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Although the integration of criminal justice has been in the planning stages for a number of years, the continual threat of terrorism, the serial sniper rampage in the Washington D.C. area or the possibility of an unregistered sex offender driving your children or grandchildren's school bus has signaled the imminent necessity for justice agencies to integrate. Our world has been forever changed and we must move forward without delay to establish the bedrock foundation for our statewide and national homeland security. Presently the costs associated with the criminal justice system business are unacceptably high and not very efficient. The taxpayers in the State of Illinois deserve better.

Integration is the ability to access and share critical information at key decision points throughout the justice enterprise. This concept has always been the backbone of all detailed criminal investigations but now we can eliminate the waste and inaccuracies of redundant data entries and share all crucial information instantly with every justice agency at the county, state and even the federal level. The technology is now available to make this integration a reality and there is no time to waste.

The Justice Agencies in the State of Illinois resoundingly support Illinois' plan to integrate our criminal justice system. The research conducted by the Illinois Integrated Justice Information System (IJIS) Governing Board evaluating the current state of integrated justice in Illinois has confirmed the absolute necessity for interoperation between all our criminal justice agencies. While there appears to be a significant amount of automation within police departments in Illinois, the survey found that there is almost a total lack of electronic data sharing between municipal and county police departments and the other components of the criminal justice system. Also, there is minimal or no sharing of information between the 102 counties in the state of Illinois and the sophisticated criminals and terrorists are well aware of our deficiencies.

In order for this plan to succeed, it is essential that it receive your unwavering support and commitment. We are not asking you to dip into your already strapped budget. This project requires no General Revenue funding from FY04 and FY05. Funding for at least the first two years of this plan will be provided by federal grant funds already designated by the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. Please keep in mind, that in the long run, every dollar we invest in prevention will save us ten or more dollars in remedial costs. Those remedial costs for 9-11 are literally incalculable.

This is a win, win situation. As a result of this plan, Illinois will experience a greatly enhanced system of justice, public safety, and homeland security. By planning our integration to interface with federal standards, we will be at the forefront of the nationwide effort to guarantee our children and our families the protection that they deserve in this great country; protection that we dare not ignore at this most critical time in our history.

As with any project of this magnitude, its success is dependent upon the passion and commitment of the people who are dedicated to making it a reality. We need people throughout the state who will pledge to champion this quintessential cause. We are asking for you to take the time to find individuals in your county who will seize the day and will truly commit to being dedicated “champions” of criminal justice integration in Illinois.

Ironically, with our country remembering the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, a quote from his inaugural address should help stir the passions of all Americans, “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.” A more heart-felt call for “champions” could not be made. This is a *nonpartisan* effort that must be addressed immediately to safeguard the future of the safest and greatest nation on earth.

We greatly appreciate your attention to this most critical project and we anxiously await your response. Also, if you have any questions or would like any additional information we will be glad to assist you. We welcome your feedback, input and ideas.

Please respond to this endeavor by e-mailing www.ijis@icjia.state.il.us or by mailing the enclosed response card to the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority at the address provided on the card.



**Enhancing Timely Decision Making Through
Statewide Information Sharing!**

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH GOVERNOR

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 Organization _____ County _____
 Address _____ City _____
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