

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 4, 2018

The Honorable J. Rod Rosenstein  
Deputy Attorney General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530

Matt M. Dummermuth  
Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530

David Muhlhausen  
Director  
National Institute of Justice  
810 Seventh Street NW  
Washington, DC 20531

Dear Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Dummermuth, and Director Muhlhausen:

We write to urge you to sign an extension of the existing charter for the Science Advisory Board (the Board) at the Office of Justice Programs (OJP), which is authorized and operates under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, and is due to expire on December 8, 2018. This Board is a tremendous asset for OJP, as well as the Department of Justice (DOJ) more broadly, in its continuing efforts to better integrate scientific knowledge to inform crime reduction nationwide. Allowing this charter to expire would be a significant setback to the formulation of well-informed criminal justice practice and policy.

Since its inception in 2010, the Board has made numerous contributions to the public safety investments of OJP. The Board has formulated joint working committees composed of board members and OJP staff, focusing on priority areas for OJP leadership. These efforts have recently produced a number of useful products, including guidelines for implementing and evaluating place-based crime reduction interventions, a checklist for police departments to enhance communications with communities about their operations and successes, and strategies to bolster response rates in surveys on criminal justice practices. The Board has worked in a collaborative fashion with both agency leadership and staff, providing advice and guidance as appropriate.

Despite this positive record, OJP has not convened the Board for over a year. Part of this lack of engagement may be attributed to the fact that, until relatively recently, the director positions of each of the divisions of OJP and that of the Assistant Attorney General were occupied by individuals with “acting” appointments. The time has come now, however, to re-energize the Board.

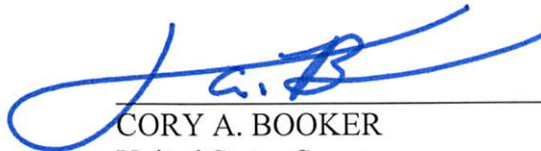
The first step toward this goal is to extend the existing charter for the Board rather than letting it fade out of existence. Once extended, DOJ leadership will have an opportunity to fill several open positions on the Board with scholars and practitioners representing a broad range of professional and scientific perspectives.

In this era of increased concern about violent crime, the opioid crisis, and recidivism reduction, the importance of a Science Advisory Board to produce evidence-based guidance is imperative. As such, OJP and the Department of Justice would benefit greatly from this resource. We urge you to approve the charter for the Board and move us all forward toward a more informed and effective justice system.

Sincerely,



BRIAN SCHATZ  
United States Senator



CORY A. BOOKER  
United States Senator



RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
United States Senator