

July 23, 2021

The Honorable Joseph Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20230

Dear President Biden:

On behalf of the national associations listed on this letter, which represent the interests of a significant portion of our nation's State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial (SLTT) law enforcement and public safety community, we want to thank you for your recent announcements of initiatives to address the threats of domestic terrorism and violence across our nation.

While the initiatives include some helpful components, including the clarification that Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds may be used to enhance law enforcement efforts to address pandemic-related violence, they could have been even stronger and more impactful in our daily operations if more input from the members of our associations had been included in the discussion and development process. For example, criminal intelligence analysis and information sharing among agencies are fundamental to any successful initiative. The National Network of Fusion Centers (NNFCs), the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTAs) Program, and our Regional Information Sharing Systems (RISS) Program partners play critical and mutually supportive roles as focal points among Federal and SLTT partners for information and intelligence sharing, threat detection, criminal intelligence analysis, and threat disruption.

Our associations welcome support from our Federal partners to effectively counter domestic terrorism and violent crime in the Homeland. However, engagement and feedback from SLTT partners who are implementing efforts every day in our communities should be prioritized. As the members of our associations must shoulder the greatest burden for the success of the strategies, they should have a greater voice in their development and deployment. As noted in your National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism, "Some of the first to identify a potential threat of domestic terrorism are often state, local, tribal, or territorial partners, or those in their communities." An effective strategy cannot achieve its objectives without true coordination with those who are responding to the threats daily. We are here to support those efforts, but we must be part of the process.

In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, our SLTT law enforcement community focused on working with Federal partners to help build a framework that enables broad-scale exchange of pertinent justice and public safety information, as well as the effective sharing of criminal intelligence that is essential to preventing criminal activity, including terrorism-related events. With the support of the U.S. Attorney General, the Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative (GLOBAL) and Criminal Intelligence Coordinating Council (CICC) were formed as the cornerstones of this nationwide coordination and collaboration.

Our designated GLOBAL and CICC representatives currently provide recommendations to the Attorney General to improve our ability to detect, identify, prevent, mitigate, and respond to terrorist acts and the major criminal activity that threatens public safety. Our representatives on these advisory bodies are available to support the implementation of the recent strategies and assist with the development of any future strategies.

We are operating in the most dynamic threat environment that we have seen since 9/11. We have also seen increasing challenges to addressing the new threat environment. Some of these challenges remind us of the collaboration issues that we encountered prior to 9/11. The challenges include issues related to criminal justice information services access, intelligence information sharing between Federal, state, and local authorities, the deployment of Federal resources to our fusion centers, HIDTAs, and RISS watch centers, and the prioritization of partnerships between Federal and SLTT partners.

We know that collaboration, information sharing, criminal intelligence, and the appropriate deployment of Federal resources to augment what all of us are doing in each of our communities every day can help turn the tide. We are standing by to work with you and your team to help protect America.


Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Keel".

Mark Keel
Chief – South Carolina Law Enforcement Division
Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies (ASCIA)



Art Acevedo
President, Chief – Miami Police Department
Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA)



Kim Wagner
Executive Director
Major County Sheriffs of America (MCSA)



Jonathan Thompson
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National Sheriff's Association (NSA)



Bob Bushman
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Mike McDaniel
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Donna Williams
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Mike L. Sena
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