

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 30, 2004

The Honorable George W. Bush
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to urge you to, at the very least, double the Urban Area Security Initiative funds under Homeland Security in your FY2005 budget proposal and to ensure that high-risk cities including New York, Los Angeles, Washington, Seattle, Chicago and others do not receive significant cuts in assistance. As representatives from high-threat cities, we have examined homeland security grants for at-risk cities in detail and have concluded that the federal government is not giving these communities adequate assistance.

The need for increased assistance in high-threat cities was once again made clear over the holidays, when the terror threat level was raised to Code Orange. Cities such as New York, Washington and Los Angeles are in Al Qaeda's bull's eye – they have been targets before and after 9/11.

The cities we represent are the most likely targets for future terrorist activity. For the federal government to let security wane in these communities – by letting firehouses close down, for instance – is not only illogical, but hazardous to our security.

The Urban Area Security Initiative within the homeland security budget is intended to assist cities such as New York, Washington and Los Angeles. In last year's budget, however, funds for these cities were cut by \$75 million overall from last year to \$725 million, even though the recent Code Orange demonstrated that the threat has not diminished. Furthermore, the number of communities receiving these funds increased from 30 to 50. The result was a \$103 million (69%) cut for New York City from the year before, a 52% cut for the National Capital region and a 10% cut for Los Angeles.

We are not opposed to increasing assistance to additional cities if they face high threats. But such assistance should not come at the expense of New York, Los Angeles, Washington, Seattle, Chicago and other high-threat cities.

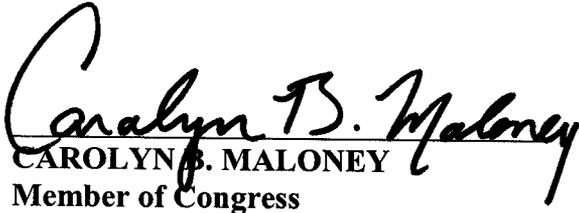
Now that you have announced a nearly 10% increase in the FY2005 homeland security budget, we urge you to allot at least twice as much as last year for the Urban Area Security Initiative and to base its distribution primarily on threat.

For a city like New York, which has spent \$1 billion out of its own pocket for security since 9/11, the \$103 million cut in FY2004 not only is dramatic, but it could mean the difference between adequately staffing firehouses in 2004 and shutting down more of them. New York City firefighters – the men and women who were our first line of defense on 9/11 and will be again in the event of future terrorist attacks – are a prime example of the alarming lack of assistance for local responders most in need. Until December (two years and three months after 9/11), there were fewer firefighters on the streets of New York at any given time than on September 10, 2001. New York City had to close six entire firehouses in 2003. Indeed, firefighters there have said they are less prepared for a terrorist event now than they were before 9/11.

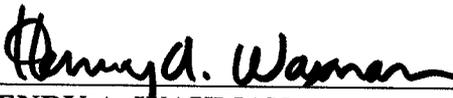
Mr President, we never saw our country or our Congress more united than in the days and weeks

following 9/11, when we made a commitment to securing our citizens and ensuring that the events of that tragic day will never happen again. Reversing the cut in Urban Area Security Initiative grants in your budget proposal and writing a distribution formula that guarantees that our most targeted cities are not the subject of cuts in grants, are important steps we can take to fulfill that promise. We thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress


ANTHONY WEINER
Member of Congress


HENRY A. WAXMAN
Member of Congress


JIM MCDERMOTT
Member of Congress


CHARLES B. RANGEL
Member of Congress


MARTIN FROST
Member of Congress

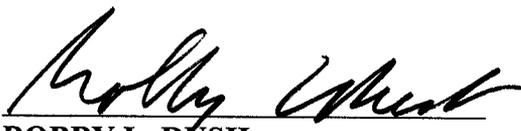

MAXINE WATERS
Member of Congress


JAMES P. MORAN
Member of Congress

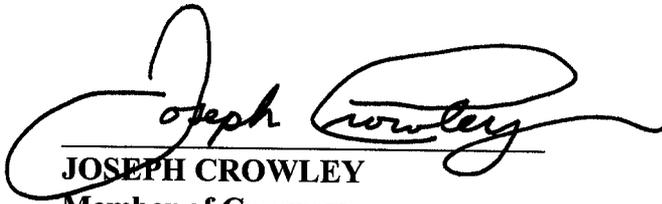

ELIOT L. ENGEL
Member of Congress


JOSÉ E. SERRANO
Member of Congress


DIANE E. WATSON
Member of Congress

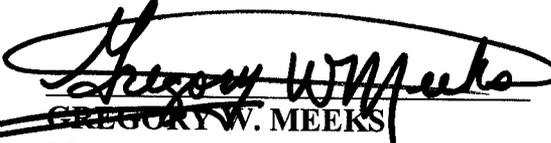

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Member of Congress


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Member of Congress


JOSEPH CROWLEY
Member of Congress

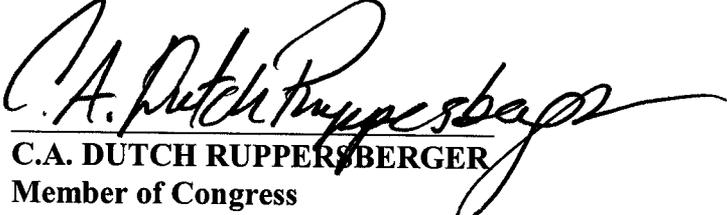

NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ
Member of Congress

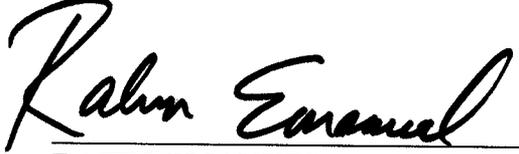

JERROLD NADLER
Member of Congress


GREGORY W. MEEKS
Member of Congress

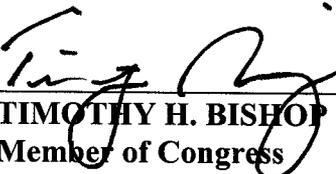

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Member of Congress


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Member of Congress


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Member of Congress


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Member of Congress


CHRIS BELL
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