



## U.S. Department of Justice

### Federal Bureau of Investigation

Office of the Director

Washington, D.C. 20535-0001

November 8, 2023

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson and Leader Jeffries:

Over the years, the House Appropriations Committee has been very supportive of the FBI and our work to protect the American people and uphold the Constitution. The FBI's work can be seen in communities across the country through our efforts to thwart international terrorists and hostile foreign intelligence services; our investigations of sophisticated cyber-based attacks and internet-facilitated sexual exploitation of children; and our operations targeting violent gangs and transnational criminal organizations. Importantly, the FBI conducts this work through thousands of direct partnerships with local police and sheriff's departments across the country. I am deeply concerned that the House Appropriations Committee's Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (CJS) Subcommittee mark of the fiscal year (FY) 2024 budget will result in a damaging and dangerous reduction in the services the FBI can provide to the public and to our local partners—at a time when those law enforcement partners need and deserve our support more than ever.

The *Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023* requires the federal government to be even more diligent in its budget management. I assure you the 38,000 men and women of the FBI have been good stewards of taxpayer resources and have produced meaningful results for the American people through cost-effective business practices. I understand the fiscal constraints facing the federal government, but the mark's proposed \$1 billion reduction from the FY 2024 President's Budget request, which is \$400 million less than the FY 2023 enacted level, goes beyond fiscal discipline. This type of cut will lead to a dangerous reduction in services the FBI provides to the American people, both directly and through state, local, and tribal law enforcement partnerships. The resulting degradation of our work and support to sheriffs and police chiefs will empower our adversaries—terrorists, foreign intelligence officers, hackers, cartels, gangs, and child predators—at a time of an alarmingly heightened threat environment.

Countering terrorism remains the FBI's number one priority. The recent, brutal Hamas attack against Israel reminded anyone who had forgotten that the threat of terrorism is real and dangerous—abroad and right here at home. The FBI is responding to increased threats to the homeland both from terrorist organizations worldwide and from lone actors focused on targeting faith-based communities. We will continue to use every lawful capability at our disposal to protect the American people and pursue justice for the victims and their families. Now is not the time to undermine those capabilities and increase the danger to the American people through budget cuts to the FBI's international terrorism program.

The People's Republic of China (PRC) represents the defining threat of this era. There is no country that presents a broader, more comprehensive threat to our ideas, our innovation, our economic security, and, ultimately, our national security. While Congress debates reducing the FBI's capabilities, the PRC uses every means at its disposal against our economic security—blending cyber, human intelligence, corporate transactions, and other means of attacking and exploiting U.S. companies to advance its own economic growth, national power, and military capability. Stolen innovation means stolen jobs, stolen opportunities for American workers, and stolen leadership in industry. Currently, the FBI has approximately 2,000 active investigations that are just related to the Chinese government's efforts to steal information.

Reductions to the FBI's budget in FY 2024 would adversely impact the FBI's counterintelligence and computer intrusion programs, undermining their ability to continue to aggressively and successfully thwart countless Chinese threats to our economic and national security before they can do significant harm. Those programs also counter Chinese attempts to repress Americans for exercising their constitutional rights. For example, we have identified and arrested individuals who operate illegal Chinese police stations here in the United States, and we have charged individuals who engage in other PRC-directed transnational repression activities—everything from targeting anti-Beijing congressional candidates, to harassing students who offend the PRC with their comments in the classroom, to punishing U.S. companies whose employees tweet comments that Beijing does not like. Budget cuts limiting that work will assist the PRC in interfering with Americans' exercise of their constitutional rights in their own communities, schools, and workplaces.

A reduction to the FBI's budget is also a reduction in the FBI's ability to protect our most precious national asset—America's children—from exploitation, drugs, and violence. In July 2023, men and women of the FBI and our partners rescued more than 200 victims of sex trafficking and recovered 59 children who had been reported missing.<sup>1</sup> In May 2023, the FBI-led multi-year coordinated international law enforcement effort called Operation SpecTor resulted in the arrest of 288 individuals and seizure of 850 kilograms of drugs, 117 firearms, and \$53.4 million in cash and virtual currency across the United States and eight other countries.<sup>2</sup> At a national level last year alone, the FBI's violent crime task forces arrested more than 20,000 violent criminals and child predators. That is an average of 55 violent crime arrests per day, every day. I share this with you as a reminder of the powerful, lifesaving return on investment that the FBI provides to the American people, in partnership with local law enforcement.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/fbi-led-sweep-targeting-sex-traffickers-recovers-dozens-of-minor-victims>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/operation-spector-targets-darknet-markets>

Each day, the FBI works with its law enforcement partners to investigate cartel leadership to thwart efforts to exploit our borders and traffic dangerous drugs into communities across the country. In June 2023, the FBI and its partners arrested 31 members of two drug trafficking organizations responsible for distributing dangerous drugs like fentanyl, cocaine, and methamphetamine throughout the area around Marion, Ohio. In that one investigation, we worked with partners from multiple local police departments and sheriff's offices to take kilograms of fentanyl off the streets—enough lethal doses to kill the entire population of Columbus, Cleveland, and Cincinnati combined. That is just one investigation led by one small office in Ohio. At a time when we are losing far too many citizens to overdoses, a significant budget cut to the FBI would mean even more deadly fentanyl would reach its final destination, claiming countless additional American lives.

The FBI is also constantly looking for even better ways to collaborate with our state, local, and tribal law enforcement partners to protect our fellow citizens. The FBI has recently taken innovative approaches to help partners tackle some of the most chilling violent crime and drug problems, including surging resources to places like Houston, Texas. As part of a coordinated violence reduction initiative with the Houston Anti-Gang Center, the FBI was able to quickly assess threats in the area, target the “worst of the worst” gang members, coordinate with prosecutors, and charge the 100% Third Ward Gang with racketeering and firearms violations. As a result of this and other cases, the Houston Police Department reported a 10 percent drop in overall crime in just a five-month period.

The FBI is not just focused on assisting our partners in big cities. In January, the FBI's Coastal Georgia Safe Streets Violent Gang Task Force run out of our Brunswick, Georgia satellite office arrested 74 members of the Ghost Face Gangsters and seized a number of illegal guns and drugs. While that takedown did not make national headlines, the Brunswick Police Department reported a 50 percent reduction in fentanyl overdoses after that arrest. These are real lives that are being saved through these partnerships.

The House mark will reduce the FBI's ability to support sheriffs and police chiefs in these types of cases through our leadership and resourcing of local task forces—everything from intelligence on how best to take down distribution networks, to assistance with technical investigative techniques, to SWAT and other tactical support—as well as digital forensics and evidence response services we provide. Local law enforcement leaders are asking the FBI to increase our support in these types of cases every day, so it is unfathomable why the House CJS mark is proposing to cut the very services that those leaders rely on from us.

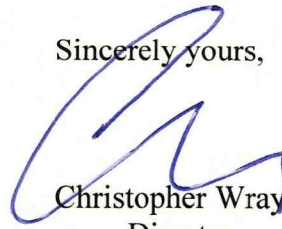
The proposed budget reductions would have the net effect of cutting 3,000 employees through a full year hiring freeze. A 3,000 personnel cut is equivalent to eliminating all the special agents and analysts working violent crimes against children, violent crimes and gangs, and transnational organized crime programs in our field offices across the country. Similarly, this reduction is comparable to closing five of our large field offices (Boston, Dallas, Detroit, Houston, and Philadelphia). Knowing the national security and criminal threats that these offices work and the support these offices provide to state and local law enforcement and to the American people directly, the very idea that the country could lose a comparable capability is enormously concerning.

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries

Enclosed are additional descriptions of the value the FBI provides the American people and the impact of proposed budget reductions. As outlined above and in the enclosure, the proposed FY 2024 House CJS mark will reduce the FBI's ability to keep communities safe from national security and criminal threats. Our adversaries will use this reduction to their advantage, knowing that these cuts would mean thousands fewer FBI agents, analysts, and other personnel investigating their illicit activities. There is no question that cutting the FBI's budget, especially at a time where significant investments must be made just to keep pace with evolving threats, will make America less safe. We cannot afford to let our guard down in this way.

If you or your staff have any questions about the impact of the proposed FY 2024 House mark, please feel free to contact the FBI's Chief Financial Officer, Nicholas Dimos, at (202) 324-7343.

Sincerely yours,



Christopher Wray  
Director

Enclosure

## **Impacts of Proposed FY 2024 Budget Reductions**

The proposed FY 2024 House mark will result in significant reductions to the FBI's operations. These budget reductions would have the net effect of cutting 3,000 employees through a full year hiring freeze. A cut of this magnitude would impact every FBI program, including counterterrorism, counterintelligence, cyber, violent crime, crimes against children, and human trafficking. At a time where adversaries like China, Russia, cartels, and violent criminals are ramping up their brazen attacks, the FBI cannot be sidelined by budget reductions.

### **National Security Investigations**

Any reduction to the FBI's national security resources puts American citizens and our allies at risk. Terrorists and foreign intelligence services have taken many opportunities to target U.S. citizens—either by conducting physical attacks, stealing our intellectual property and military advancements, or spreading misinformation. China especially has been brazen in its assaults. The Chinese government has shown its eagerness to steal its way up the ladder to accomplish its goal of surpassing the United States as a global superpower. They use a myriad of activities to accomplish this goal, including cyber intrusions, human intelligence operations, intimidation of dissidents residing in the United States, pressure on U.S. companies operating in China, and many other nefarious actions. This level of aggression is unprecedented in the history of the FBI. As the lead U.S. counterintelligence agency, the FBI is responsible for detecting and using every lawful tool to counter foreign intelligence services and organizations as they seek to hurt our interests. The task is an enormous one: even if the FBI focused all of its cyber agents and intelligence analysts on the China threat, Chinese hackers would still outnumber FBI cyber personnel at least 50 to 1. From a counterintelligence perspective, the FBI has well in excess of 2,000 active investigations in the 56 field offices focused on the Chinese government trying to undermine U.S. national and economic security. The China threat accounts for approximately 50 percent of our counterintelligence work, with a total of 75 percent of our work countering China, Russia, and Iran combined.

In addition, the threat from foreign terrorist organizations is as persistent and complex as ever. The FBI is investigating threats every day from Homegrown Violent Extremists, who are inspired and radicalized online by groups like ISIS, al-Qaida, Hizballah and their affiliates to commit violence here in the United States. That threat is as acute as it has ever been in the wake of Hamas' brutal surprise attack against Israel. We are also tracking and countering potential terrorism threats from individuals who enter the country unlawfully, including over the southern border—a monumental task given the often sparse information available on their whereabouts and associates.

The FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTF) pool talents, skills, and knowledge from across the law enforcement and intelligence communities into single teams that investigate, prevent, and respond to these terrorist threats. In the past five years, the FBI has disrupted over 3,000 terrorist incidents. Just last year, a JTTF disrupted a plot to assassinate former President George W. Bush. However, the proposed House mark will impact JTTF staffing as well as the technical tools used to share national security information. Of note, the House mark eliminates the FBI's entire budget used to sustain and operate the FBI's top secret networks and space. The proposed

mark would fully eliminate the FBI's ability to support Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF) and top secret Sensitive Compartmented Information Network (SCINet) sustainment costs. The impact of this reduction on the FBI's ability to sustain its national security mission cannot be overstated. As a member of the Intelligence Community (IC), the FBI must be able to communicate and share intelligence with federal partners at the top secret level. Eliminating the budget to support these communications and collaboration will degrade our national security capabilities for years to come. While most other IC agencies will realize a budget increase in FY 2024 since they are funded in other appropriations bills, the FBI will experience an eight percent reduction under the House's proposal. The FBI will not be able to effectively fulfill its role in the IC at this reduced level.

### **Cyber Investigations**

Over the course of the past few years, the FBI has seen a wider-than-ever range of cyber actors threaten Americans' safety, security, and economic well-being. Cybercriminal syndicates and nation-states continue to innovate and use increasingly sophisticated techniques to compromise our networks and maximize the reach and impact of their operations, such as selling malware as a service or by targeting vendors as a way to access scores of victims by hacking just one provider. These criminals and nation-states believe that they can compromise our networks, steal our property, extort us, and hold our critical infrastructure at risk without incurring any risk themselves. Using its role as the lead federal agency for threat response, the FBI works seamlessly with domestic and international partners to defend their computer networks, attribute malicious cyber activity, sanction bad behavior, and take the fight to our adversaries overseas. For instance, in April 2023, the FBI announced a coordinated international operation that dismantled Genesis Market, a criminal online marketplace offering access to data stolen from over 1.5 million compromised computers around the world containing over 80 million account access credentials. Genesis Market was also a prolific initial access broker in the cybercrime world, providing criminals a user-friendly database to search for stolen credentials and more easily infiltrate victims' computers and accounts. As part of this operation, 44 FBI field offices worked with the FBI Milwaukee Field Office and 22 international agencies investigating the case.

In total, the FBI took over 1,000 actions against cyber adversaries in 2022, including arrests, criminal charges, convictions, dismantlements, and disruptions. The FBI enabled many more actions through dedicated partnerships with the private sector, with foreign partners, and with federal, state, and local entities. The FBI also provided thousands of individualized threat warnings and disseminated 70 public threat advisories by way of Joint Cybersecurity Advisories, FBI Liaison Alert System (FLASH) reports, Private Industry Notifications (PINs), and Public Service Announcements (PSAs)—many of which were jointly authored with other U.S. agencies and international partners.

For example, in June 2023, the FBI co-authored a Joint Cybersecurity Advisory on LockBit ransomware, which was the most deployed ransomware variant across the world in 2022 and continues to be prolific in 2023. The publication of this Joint Cybersecurity Advisory followed DOJ's May 2023 indictment of a Russian national charged with deploying LockBit and other

ransomware against critical infrastructure around the world, including hospitals, government agencies, and other sectors.

As noted above, even if the FBI focused all of its cyber agents and intelligence analysts on the China threat, Chinese hackers would still outnumber FBI Cyber personnel at least 50 to 1. The U.S. Intelligence Community has assessed that China is attempting to preposition on U.S. critical infrastructure—setting up back doors to cripple critical infrastructure in the event China invades Taiwan and therefore, limiting our ability to assist Taiwan. The FBI has identified Chinese hackers gaining access to the computer networks of a major U.S. transportation hub. In this case, the FBI quickly alerted the network operators to the particular portion of their network that had been compromised and assisted with fixing the vulnerabilities. Moreover, where we have seen foreign actors target critical infrastructure like hospitals, airports, and utilities such as power and water, such attacks would potentially jeopardize the physical safety of Americans. The FBI is the only agency with authority to conduct on-network operations in the United States to counter adversaries' attacks. This is no time to undermine that capability.

At a time when the cyber threat is more sophisticated and moves more rapidly than ever before, the budget reductions included in the House mark would decimate our work to pursue the money, people, and infrastructure that empower cybercriminals and hostile nation-states, exposing our critical infrastructure to cyberattacks and costing American businesses hundreds of millions of dollars in damages. What that means in practice is: we will place on hold our efforts to develop on-network operational tools that were intended to increase technical operations like those above; we will likely reduce our just-awarded contracts for target developers and exploitation analysts, which means less technical collection opportunities will be identified; we will not complete model cyber squads in over a dozen field offices; and we will provide only a fraction of cyber positions enhanced pay under our current authorities.

### **Criminal Investigations**

The FBI is making a real difference in communities nationwide and providing many services to state and local law enforcement. Given the violence we are seeing in communities across the nation, a cut to the FBI's efforts to curb this brutality is extremely harmful to the American people. In just one example, in Buffalo, New York, the FBI partnered with the Buffalo Police Department and 19 other departments across the state on a gun-involved violence elimination initiative. Over the course of a six-month period (compared to the same timeframe in 2021), there was a 73 percent decline in the number of firearm-involved homicides, 60 percent decline in those injured by gunfire, and a 59 percent decline in shooting incidents. Due to the success of this initiative in Buffalo, this initiative has been expanded to other high-crime cities within the Buffalo area and is showing similar success. In addition, in just a two-week period last year, the FBI and its partners identified and located 84 minor victims of child sex trafficking and sexual exploitation and located 37 actively missing children. In the past five years, the FBI located 8,850 child sex trafficking victims. A cut to the FBI's budget would leave hundreds of minor victims we rescue each year with even fewer places to turn for help in escaping their tormentors.

Each day, the FBI works with its law enforcement partners to investigate cartel leadership and to thwart efforts to exploit our borders and traffic dangerous drugs into communities across the

country. The FBI is running well over 300 investigations targeting the leadership of those cartels, including 78 investigations along the southwest border. Working with partners, the FBI has already seized significant amounts of fentanyl, stopping deadly drugs from reaching their intended destinations in states all over the country and saving countless American lives. In states like California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Pennsylvania, the FBI has made seizures that were enough to kill the population of the entire state. In September 2023, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Texas charged 39 individuals involved in large-scale drug trafficking or violent robberies. Many of the charged crimes involved the illegal possession or use of firearms. During the investigations and arrests of these 39 individuals, the FBI and law enforcement partners seized: 79 firearms, including 3 machine guns; 3 ghost guns; approximately 248 kilograms of meth, including meth pills laced with fentanyl; over 1.7 kilograms of fentanyl, heroin, cocaine, and PCP; and over \$110,000 in cash. At a time when we are losing far too many citizens to overdoses, a significant budget cut to the FBI would mean even more deadly fentanyl would reach its final destination, claiming countless additional American lives.

In this vein, the FBI has unique authorities that allow us to target criminal organizations who conduct all sorts of criminal activities to fund their nefarious acts—organizations that traffic not only drugs, but humans, guns, et cetera. These organizations conduct these activities in communities around the nation as well as on the darknet, where fortunately, the FBI has gained a significant footing. On behalf of the Department of Justice, the FBI created the Joint Criminal Opioid Darknet Enforcement (JCODE) to disrupt and dismantle marketplaces facilitating fentanyl and opioid distribution. JCODE brings together agents, analysts, technical experts, and professional staff with expertise in drugs, gangs, health care fraud, and more, with other federal, state, and local law enforcement partners from across government. The JCODE strategy focuses on identifying and infiltrating the marketplace administrative team, analyzing financial information, identifying and exploiting marketplace infrastructure, targeting vendors and buyers, and enabling investigation and prosecution of these marketplaces. JCODE also collaborates extensively with international law enforcement partners to include the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (EUROPOL) to address the borderless darknet environment. Operation SpecTor, which is mentioned in the cover letter to this attachment, was a JCODE operation. The outcomes of Operation SpecTor—288 arrests and \$53.4 million in cash and virtual currency seized—represent the most-ever arrests and the most funds seized in any JCODE operation.

The FBI does not just investigate these complex crimes; we strive to also assist victims in navigating the aftermath of a crime and the criminal justice process with dignity, respect, and resilience. The FBI's Victims Services personnel deploy to crisis and mass casualty events across the nation. We support these local victims even when the FBI is not the lead investigative agency. We have provided these services to more than 2 million victims (68,000 victims in the past three years). Funding reductions would impact these investigations and endanger vulnerable populations across the country.



## **Technical and Scientific Services**

The FBI provides many technical and scientific services to state, local, tribal, federal, and IC partners. For instance, the FBI Laboratory performs over 20 different forensic science disciplines (DNA analysis, forensic facial imaging, latent fingerprint analysis, general chemistry, toxicology, cryptanalysis, firearms toolmarks, gunshot residue, bullet trajectory, shoeprint and tire tread identification, et cetera) to state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies, in addition to supporting FBI investigations. Over the past fiscal year, the Lab has processed over 4,000 submissions of evidence—almost half in support of violent crimes, which helped take violent offenders off the streets. They have also aided over 46,000 investigations, indexed over 21 million profiles, and have deployed 65 times in support of large-scale complex crime scenes and mass casualty events (including Coleyville, Texas; Buffalo, New York; and Highland Park, Illinois).

In addition to the Lab's day-to-day operations, they are also statutorily mandated to perform DNA analysis from all federally collected convicted offenders, arrestees, and non-U.S. citizen detainees, including, since 2020, samples collected by the Department of Homeland Security. The increasing volume of non-U.S. citizens engaged at the southern U.S. border is historically unprecedented and has exceeded the FBI Laboratory's capability and budget to process these samples for Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) entry, as mandated by the DNA Identification Act of 2005. During the past 12 months, the FBI has received an average of 108,000 DNA samples per month (over 10 times the historical sample volume). As a result, a significant and growing backlog of samples has developed which impacts the timeliness of CODIS entry and notification of DNA matches to local, state, and federal law enforcement. At the end of August 2023, the backlog was approximately 890,000 samples and was growing by approximately 60,000 samples each month. At this rate, the backlog could reach 1 million samples by the end of October 2023, meaning a sample might not be entered into CODIS until 12 to 15 months after collection. Practically, this means that offenders, arrestees, and detainees whose samples are backlogged will continue to be unassociated to violent crimes until those samples can be matched to crime scene samples in CODIS, presenting a risk to public safety. For example, in Dallas, Texas, an individual was taken into custody by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for illegally re-entering the United States after previously being removed. As a part of the booking process, the subject's DNA sample was collected and provided to the FBI Laboratory. Because of the current DNA processing backlog, the subject's DNA profile was not uploaded to CODIS until 4 months later. Immediately upon entry, the subject's DNA profile matched to an evidence profile developed from an unsolved homicide out of Phoenix, Arizona, that occurred in 1996.

While the House mark added \$30 million to construct a new FBI laboratory, the FBI can neither construct a laboratory with \$30 million nor appropriately staff and equip it. Federal taxpayer dollars would be more wisely spent sustaining current FBI Salaries & Expenses (S&E), laboratory funding and providing additional funding to procure and process DNA kits and ensure sufficient funding for the full range of other emergency response requirements. This S&E funding is critical to keep pace with the asylee DNA collection and processing requirements as the surge of individuals crossing the U.S. southwest border continues.

The FBI, through its Regional Computer Forensics Laboratories (RCFLs), also assists state and local law enforcement with digital forensics on child sexual exploitation cases, internet fraud, and financial crimes. Last year, FBI RCFLs provided image and video forensics support for 344 state and local law enforcement cases across the country, helping to solve critical cases. The program also provides expert testimony for court proceedings including in the Uvalde Robb Elementary School shooting; Buffalo Tops supermarket shooting; Louisville bank shooting; Moscow, Idaho, murders; and more. A reduction in services provided through FBI science and technology programs like the RCFL program would directly affect local and state law enforcement agencies' ability to collect and review digital evidence, hampering their ability to stop ongoing criminal activity or to successfully pursue prosecutions of child exploitation perpetrators, cartel members, and other violent criminals. FBI programs also assist state and local law enforcement during critical incidents, providing a variety of forensic and laboratory assistance where evidence—particularly digital evidence—is too voluminous for local and state law enforcement agencies to effectively process, exploit, and review.

### **Criminal Justice Services**

In addition to technical and scientific support, the FBI provides real-time sharing of criminal justice information to state, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement partners. For instance, our National Threat Operations Center (NTOC) receives approximately 4,000 calls and e-tips a day—many of which involve threats to life or situations when getting information quickly to our FBI field offices or state/local law enforcement is literally a matter of life and death. Recently, after receiving information regarding a possible school shooting threat through the NTOC, the FBI shared the information with the appropriate FBI field office and the state/local fusion center. The FBI field office collaborated with local law enforcement, who dispatched two detectives to interview the possible subject(s). Local law enforcement seized one subject's firearm and is pursuing state terroristic threat charges. Any cuts would mean fewer people to process those life-or-death calls.

The FBI also runs the National Crime Information Center (NCIC)—a computerized database of documented criminal justice information available to virtually every law enforcement agency nationwide (90,000 state and local law enforcement agencies), 24 hours a day, 365 days a year – 10 million times per day. The officers in your district and in agencies around the nation query this data when they are pulling someone over at a traffic stop or attempting to apprehend a fugitive. This system has kept local officers safe by identifying passengers in traffic stops as terrorists, fugitives and other violent offenders—before potentially violent interactions occur. However, budget reductions would jeopardize the FBI's ability to maintain this system.

Of particular significance, for nearly a quarter of a century, the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) has been performing firearm-related background checks. NICS staff must keep abreast of each state's firearm laws and regulations as they evolve and change over time. Accordingly, NICS processed over 10 million NICS checks last year. Of this substantial number of checks, the FBI denied almost 136,000—meaning people who were not legally permitted to obtain a firearm applied for one anyway and were denied. Without necessary funding to sustain the NICS system and personnel, firearms may be granted to

individuals who are not legally authorized to have them, thus creating public safety concerns and an inability to sustain our responsibilities under the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act.

### **State and Local Assistance**

In addition to the examples of federal, state, and local assistance mentioned above, the FBI provides countless other services and capabilities to law enforcement partners. Reductions to the FBI's budget in FY 2024 will reduce the amount of support the FBI can provide to these partners.

For example, the FBI's Hazardous Devices School (HDS), located at the Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama, is the only facility in the country that trains and certifies the nation's public safety bomb technicians (state, local, and other federal) to render safe Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). HDS trains and certifies approximately 3,000 federal, state, and local bomb technicians who support 466 accredited Public Safety Bomb Squads located in all 50 states. Waitlists for HDS courses are long, with over 139 law enforcement personnel on the waitlist for certification and over 174 on the waitlist for the crisis response training. Funding cuts would diminish HDS's capacity, leading to additional backlogs. The consequences of discovering an IED in a jurisdiction without a certified team are dire and could endanger the American public.

The FBI also provides language translation and interpretation support to local and state law enforcement officers. This includes translation for jail calls, homicide investigations, child pornography, fraud, human and drug trafficking, social media posts, foreign police reports, consent forms, and polygraph examinations. Over the past five years, the FBI language program has provided approximately 10,000 hours of support to state and local law enforcement in 54 languages. Reductions to the language program will reduce the support the FBI can provide to our law enforcement partners for language translation requirements.

It is not only FBI personnel dedicating their lives to prevent attacks and take serious criminals off the streets—state, local, and tribal police chiefs and sheriffs contribute nearly 6,000 officers to FBI task forces. It is a testament to the value FBI partnerships provide when chiefs and sheriffs are dedicating additional personnel to serve on task forces while their organizations are seeing significant personnel shortages. The FBI leads over 750 task forces nationwide covering the gamut of national security and criminal threats, including terrorism, violent crime and gangs, child exploitation, cyber, counterintelligence, organized crime, public and border corruption, civil rights, intellectual property rights, mortgage and financial fraud, and many others. Cuts to the FBI's budget will affect more than just FBI operations; they will directly impact our partners in state and local law enforcement as well as the safety of communities across the nation.

Finally, the FBI trains state, local, tribal, and international law enforcement personnel at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia. This training is essential and sometimes the only training some officers receive in advanced disciplines such as intelligence theory, behavioral science, law enforcement communication, and forensic science. Not only will the House mark diminish the FBI's ability to execute this training, but the mark specifically eliminates funding to maintain the core physical infrastructure at Quantico, thus impacting operations of the entire campus.