

**MAJOR CITIES CHIEFS ASSOCIATION
POLICE EXECUTIVE RESEARCH FORUM
THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS**

July 5, 2011

The Honorable Daniel Inouye, Chairman
The Honorable Thad Cochran, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mary Landrieu, Chair
The Honorable Dan Coats, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

We write on behalf of The U.S. Conference of Mayors, Major Cities Chiefs Association, and Police Executive Research Forum to urge the Senate to restore the draconian cuts in state and local first responder funding contained in the House-passed FY 2012 homeland security appropriations bill. As you prepare to markup the Senate's version of the bill, we hope that you will maintain current funding for these programs at a minimum and, if possible, restore it to last year's level.

The House bill would cut funding for state and local programs to \$1 billion, a cut of more than 50 percent below this year's level and more than 60 percent below the FY 2010 level. In addition, it would combine them into a single program to be administered at the discretion of the Secretary of Homeland Security. Separately, the bill would cut firefighter grants 17 percent to \$670 million next year.

It is particularly ironic that these cuts and changes, which we strongly oppose, are proposed in the same year that our nation is marking the 10th anniversary of the September 11th attacks. That irony is compounded by the Administration's release last week of a new counterterrorism strategy which designates the homeland as a primary area of emphasis in the nation's counterterrorism efforts. It is police officers and other local authorities – in touch with their communities and a presence in them every day – who often gather the intelligence and take the action needed to stop terrorist threats.

These cuts also come at a time when local governments face severe funding limitations due to decreased revenues and limited ability to increase those revenues. Many cities have been forced to lay off first responders, including police officers and firefighters.

While we understand the severe fiscal constraints facing the Committee, we are confident that needed funding reductions could be spread more equitably across the homeland security spending bill. We urge you to restore funding for these programs to the maximum extent possible.

Sincerely,



Michael A. Nutter
Mayor of Philadelphia
Vice President
Chairman, Task Force on Mayors
and Police Chiefs
The U.S. Conference of Mayors



Charles Ramsey
Commissioner
Philadelphia Police Department
President, Police Executive Research Forum
President, Major Cities Chiefs Association