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Rep. Pastor secures funding in Omnibus bill for after school, anti-meth and law enforcement programs

WASHINGTON - Several programs will receive federal funding from the Department of Justice under an Omnibus Appropriations Bill approved today by the U.S. House of Representatives, announced Rep. Ed Pastor, D-Ariz.

The funding will benefit Operation Quality Time, an after-school program in Phoenix schools; the Arizona Meth Project; the Phoenix Police Department's communications network; and a Pima County communications system.

The funding for the projects was included in the Omnibus Appropriations Bill, which combined nine annual appropriations bills left over from last year, including Fiscal Year 2009 Commerce, Justice, Science appropriations. The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration.

"We need to invest federal dollars into our law enforcement and juvenile justice programs to make sure we are providing resources and offering young people opportunities to succeed," Pastor said.

The funding included:

- \$1 million for the Arizona Meth Project, a highly-respected public awareness and drug

prevention campaign that effectively communicates the risks of meth use. The program needs to be expanded to address Arizona meth usage, which is twice the national average. Arizona's campaign is modeled after a Montana program which took the state from the fifth largest meth user in the nation to the 39th. Arizona will match the federal funding.

- \$550,000 for Operation Quality Time, an after-school program in the greater metropolitan Phoenix area. This K-12 program provides students in disadvantaged neighborhoods with structured activities and academic assistance during the later afternoon hours when children often need supervision. More than 20 partner schools provide school supplies, space, equipment, insurance, utilities, custodial duties, administration activities and auditing services, while local businesses contribute goods and services. The needs these children have for a positive atmosphere that keeps them motivated is clearly evident by the waiting list of students anxious to participate.

- \$500,000 for the City of Phoenix Police Officers Communication Network to improve a system which is more than 15 years old. Improvements should help officers access records more quickly and remain in the field longer, as much of their paperwork would be accomplished on the spot with the new system.

- \$2 million for the Pima County Wireless Integrated Network project which will help fully field a public safety grade communication system to all 32 public safety agencies within Pima County.