

February 14, 2025

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District Attorney
Newton County
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Patsy Austin-Gatson
District Attorney
Gwinnett County
75 Langley Drive
Lawrenceville, GA 30046

Alisha Johnson
District Attorney
Rockdale County
922 Court Street, Ste 201
Conyers, GA 30012

Dear District Attorney McGinley, Austin-Gatson, and Johnson:

I am writing to express my deep appreciation for your tireless efforts in upholding justice and protecting the residents of Georgia's Thirteenth Congressional District. Your leadership in navigating the complexities of our legal system is a testament to your dedication to public service. I am honored to represent Gwinnett, Rockdale, and Newton counties as part of the newly drawn GA-13 district lines in the U.S. House of Representatives. It is my hope that we will forge a strong partnership to bolster a fair and equitable criminal justice system and strengthen our local Georgia communities for the better.

As your representative in Congress, I share your commitment to ensuring a fair, equitable, and effective criminal justice system. In recent years, it has become increasingly clear that achieving this goal requires a collaborative approach to address pressing issues such as recidivism, over-incarceration, and the need for comprehensive criminal justice reform. I am eager to explore ways we can work together to develop strategies that improve outcomes for our communities while enhancing public safety.

One area where we can make a meaningful impact is by prioritizing initiatives aimed at reducing recidivism. Research consistently shows that providing individuals with access to education, job training, mental health services, and substance abuse treatment significantly decreases likelihood of re-offense. By addressing the root causes of criminal behavior, we can break the cycle of incarceration and foster opportunities for individuals to reintegrate into society as productive and law-abiding citizens. I am interested in learning about the programs your office has implemented or plans to introduce in this regard and how I might support these efforts at the federal level.

Expanding the use of accountability courts in your respective judicial districts is another critical aspect of reform. Accountability courts utilize rehabilitative measures to reduce recidivism, limit unnecessary incarceration, and save taxpayer money. I have advocated for the use of these courts with neighboring Atlanta-area district attorneys because of their high rates of success. Reports

indicate that accountability courts continue to be highly effective at deterring repeat offenders and cutting incarceration, reentry, and health care costs across the board.

While holding individuals accountable for their actions is essential, we must also recognize that over-reliance on incarceration can have devastating effects on families and communities, particularly those already facing systemic disadvantages. In addition to accountability courts, other alternatives to incarceration, such as diversion programs, restorative justice practices, and community supervision, offer a path to more balanced and effective outcomes. I would greatly appreciate your insights on how these approaches are working in your districts and how we can further their success.

To support our shared goals, I am committed to helping you access federal resources that can enhance your office's capacity to implement innovative solutions. Programs such as Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance (Byrne-JAG) grants and the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grants provide vital funding to local jurisdictions for a wide range of initiatives, including crime prevention, officer training, technology upgrades, and community engagement efforts. If your office is pursuing or considering applying for these grants, please know that my staff and I are available to provide guidance, write letters of support, and advocate on your behalf with the relevant federal agencies. Together, we can secure funding for national programs that can have a lasting impact on countless lives across Georgia.

Additionally, I would welcome the opportunity to facilitate conversations between your office and key stakeholders, including community organizations, law enforcement agencies, and federal policymakers, to ensure our approach to criminal justice reform is holistic and inclusive. By fostering open dialogue and building partnerships on which to base future efforts, we can create a framework that reflects the values and priorities of our constituents while addressing the serious challenges we face.

In closing, I wish to reiterate my gratitude for the critical work you and your respective teams undertake each and every day. Your dedication to justice and willingness to seek out innovative solutions inspire confidence and hope for a brighter future. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly if there are specific ways I can support your efforts or if you would like to discuss potential areas of collaboration further. To that end, I would welcome a formal meeting with you to better understand the challenges and opportunities in your judicial circuit. I am confident that, together, we can make meaningful progress toward a criminal justice system that is fair, compassionate, and effective for all.

Please know you have a strong ally in Congress as you continue the work of keeping our communities safe. I look forward to meeting and working together in service to the people of Georgia's Thirteenth Congressional District.

Sincerely,



David Scott
Member of Congress