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April 19, 2006

The Honorable Thad Cochran, Chair
Committee on Appropriations
S-128 US Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Byrd, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
S-125A US Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran and Senator Byrd:

As you determine funding levels through the FY 2007 appropriations process, the undersigned members of State Associations of Addiction Services (SAAS) urge you to consider the importance of fully funding programs in the Department of Justice that support prevention and treatment of substance use disorders. SAAS is a national organization representing 40 state provider associations and community-based prevention and addiction treatment programs.

Research has shown that between 60 and 80 percent of individuals under supervision of the criminal justice system were under the influence of alcohol or other drugs during the commission of their offense, committed the offense to support a drug addiction, were charged with a drug-related crime, or are regular substance users. Supporting prevention and addiction treatment services for individuals under the supervision of the criminal justice system is critical to improving the health and safety of communities nationwide. Addiction treatment has been shown to cut drug use in half, reduce crime by 80 percent and reduce arrests up to 64 percent. Fully funding programs in the Department of Justice that prevent drug use by young people and provide treatment to people addicted to drugs is critical to address the spread of methamphetamine use, reduce recidivism rates and prevent underage drinking.

As you determine the FY 2007 funding allocations for the Department of Justice, we ask that you keep in mind the importance of the following programs:

- **The Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) Program** provides drug addiction treatment services for individuals in State and local correctional facilities. Despite the extremely high number of incarcerated individuals who need drug addiction treatment services, there is a severe shortage of these services in the criminal justice system. Programs like RSAT that offer treatment during incarceration, combined with aftercare services for individuals who are returning to the community, are essential to any successful reentry strategy. We urge the Committee to support funding this critical program at \$40 million for FY 2007.
- **The Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws (EUDL) Program** helps States to develop comprehensive and coordinated initiatives to enforce State laws that prohibit underage drinking. Addiction is a disease that begins in adolescence; research by the National

Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has shown that if we can stop use before age 25, we will significantly reduce the prevalence of addiction. Programs like the EUDL, that support collaboration between law enforcement and the prevention and addiction treatment fields, are critical to reducing the often devastating effects of underage drinking. We request that the Committee provide this program with \$25 million, funding level to the amount appropriated for the 2006 fiscal year.

- **The Drug Courts program** allows States, localities, State and local courts, and Indian tribal governments to apply for financial and technical assistance to develop and establish drug courts. The Drug Courts program works to address the high level of drug use found within individuals convicted of non-violent crimes in the criminal justice system. Research has shown that drug courts, which provide addiction treatment services and foster accountability in participating individuals, have led to improved retention rates and reduced recidivism. We ask that the Committee provide \$69 million for the Drug Courts program, funding at the level of the President's budget request.
- **The Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) Program** assists State and local governments with funding for a broad range of law enforcement-related activities including education, prevention and treatment for drug addiction. Many States have used JAG funds to set up multi-jurisdictional and State-wide drug taskforces, key to fighting the flow of drugs such as methamphetamine. We encourage the Committee to support restoration of the program's funding to the FY 2005 level, \$634 million, to help continue the success of State and local law enforcement in preventing substance use and helping those in need receive proper treatment.
- **The Methamphetamine Treatment for Pregnant and Parenting Women Program**, recently authorized as a part of the Combat Meth Act within the USA Patriot Act, seeks to provide grants to address methamphetamine use and addiction among pregnant and parenting women. In many states, large numbers of women are incarcerated for methamphetamine-related crimes, and most of these women are mothers to minor children. We urge the Committee to appropriate \$20 million for this program, so that pregnant and parenting women can better access critical drug addiction treatment services.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. If you have any questions, please have your staff contact Alexa Eggleston, J.D., Director of National Policy at the Legal Action Center, 202-544-5478 x. 11 or aeggleston@lac-dc.org. Thank you for your time and attention to these critical issues.

Sincerely,

State Associations of Addiction Services

cc: Senate Appropriations Committee