



For Immediate Release: March 16, 2006

Barrow: “Don’t Cut Immigration Enforcement Funds for State and Local Police”

Georgia Congressman urges House Budget Committee to reject proposed cuts to the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program; 38 Members of Congress join Barrow in calling for full funding of the program

Washington, DC – Outraged by the recently proposed funding cuts to a vital federal initiative that reimburses state and local law enforcement agencies for the costs of incarcerating criminal illegal aliens, Georgia Congressman John Barrow (12th District) today called on the House Budget Committee to fully fund the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP).

In a letter to House Budget Committee Chairman Jim Nussle and Ranking Member John Spratt, Barrow wrote that Congress has “a responsibility to ensure that state and local law enforcement don’t suffer from unfunded federal mandates,” and that, “state and local governments have faced a huge fiscal burden as a result of incarcerating criminal aliens, and so far they are only partially reimbursed by the Federal government.”

Barrow’s letter was signed by a bipartisan group of 38 Members of Congress, including fellow Georgia Congressmen Jim Marshall (3rd District) and David Scott (13th District).

“Congress likes to talk tough about enforcing our immigration laws and strengthening our borders,” Barrow said after sending the letter. “But tough talk will get us nowhere unless we back it up with action. If we expect our local law enforcement agencies to fight illegal immigration and jail criminal aliens, we’ve got to make sure they have the money and resources they need to do their job. I hope that the House Budget Committee will do what’s right – reject these proposed cuts and fully fund the SCAAP program.”

The SCAAP program was created to reimburse state and local governments for the costs associated with incarcerating adult illegal immigrants. Since 1997, the State of Georgia has received more than \$28 million in SCAAP grants. In 2005, Georgia received a total of \$1,861,952, of which \$1,393,149 went directly to state government initiatives, and \$468,803 went to local counties and cities throughout the state. In Barrow’s 12th Congressional District, Augusta-Richmond County received \$19,559 in direct grants, while Chatham County received \$31,561. To review a full list of SCAAP grant recipients in Fiscal Year 2005, visit: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/05SCAAP.pdf>.

The House Budget Committee is expected to make a decision on funding for the SCAAP program later this month. Below is the full text of Congressman Barrow’s letter to Congressman Nussle and Congressman Spratt:

March 16, 2006

The Honorable Jim Nussle
Chairman, House Budget Committee

The Honorable John Spratt
Ranking Member, House Budget Committee

Dear Chairman Nussle and Ranking Member Spratt,

We're writing to request that you fully fund the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) for Fiscal Year 2007. This program is essential to the protection of American jobs and decreasing the possibility of terrorism.

Since September 11, 2001, America has taken strides in strengthening and enforcing immigration policies. One result has been the expansion of state and local law enforcement's authority in the investigation, arrest, and detention of immigration violators. State and local governments have faced a huge fiscal burden as a result of incarcerating criminal aliens, and so far they are only partially reimbursed by the Federal government.

As Members of Congress, we have a responsibility to ensure that state and local law enforcement don't suffer from unfunded federal mandates. These agencies must maintain the focus of traditional funding on fighting crime and emergency response. When we expand their authority into the realm of illegal immigration, we must also expand their resources.

In the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005, SCAAP was reauthorized for \$750,000,000 for fiscal year 2006; \$850,000,000 for fiscal year 2007; and \$950,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2011. As you know, Congress appropriated \$405 million for SCAAP in Fiscal Year 2006. For Fiscal Year 2007, we request funding the program at its fully authorized amount of \$850 million.

Protecting American citizens from criminal aliens is essential to the War on Terror. Please ensure that our state and local law enforcement have the resources to play their part in this important national security issue.

Sincerely,

John Barrow (D-Georgia), Mike Ross (D-Arkansas), Carolyn McCarthy (D-New York), Doris Matsui (D-California), Phil English (R-Pennsylvania), Neil Abercrombie (D-Hawaii), Ed Case (D-Hawaii), Xavier Becerra (D-California), Tim Holden (D-Pennsylvania), Vic Snyder (D-Arkansas), Tim Bishop (D-New York), Henry Cuellar (D-Texas), Diane Watson (D-California), Dennis Cardoza (D-California), Grace Napolitano (D-California), Brian Higgins (D-New York), Dutch Ruppersberger (D-Maryland), Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-Texas), David Scott (D-Georgia), Sam Graves (R-Missouri), Ginny Brown-Waite (R-Florida), Linda Sanchez (D-California), Jim Marshall (D-Georgia), Ed Pastor (D-Arizona), Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-California), Mark Udall (D-Colorado), Loretta Sanchez (D-California), Nita Lowey (D-New York), Anthony Weiner (D-New York), Sam Farr (D-California), Louise Slaughter (D-New York), Jim Kolbe (R-Arizona), Susan Davis (D-California), Solomon Ortiz (D-Texas), Ruben Hinojosa (D-Texas), Lloyd Doggett (D-Texas), Sue Kelly (R-New York), Jim Matheson (D-Utah), John "Randy" Kuhl (R-New York)

To learn more about the SCAAP Program, visit the Bureau of Justice Assistance website at: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/grant/scaap.html>.

###

Contact: Harper Lawson, (202) 225-2823