

March 17, 2026

Dear Senator Britt:

Thank you for your service to the people of Alabama. Your leadership and commitment to public safety are deeply appreciated.

I write on behalf of the Baldwin County Sheriff's Office, an affiliate agency of the Alabama Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force, to express the Baldwin County Commission's support of a \$891,300.00 FY27 Congressionally Directed Spending request for their *Digital Forensic Capacity and Technology Project*.

As a local law enforcement agency serving the residents of Baldwin County, our investigators work directly with the ICAC Task Force to investigate cases involving online child sexual exploitation, including child sexual abuse material (CSAM), sextortion, and child trafficking. These cases increasingly require sophisticated digital forensic tools, secure evidence storage, and specialized investigative technology that most local agencies cannot independently purchase or maintain.

The ICAC Task Force operates as a statewide collaborative network, bringing together federal, state, and local investigators to identify victims, apprehend offenders, and support prosecutions. Funding through this request will strengthen those capabilities and ensure that investigators across the state, including those serving communities like ours, have access to the tools necessary to keep children safe.

This request is eligible under the Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) account and aligns with DOJ's mission to strengthen community policing by equipping law enforcement with modern investigative resources.

Law enforcement agencies nationwide are facing an unprecedented surge in cases involving online exploitation of children. Meanwhile, the Department of Justice's Missing and Exploited Children (MEC) program provides an average ICAC Task Force award of approximately \$556,000.00, an amount that no longer reflects the scale, complexity, and technological demands of these investigations.

Additional investment through this request will directly support investigations conducted by local agencies like ours while strengthening the statewide ICAC network that protects children throughout Alabama.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

JAMES E. BALL, Chairman
Baldwin County Commission