

JAIME HERRERA BEUTLER  
3RD DISTRICT, SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND WATER  
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SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES  
AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-1602

June 30, 2016

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□ GENERAL O.O. HOWARD HOUSE  
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Director Ronald L. Davis  
U.S. Department of Justice  
Community Oriented Policing Services Office  
145 N Street NE  
Washington, DC 20530

Re: FY 2016 Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Hiring Program  
City of Battle Ground, Washington  
School Resource Officer

Dear Director Davis:

I am writing to express my strong support for the City of Battle Ground's COPS Hiring grant application and hope you will strongly consider the city's unique need for an additional School Resource Officer (SRO).

Current data and community discussions verify that the City of Battle Ground is in the midst of a teen suicide epidemic without the resources to effectively address the underlying problems children face at school and home. In the last year and a half alone, four Battle Ground students under the age of 18 have committed suicide. While it's difficult to know exactly how many teen suicide attempts and threats have occurred as many go unreported, there have been five documented teen suicide attempts and 10 documented suicide threats in that same time period. Further, the rate of suicide-related mortality within Battle Ground School District is 16.7/100,000, about 20% higher than the rate for Washington State.

Unfortunately, those statistics do not reflect the entirety of the problem. The 2014-15 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey found that among Battle Ground students surveyed, an average of 18% seriously considered attempting suicide, 15% made a plan to commit suicide and a shocking 18% of Battle Ground High School seniors had carried a weapon on campus.

The Battle Ground School District is geographically the largest in the state, serving more than 13,000 students in 19 schools spread over 273 square miles, about 50 square miles bigger than Chicago. While the Battle Ground Police Department implemented an SRO program several years ago, budget constraints following the Great Recession forced the Department to downsize the program from two full-time SROs to one. Now, the City's lone remaining SRO is obligated to primarily staff the high school population, leaving the middle and elementary schools with no SRO presence.

Federal funds would allow the Battle Ground Police Department to hire a second SRO to restore a critical presence within the K-8 populations, assist with problems at the high school and work to deal proactively with issues on campuses before they become a risk to students and staff. Further, the individual would work in conjunction with school officials, juvenile justice professionals, alcohol and drug prevention groups and other community resources to proactively increase the resiliency of children in the community.

Both the prevalence of suicide ideation among students and the sheer size of the Battle Ground School District require an additional SRO to adequately protect its students.

I strongly support this application and thank you for your consideration of this important public safety request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jaime Herrera Beutler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jaime Herrera Beutler  
Member of Congress