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January 22, 2013

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The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr.
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Holder:

I write regarding the recently-released president's plan to reduce gun violence. Given that the president's proposal may include some proposals for immediate action using current fiscal year appropriations, I believe there are two additional commonsense pieces that should be included in any reprogramming.

I understand that funds are available under the current continuing resolution to support grant programs to strengthen the Nation's background check system and keep guns out of the hands of prohibited individuals. Both the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Act Record Improvement Program, and the National Criminal History Improvement Program can provide States with grant funding to update and automate criminal history and mental illness records. I believe that improving the data in the NICS Index will improve the effectiveness of the national background check system and thereby reduce gun violence. For this reason, the House-passed CJS Appropriations bill for fiscal year 2013 included $12 million for the NICS Act Record Improvement Program, which is more than double the amount requested in the President's budget and more than double the amount available under the current continuing resolution. I recommend that you reprogram funds to increase the amount of funding available for such purposes this fiscal year pending the enactment of a final fiscal year 2013 appropriations bill.

In addition, I would also recommend you reprogram funds to establish a national center for campus public safety along the lines of that described in H.R. 6691 from the 112th Congress. Such a program could provide training, research and best practices to educational institutions at all levels to increase safety and prevent violence. This proposal has passed the House, and has strong bipartisan support in both chambers. It is also supported by the Virginia Tech Family Outreach Foundation.

Given your recent unilateral $165 million reprogramming to acquire Thomson prison in Illinois, I am confident that you will make the necessary resources available for these two initiatives. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Wolf
Chairman
House Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies