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ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

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February 29, 2016

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The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro  
Comptroller General of the United States  
Government Accountability Office  
441 G St., NW  
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Comptroller General Dodaro:

In June of last year, the House Judiciary Committee launched a criminal justice reform initiative. Over the ensuing months, the Committee has addressed a variety of criminal justice issues through legislation.<sup>1</sup> In order to assist our efforts in this endeavor, we are writing to you regarding our concerns about the cost of crime in the United States. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, there were an estimated 1,165,383 violent crimes and an estimated 8,277,829 property crimes in 2014.<sup>2</sup> Undoubtedly, these and other crimes generate substantial costs to society at individual, community, and national levels.

Accordingly, we seek the assistance of the Government Accountability Office in fully investigating the cost of crime in the United States. Specifically, we are interested in:

1. The cost of Federal and State crimes to victims of crime:
  - a. Total cost
  - b. Cost by state
2. The cost of crime to the United States economy and to state economies
3. The cost of crime to Federal, State, and local governments

<sup>1</sup> See <http://judiciary.house.gov/index.cfm/criminal-justice-reform-initiative>

<sup>2</sup> "Crime in the United States" FBI 2014. See <https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2014/crime-in-the-u.s.-2014>

4. The cost of crime, per year:
  - a. Per type of criminal offense
  - b. Average cost per criminal
  - c. Average cost per victim
5. The rate of recidivism of offenders who are released from terms of imprisonment, and the costs described under #1 through #3 for crimes committed by such offenders subsequent to their release

We look forward to working with you so that GAO can expeditiously complete this important task. Please contact Jason Cervenak, counsel on the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigations with any questions (202-225-5727). Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob Goodlatte". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bob" being more prominent.

Bob Goodlatte  
Chairman

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve King". The signature is written in a bold, cursive style.

Steve King  
Member of Congress