

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 25, 2016

The Honorable John Carter
Chairman
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Carter and Ranking Member Roybal-Allard:

New York City is the nation's top target for terrorists who seek to inflict damage on the United States. Since 2001, twenty terrorist plots targeting the city have been thwarted, including four major cases in the past two years. As the threat continues to grow, federal funds are essential for New York City to evolve to stay ahead of the threat. For this reason, we find it concerning that the Administration's FY2017 budget proposes cutting homeland security programs that are critical to New York City and the region.

As bipartisan members of Congress who represent the most high-risk area of the country, we strongly urge you to support full funding for New York's homeland security needs through Department of Homeland Security (DHS) State and Local Grant Programs. This includes funding national programs like the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), State Homeland Security Grant Program, Port Security Grant Program and Transit Security Grant Program at FY2011 funding levels. These programs are important pieces of the national effort to strengthen homeland security preparedness, including the security of critical transportation and port infrastructure. The Port of New York and New Jersey is one of the busiest in the nation and New York City's commuter rail system has the most stations and annual ridership of any in the world.

UASI funding is essential to many ongoing counterterrorism operations, investments in public safety communications, core competency training for police and fire, public health readiness and overall emergency preparedness. We have serious concerns that the FY2017 proposed budget cuts this vital program nearly in half from the \$600 million to about \$330 million. The New York Police Department (NYPD) requires this funding to continue to procure the necessary equipment to detect potential chemical, biological, and radiological weapons. They also support the Domain Awareness System (DAS), a networked system that aggregates and correlates multiple real time law enforcement data streams and provides the NYPD with actionable intelligence in support of its counterterrorism related assessments and operations. These funds are critical to maintain the Department's staff of intelligence research specialists, which examine raw data from multiple sources of information to identify trends and provide operational and investigative support in a wide array of investigations.

Federal funds enable the NYPD to develop programs like the Counterterrorism Bureau's Training Unit, which offers some of the most advanced and comprehensive active shooter training. This training is critical in the aftermath of the Paris and San Bernardino attacks, and the unit provides equipment for law enforcement to practice life-saving techniques on victims before medical personnel arrive at a shooting and a space for live active shooter training exercises to prepare law enforcement for real life scenarios. Cuts would also impede the expansion and sustainment of the Canine Unit teams and the Counterterrorism Bureau's newly created Critical Response Command (CRC) Vapor Wake Detection Canine teams. These teams detect the scent of explosives on the move. The Counterterrorism Officer (CTO) Program offers a trained and experienced counterterrorism force for the NYPD to deploy as-needed for special events or in response to intelligence without depleting the numbers of officers on patrol.

In addition to sufficiently funding these programs, we urge you to continue to extend the performance period of these programs to a period of three years. Such a move would better allow for implementing complex, innovative programs and overseeing the procurement of customized equipment, as well as take into account ongoing input by the Federal Emergency Management Agency that periodically alters the implementation timeline.

Making investments in homeland security preparedness is crucial for the safety and security of New York residents, as well as those who visit our city. New York City saw nearly 60 million tourists in 2015 alone. This, coupled with the fact that New York City is a major port of entry and transit hub, illustrates that security efforts in New York City have far reaching effects for the nation's security. Funding cuts to homeland security grant programs would undermine New York City's continued security and intelligence gathering efforts that protect its citizens, commuters, business locations and networks – which support much of the New York's commercial sector and the loss of which would be devastating to the nation's economy – as well as iconic national landmarks that attract millions of tourists every year, from nuclear, biological, and cyber-attacks. We firmly believe it is in the interest not just of New York, but of our entire country, to do everything possible to prevent a potential attack. We continue to believe that the reasonable price of prevention far outweighs the costs of recovering from a terrorist attack.

We urge you to place the highest priority on protecting New York and other high-threat urban areas from attack by allocating full funding for these key programs.

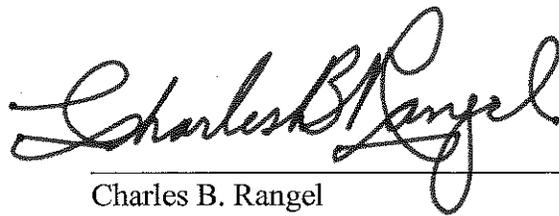
Sincerely,


Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress

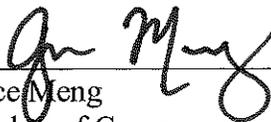

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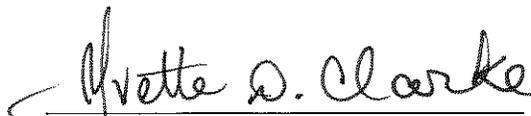
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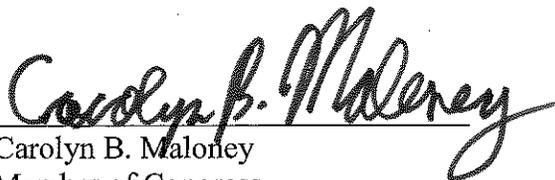
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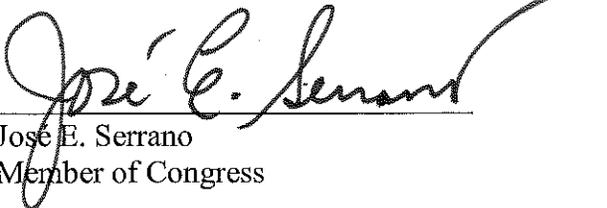
Lee Zeldin
Member of Congress



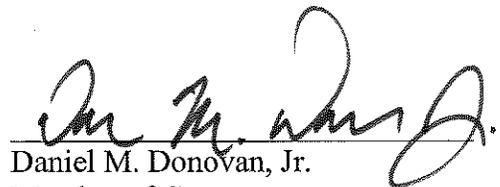
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