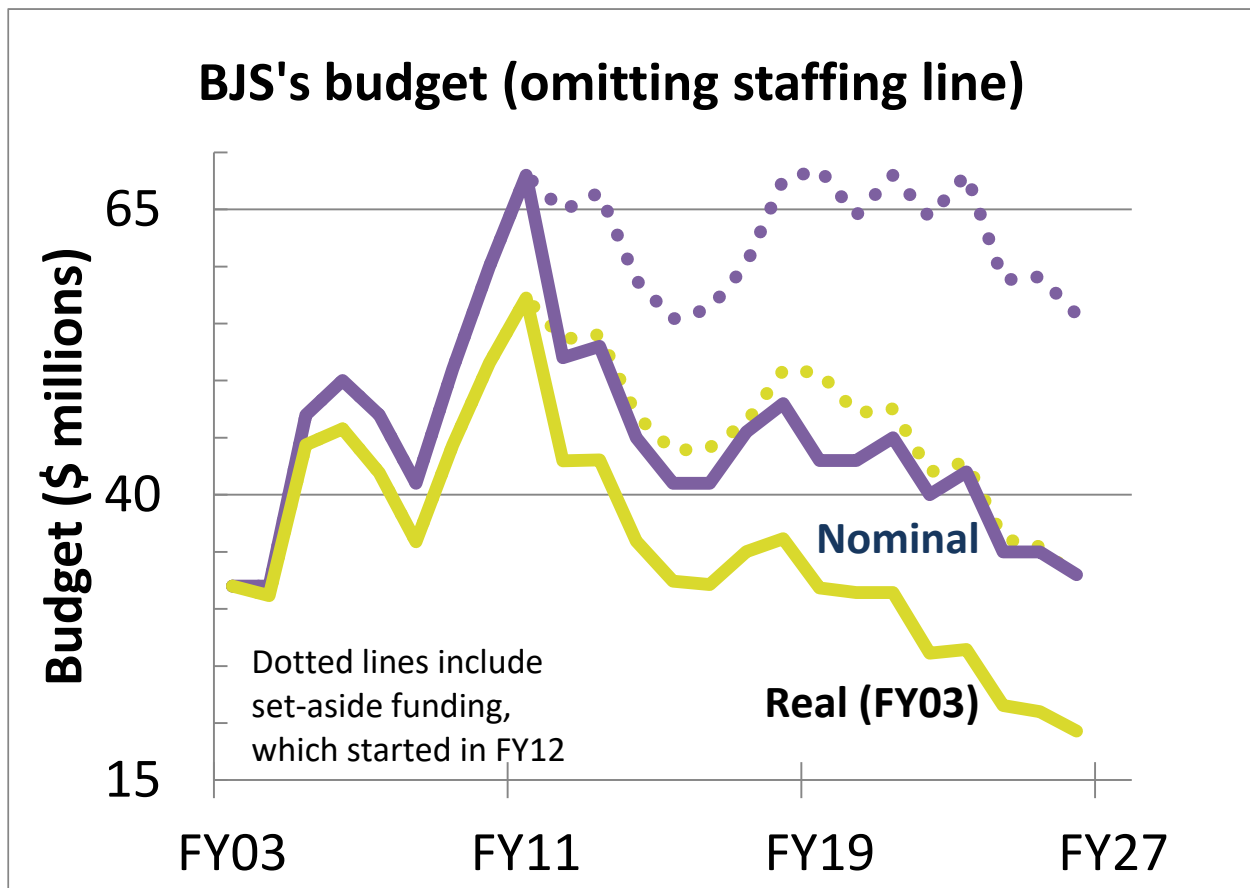
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ron Wasserstein
ASA Executive Director

Enclosures: BJS and NIJ budget graphs



National Institute of Justice Budget

