

Mobilizing ACJS Members

Crime and Justice Research: An Important Public Policy Issue

As ACJS President, I ask your active support in what we believe is a vitally important endeavor. Over the past year, the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences and the American Society of Criminology have worked together as the Criminology and Criminal Justice Policy Coalition (CCJPC) to build relationships with policymakers in Washington DC. The CCJPC was formed to educate Congress and the Administration on the importance of reliable social science research and to serve as a resource to policy makers interested in creating and supporting evidence-based crime and justice policy.

We recognize our varied political positions and priorities and that our research sometimes leads us to differing or inconclusive policy recommendations. Therefore, ACJS has chosen *not* to promote specific substantive legislation or policy prescriptions. Rather, as an organization, we choose to coalesce around our fundamental principles: support for reliable, accurate, and scientifically valid social science research, and for the development and promotion of a comprehensive criminal justice research agenda without the influence of partisan politics or pre-determined outcomes or opinions.

Members of Congress often have to draft substantive legislation or make funding decisions in highly specialized areas in which they may have little readily available expertise. Members of Congress rely heavily on their staffers, and are informed by the letters and calls that their offices receive on specific issues or pending bills. As a non-partisan, academic organization with members all over the nation, the ACJS is well situated to communicate with Members of Congress and their staffers to share our expertise, and educate them about the importance of comprehensive and ongoing criminal justice and criminology research.

While ACJS and the CCJPC can serve as a resource for congressional and Administration staff by providing them with unbiased, non-partisan, and scientifically sound information about the value and role of research, **no voice is more important to a Member of Congress than that of a constituent from his or her own district.** In the past, we have occasionally reached out to ACJS members from particular states to sign on to specialized letters supporting appropriations requests for federal agencies or the appointment of Presidential nominees. We anticipate expanding this work, and are actively looking for opportunities to provide *regular* input to the Administration and Congress. One of the most effective strategies is to supplement CCJPC letters with state-specific or district-specific sign-on letters from our members. I will continue the practice of reaching out to you to join us in this effort. I thank you for your past involvement, and I hope you will continue to be supportive.

Sincerely yours,



James W. Marquart
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