

RICHARD SHELBY
ALABAMA

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JUSTICE, SCIENCE, & RELATED AGENCIES

COMMITTEE ON RULES & ADMINISTRATION

304 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0103
(202) 224-5744

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0103

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STATE OFFICES:

- 1800 FIFTH AVENUE NORTH
321 FEDERAL BUILDING
BIRMINGHAM, AL 35203
(205) 731-1384
- HUNTSVILLE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
1000 GLENN HEARN BOULEVARD
BOX 20127
HUNTSVILLE, AL 35824
(256) 772-0460
- 113 SAINT JOSEPH STREET
445 U.S. COURTHOUSE
MOBILE, AL 36602
(251) 694-4164
- 15 LEE STREET
FMJ FEDERAL BLDG., SUITE 208
MONTGOMERY, AL 36104
(334) 223-7303
- 2005 UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD, SUITE 2100
TUSCALOOSA, AL 35401
(205) 759-5047

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

I wrote you on November 24th to express my concern at learning of your Administration's work with Executive Order 13688 to take protective surplus military equipment away from local law enforcement agencies in Alabama and across the country. As I watched the tragedy in San Bernardino unfold last week, I noticed the equipment that local and other law enforcement agents used to track and ultimately neutralize the murderers. Like all Americans, I was glad to see that those local agents relied on ballistic armored vests, helmets, and vehicles to prevent injury and the loss of life to officers and the community they were protecting. Luckily, your Administration had not yet taken back surplus armored vehicles in San Bernardino, though I believe that is only because your agents hadn't yet gotten that far down the list.

As our country and its local, state, and federal leaders try to address the threat of violence, I ask again that you review and roll back your ill-informed, politically correct, and unsafe policies regarding the acquisition of unarmed surplus military equipment. I also ask that you immediately direct grant-making officials at the Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, and other departments to remove any administrative restrictions on using funds to purchase or use surplus military equipment. Simply stated, the implementation of your Executive Order has made communities less safe.

I stand ready to work with anyone in your Administration to preserve and increase the safety of communities in Alabama and America. However, I am also ready to fight against policies that seek to erode the protection, safety, and rights of our law enforcement officers, their communities, and citizens. The answer to criminal and terrorist violence is not to weaken the rights and abilities of law-abiding citizens to protect themselves.

Let me be clear – our local governments and law enforcement agencies need the tools to keep communities safe from criminals and terrorists. Policies that reduce or remove those tools must be eliminated, and I hope that you and your Administration will listen to citizens and law enforcement officers to quickly reconsider Executive Order 13688 and its implementation.

Sincerely,



Richard Shelby
U.S. Senator