

RICHARD SHELBY  
ALABAMA

CHAIRMAN—COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING,  
& URBAN AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

CHAIRMAN—SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE,  
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

November 24, 2015

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 was extremely disturbed to learn that the Defense Logistics Agency is removing two unarmed, tracked armored vehicles from the Calhoun County Sheriff's office in Alabama. These military surplus vehicles, obtained through the Section 1033 program, have been valuable to local law enforcement in Calhoun County. For example, one of the vehicles has been used to search a wooded area for a man suspected of shooting and killing a local police officer. Another one has been used to assist the community during ice storms. While some may argue that the use of military surplus equipment by law enforcement "militarizes" our law enforcement agencies in ways contrary to civil rights and liberties, I strongly disagree with the premise that local governments do not strive to support and be sensitive to their communities. In addition, where misuse of such equipment does occur, civil and criminal remedies exist to properly address any agency that takes advantage of this system.

During this time of increased uncertainty at home and abroad, the American people are looking to your Administration and the federal government to keep them safe. Unfortunately, it has become increasingly clear that you are more interested in providing favors for political and ideological friends. Citizens across Alabama and America wonder why your Administration is attacking local law enforcement while criminals and terrorists are taking advantage of a system in which politically correct policies are advanced by lawyers and activists who profit by accusing police and soldiers of abuses. Let me be clear, while some isolated incidents of police misconduct do occur, your executive action undermines the men and women in uniform and the safety of American citizens.

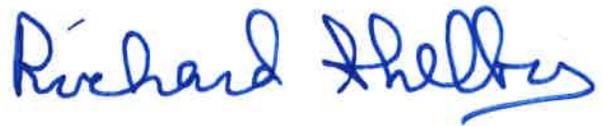
In the wake of events in Ferguson and the lawlessness that followed, I understand the need for a national debate about how to balance the rights of law-abiding citizens with the tools and policies necessary for public safety. As Chairman of the Commerce, Justice, and Science Subcommittee on the Senate Appropriations Committee, I have supported such a debate and have worked to enact policies in appropriations legislation for the Department of Justice on this subject. For example, we have made great strides in common-sense, community-driven policies such as increased availability of body cameras and enhanced community policing.

It comes as no surprise to those of us in Alabama that you have aligned your policies with those who would have us believe that the biggest problem in communities is the police, and your executive order regarding surplus military equipment is one case in point. Communities in

Alabama and across the country depend on the Section 1033 program to obtain equipment that they could not otherwise afford. Your new prohibitions on types of equipment – like unarmed, tracked armored vehicles, .50 caliber weapons, and others – suggest that you believe that you know better than leaders of our communities what tools they need to help keep their citizens safe. After the unprecedented overreach of your executive actions on issues such as immigration and the environment, Americans are sick and tired of liberal elites substituting their so-called wisdom for local efforts to meet the needs of our families and communities.

In the aftermath of the attack in Paris and surge of terrorist violence across the world, I ask that you revisit this misguided and dangerous policy on surplus military equipment. Our citizens need their national leaders to place the safety of our communities and those who protect them above criminals, terrorists, and politics. Congress will surely review and respond to these misguided policies in 2016.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard Shelby". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent underline at the end.

Richard Shelby  
U.S. Senator