

Press Release

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CHICAGO CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION CALLS ON BUSH ADMINISTRATION TO SECURE CITY, IMPLEMENT 9/11 COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

Delegation requests meeting with Sec. Chertoff to discuss progress

CHICAGO, IL -- In light of the alleged terror plot targeting Sears Tower, U.S. Representatives Jan Schakowsky, Bobby L. Rush, Luis Gutierrez, Danny K. Davis, Jesse Jackson Jr., Rahm Emanuel, Daniel Lipinski and U.S. Senators Dick Durbin and Barack Obama today sent a letter to Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff requesting that the Bush Administration quickly implement the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission in order to secure Chicago and the nation from another terrorist attack. These members of Congress further requested that Secretary Chertoff meet with Chicago's congressional delegation to discuss the agency's progress in filling the holes in our security infrastructure and response programs.

The full text of the letter is below:

Secretary Chertoff:

We write today on behalf of our constituents and residents of the Chicagoland area, who want to ensure that the federal government is doing everything it can to secure our city and to prevent another terrorist attack in the United States.

No matter what we learn about the scope of the recently announced alleged plot targeting buildings in the U.S, including Chicago, the arrests make clear that bolstering our homeland security must be the first front in the War on Terror. The Bush Administration and the Republican Congress have yet to implement a number of recommendations of the 9/11 Commission and the Government Accountability Office that are leaving our ports and our plants, our trains and our airlines, and the American people, vulnerable to another terrorist strike on our soil.

RISK BASED FUNDING. The 9/11 Commission recommended that state and municipal

homeland security funding be allocated based on risk and vulnerabilities (not political influence). The 2006 Urban Area Grant Locations, issued by the Department of Homeland Security, significantly cut funding for the two cities at the top of the list - New York and Washington DC -- while increasing funding for cities like Omaha and Louisville.

POLICE AND FIRE. The 9/11 Commission recommended that the Department of Homeland Security and its oversight committees should regularly assess the types of threats the country faces, in order to determine the adequacy of the government's plans and the readiness of the government to respond to those threats. However it has become clear that our government's plans have been inadequate. A recent needs analysis identified that nationally 28 percent of firefighters per shift are not equipped with a self-contained breathing apparatus, and 39,000 fire fighters lack personnel protective clothing. And the FY07 Homeland Security Appropriations bill contains a 39 percent reduction in state homeland security grants. To make matters worse, the Department of Homeland Security has not even distributed the appropriated FY06 security grant funds to the states.

TRANSIT/RAIL SECURITY. The 9/11 Commission recommended that strategies be developed for neglected parts of our transportation security system, specifically focused on mass transit. DHS has provided only \$416 million since 9/11 to secure our nation's transit systems even though the mass transit industry estimates that \$6 billion is needed for security training, radio communication systems, security cameras, and limiting access to sensitive facilities.

AVIATION SECURITY. The 9/11 Commission recommended that all passengers and carry-on bags be screened for explosives and that in-line explosive detection systems be installed as quickly as possible. The FY07 Homeland Security appropriations bill does not fund any additional in-line screening systems beyond the current 8 approved airports and a Democratic amendment to provide an additional \$200 million more to expand explosive screening systems was defeated by Republicans in Committee.

CHEMICAL PLANT SECURITY. The federal government requires no security standards for most U.S. chemical plants. In 2003, the Government Accountability Office recommended that the Administration develop a comprehensive national chemical security strategy - which the Administration just released in May, 2006. The strategy asked for Congress to grant DHS the authority to regulate the chemical sector. Because of an amendment by Rep. Sabo, the Secretary of Homeland Security now has the authority to do that. Now we await action by the Administration and the Republican leadership to secure our plants. Illinois has 745 chemical manufacturing facilities - the 6th most of any state in the nation.

Given the concerns the 9/11 Commission has raised about unmet homeland security needs, we would like to request that you meet with members of the Chicago delegation to update us on your progress in securing our city and our region - our ports, our plants, our rail, our airports, our first responders, and our freshwater sources. We stand ready to work with you to advance a Congressional agenda that ensures that these holes in our

security are filled as quickly as possible.