



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Attorney General

Jason S. Miyares
Attorney General

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800-828-1120

August 16, 2022

VIA E-MAIL AND U.S. MAIL

The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine
United States Senator
231 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20510

The Honorable Mark R. Warner
United States Senator
703 Hart Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20510

The Honorable Jennifer L. Wexton
United States Congresswoman
1217 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20515

The Honorable Benjamin Cline
United States Congressman
2443 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20515

Re: Virginia Army National Guard Counter Drug Unit Budget Reductions

Dear Senator Warner, Senator Kaine, Congressman Cline, and Congresswoman Wexton,

I write to urge you to continue full funding of the National Guard, including all programs it operates, without any budget reductions for the coming budget cycle. It has come to my attention that the latest congressional budget proposal for fiscal year 2023 includes reductions for the National Guard Counter Drug Program, which will result in budget reductions for the Virginia Army National Guard (VANG) Counter Drug Units. According to information received by my office, the current congressional proposal for funding VANG Counter Drug unit indicates a 10% reduction in the program in Virginia, resulting in a reduction of approximately \$337,000. This reduction will decrease staffing within VANG Counter Drug Units in Virginia.

As you are both aware, our nation continues to face a drug crisis, with the latest statistics demonstrating over 107,000 people died in the United States from drug overdoses in 2021.¹ Given

¹ "Provisional data from CDC's National Center for Health Statistics indicate there were an estimated 107,622 drug overdose deaths in the United States during 2021, an increase of nearly 15% from the 93,655 deaths estimated in 2020."

the scope of this crisis, any reduction in law enforcement resources, such as those provided by VANG's Counter Drug Unit, are detrimental to our ongoing efforts to keep communities safe and provide necessary resources to law enforcement agencies on the front lines of this crisis.

The VANG Counter Drug Units are instrumental partners to law enforcement agencies across the Commonwealth of Virginia. Their support is especially significant to law enforcement agencies in Southwest Virginia, where most agencies do not have the budgetary resources to hire analysts. The VANG Counter Drug Units work in tandem with United States Marshals Service (USMS) offices throughout the Commonwealth to support local law enforcement agencies. These fulltime, active-duty VANG analysts are housed in USMS offices, provided necessary equipment to conduct and aid investigations, and trained by USMS staff. These analysts provide valuable resources to law enforcement agencies, to include:

- Coordinate with county/municipality Drug Investigation Units to provide analytical support for investigations and dangerous drug seizures;
- Coordinate with investigators to review data received pursuant to legal process and conduct analyses;
- Produce flow charts, graphs, or data for investigators and prosecutors;
- Aid the United States Marshals Service (USMS), via the Capital Area Regional Fugitive Task Force (CARFTF), to adopt locality and state warrants for the apprehension of violent offenders and drug offenders;
- Aid the CARFTF member agencies (including all SWVA Sheriff's Offices) by providing analytical support to investigators to locate dangerous, wanted offenders;
- Conduct forensic cellular analysis and extraction from cellular devices for investigators;
- Perform monthly reviews of violent offender warrants from assigned localities, to ascertain status and further analytical support;
- Provide on-site analytical support to partner agencies;
- Provide analytical support to the Southwest Virginia Missing Child Unit;
- Provide analytical support on human trafficking investigations;
- Create reports and statistical overview of data for investigators and executive leadership; and
- Manage virtual command centers for active critical incidents, providing officers with continuous information flow.

As evidenced above, the VANG Counter Drug Unit analysts provide critical law enforcement support for not only drug investigations, but also support many serious criminal investigations. These analysts provide critical assistance to law enforcement across the Commonwealth, in turn helping reduce drugs and violent crime in our communities. The current proposed budget reductions would result in the loss of five VNG Counter Drug Unit analysts across the Commonwealth, one of which would be lost in Southwest Virginia. The loss of this analyst in SWVA would leave only two VANG Counter Drug analysts to provide support for the 52 counties in the Western District of Virginia. As you are both aware, this region is already underserved, underfunded, and has long been nearest the epicenter of the opioid crisis in our country.

I've shared this information with my partners in law enforcement, to include Commonwealth's Attorneys and Sheriffs, especially across Southwest Virginia where the loss of an analyst position will have the most impact. I, along with my undersigned partners, strongly urge you to support full funding, without any reductions, of the Virginia Army National Guard Counter Drug Unit, as well as all such units nationwide. We fully support the important work these units perform to aid and assist law enforcement in the Commonwealth and our communities, especially those in Southwest Virginia who have faced the most significant impact of the drug crisis in the Commonwealth. Any staffing reductions of these units will be felt by law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve, unnecessarily disrupting their important duties due to funding reductions.

Sincerely,



Jason S. Miyares



Jason R. Ramsey Sheriff
Bland County Sheriff



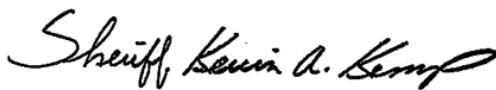
John Austin
City of Bristol Chief of Police



R. Tyrone Foster
City of Bristol Sheriff



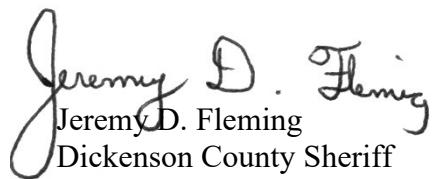
John C. McClanahan
Buchanan County Sheriff

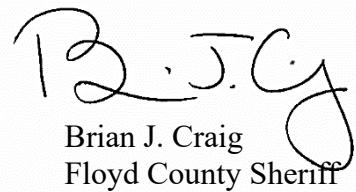


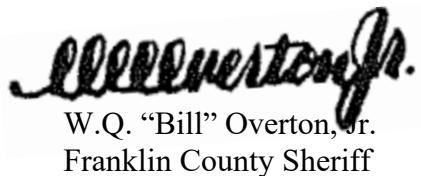
Kevin A. Kemp
Carroll County Sheriff



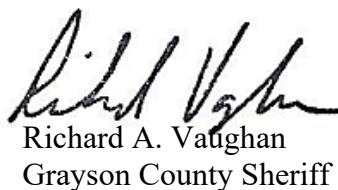
Lloyd T. N. Craddock
Craig County Sheriff


Jeremy D. Fleming
Dickenson County Sheriff

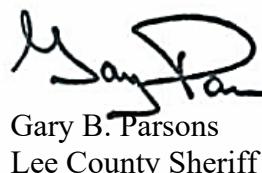

Brian J. Craig
Floyd County Sheriff


W.Q. "Bill" Overton, Jr.
Franklin County Sheriff

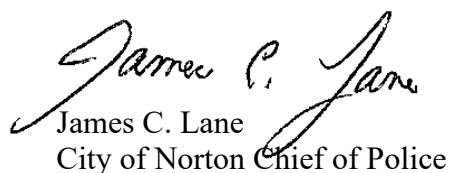

W. Morgan Millirons
Giles County Sheriff

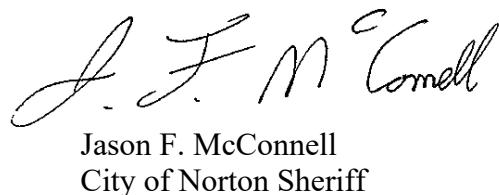

Richard A. Vaughan
Grayson County Sheriff

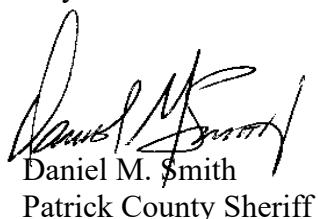

Lane A. Perry
Henry County Sheriff

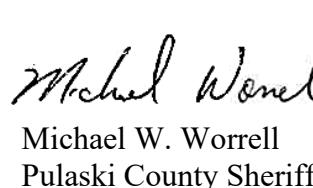

Gary B. Parsons
Lee County Sheriff

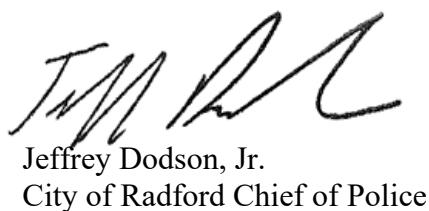

C.H. "Hank" Partin
Montgomery County Sheriff

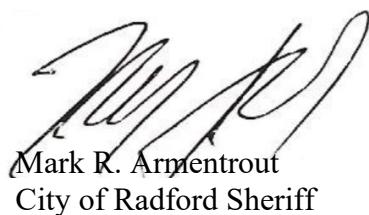

James C. Lane
City of Norton Chief of Police


Jason F. McConnell
City of Norton Sheriff


Daniel M. Smith
Patrick County Sheriff


Michael W. Worrell
Pulaski County Sheriff


Jeffrey Dodson, Jr.
City of Radford Chief of Police


Mark R. Armentrout
City of Radford Sheriff



Samuel Roman, Jr.
City of Roanoke Chief of Police



Antonio D. Hash
City of Roanoke Sheriff



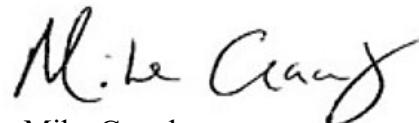
J. Eric Orange
Roanoke County Sheriff



Steven L. Dye
Russell County Sheriff

(Separate letter of support enclosed)

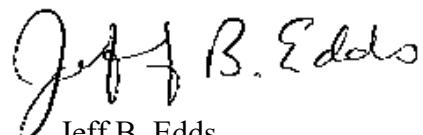
Howard B. Hall
Roanoke County Police Department



Mike Crawley
City of Salem Chief of Police



April M. Staton
City of Salem Sheriff



Jeff B. Edds
Scott County Sheriff



B.C. "Chip" Shuler
Smyth County Sheriff



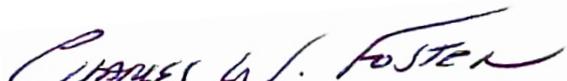
Brian L. Hieatt
Tazewell County Sheriff



R. Blake Andis
Washington County Sheriff



E. Grant Kilgore
Wise County Sheriff



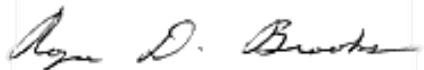
Charles W. Foster
Wythe County Sheriff



Patrick D. White
Bland County Commonwealth's Attorney



Jerry A. Wolfe
City of Bristol Commonwealth's Attorney



Roger D. Brooks
Carroll County Commonwealth's Attorney



Joshua H. Newberry
Dickenson County Commonwealth's Attorney



W. Cooper Brown
Franklin County Commonwealth's Attorney



Brandon R. Boyles
Grayson County Commonwealth's Attorney



H. Fuller Cridlin
Lee County Commonwealth's Attorney



Justin L. Griffith
Pulaski County Commonwealth's Attorney



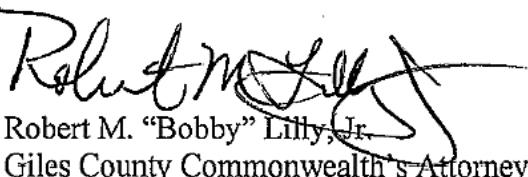
Gerald D. Arrington
Buchanan County Commonwealth's Attorney



Matthew Dunne
Craig County Commonwealth's Attorney



W. Eric Branscom
Floyd County Commonwealth's Attorney



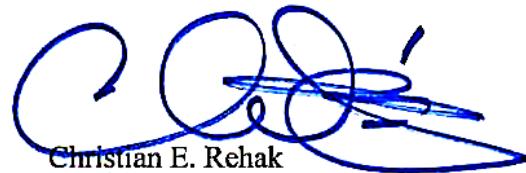
Robert M. "Bobby" Lilly, Jr.
Giles County Commonwealth's Attorney



M. Andrew Nester
Henry County Commonwealth's Attorney



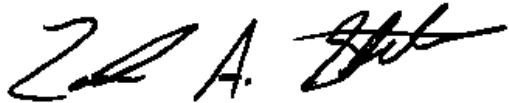
Mary K. Pettitt
Montgomery County Commonwealth's Attorney



Christian E. Rehak
City of Radford Commonwealth's Attorney



Donald S. Caldwell
City of Roanoke Commonwealth's Attorney



Zachary A. Stoots
Russell County Commonwealth's Attorney



Roy F. Evans
Smyth County Commonwealth's Attorney



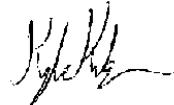
Joshua S. Cumbow
Washington County Commonwealth's Attorney



Michael D. Jones
Wythe County Commonwealth's Attorney



Brian T. Holohan
Roanoke County Commonwealth's Attorney



Kyle B. Kilgore
Scott County Commonwealth's Attorney



J. Christopher Plaster
Tazewell County Commonwealth's Attorney



Steven C. Davis
Wise County/Norton Commonwealth's Attorney

c: The Honorable H. Morgan Griffith, United States House of Representatives
The Honorable Robert P. Mosier, Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Safety
The Honorable Terry G. Kilgore, Virginia House of Delegates, Majority Leader
The Honorable Todd E. Pillion, Virginia Senate



ROANOKE COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT
MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Matthew C. Hall
Office of the Attorney General

FROM: Chief Howard B. Hall

DATE: August 2, 2022

SUBJECT: VANG Counter Drug Unit Budget

I have reviewed the letter drafted by Attorney General Miyares regarding the continued funding of the VANG Counter Drug Unit. I fully support the important work of this unit and the need to maintain its funding. I concur with the Attorney General's letter.