



**One Hundred Ninth Congress**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Homeland Security**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 1, 2006

The Honorable Michael Chertoff  
Department of Homeland Security  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Chertoff:

On May 31, 2006, the Department of Homeland Security announced the recipients of the fiscal year 2006 Homeland Security Grants, including the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP), the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI), and the Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program (LETPP). It is troubling that so many States and local communities were victims of a reduction in funding from 2005. As our country continues to strengthen its defenses, I fear that drastic cuts in these critical grant programs will further limit the effectiveness of State and local communities to prevent another September 11th from occurring. I am saddened once again to see bureaucrats in Washington, D.C. putting those on the frontlines of response, including the police, firemen, and emergency medical personnel in both our urban and rural communities, at risk.

In reviewing the numbers, it seems apparent that the Department's cuts in these critical grant programs are a direct result of irresponsible budgeting by this Administration. For instance, in Fiscal Year 2006, one year after the Administration provided \$90 billion in tax cuts to the wealthiest one percent of Americans, the President's budget proposed a \$534 million reduction in the SHSGP and a \$118 million reduction in UASI.

Earlier this year, without full and open consultation with this Committee, the Department reduced the number of communities eligible for UASI grants from 50 urban areas to 35 urban areas. What is most disturbing is that among the cities cut from the list were Las Vegas, San Diego, and Phoenix – more than 30 million tourists visit Las Vegas every year, San Diego is home to many of our nation's largest military bases, and Phoenix is a major hub of defense contractors. Surely, the Department cannot believe that these could not be potential terrorist targets.

In addition, it is unconscionable that New York City, Boston, and Washington, D.C. all received significantly less in terrorism-fighting grants. I should not have to

remind you that the Department's existence is, in part, because of the bravery and sacrifice of thousands of New Yorkers, Bostonians, and Washingtonians, many of whom lost their lives on September 11th. I simply do not understand the grant-funding game that the Department is playing with America's security.

The Administration appears to be continuing its recklessness into next year. In its Fiscal Year 2007 budget proposal, submitted to Congress earlier this year, the Administration further slashed critical emergency preparedness grants. In February, Democrats on the House Homeland Security Committee strongly objected to the \$612 million reduction in grants and training for first responders and owners/operators of critical infrastructure contained in the budget. We also opposed the President's proposal to eliminate three first responder grant programs, including the LETPP and the Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS). Of great concern to us were the President's drastic cuts in SHSGP and UASI, which, since Fiscal Year 2006, have been reduced from \$1.063 billion to \$616 million, and \$855 million to \$817 million, respectively.

This summer, the Homeland Security Committee will be marking up an authorization bill for the Department. I assure you that I will do all that I can to make sure that the Department of Homeland Security, under your leadership, does not continue to shortchange our security.

Sincerely,



---

Bennie G. Thompson  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Homeland Security