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## **SCHAKOWSKY AND DEMOCRATS LEAD EFFORTS TO DELIVER FEDERAL HOMELAND SECURITY AID TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

### **DES PLAINES CITY OFFICIALS TESTIFY BEFORE DEMOCRATIC HOMELAND SECURITY TASK FORCE IN WASHINGTON**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) and members of the Democratic Task Force on Homeland Security today heard chilling testimony from local officials and first responders about the federal government's failure to provide municipalities with enough resources to protect and prepare against terrorist attacks.

"The federal government is shortchanging local communities when it comes to homeland security. It is time to get federal money to mayors, city managers and first responders - that's where the rubber hits the road. Unless we act now and provide immediate critical federal funds to our local officials, we may be putting our constituents at risk," Schakowsky said.

William Schneider, Acting City Manager for the City of Des Plaines, said, "We are more prepared in knowing what to expect and who is responsible for handling different phases of an incident. We are not properly equipped or trained to provide adequate protection to first responders or citizens in the event of a chemical, biological or nuclear terrorist attack."

Schneider, who was invited by Schakowsky to testify along with Des Plaines Deputy Police Chief Jim Prandini, added, "Ironically, without a federal infusion of dollars, public safety could be jeopardized as a result of homeland security."

Schneider, along with other local officials and first responders, testified about the budgetary strains placed on local governments and the difficult fiscal choices they are forced to make every day because of heightened homeland security needs. Specifically, Schneider made the following critical points during his testimony:

- Security costs are mounting; however, the City of Des Plaines has not received any federal funding for homeland security.
- Overtime pay during high terrorist alert warnings where "the police department assigns extra officers to monitor activity at city hall, numerous schools, government buildings, O'Hare International Airport boundaries and other locations identified as potential targets," has siphoned off funds slated to be used for other projects.
- Des Plaines has been unable to purchase a fire truck or build a new firehouse and police station as result of homeland security demands.
- Des Plaines anticipates purchasing equipment for first responders (police, fire and public works personnel) totaling \$429,900 in the year 2004 as a direct result of homeland

security initiatives.

- In the event of a terrorist attack, the Fire Department would incur a weekly overtime expense of over \$231,000, while the Police Department would add another \$235,000 in overtime expenses per week.

Schneider and Prandini have also filed a comprehensive report about the unmet homeland security needs of the Des Plaines, a city of 58,000 people that borders O'Hare Airport, 450 employees, including 105 police officers and 94 fire officers, and an annual budget \$120 million.

In Congress today, the House is voting on a \$29.4 billion Homeland Security Appropriations bill, which includes \$4.4 billion for in grants for police, fire and emergency personnel.□ Democrats were denied the opportunity to add an additional \$1 billion for port security, border security, aviation security, maritime security and infrastructure security.□ The funds would have been provided by reducing, from \$88,326 to \$83,326, the amount that the 200,000 households in the country with incomes over \$1 million would get in their 2004 tax cut.

"So far, the Bush Administration and the Republican Leadership in Congress have failed to meet the growing homeland security needs of cities and town across the country," Schakowsky said.

Schakowsky concluded, "Local officials in the 9th Congressional District, like Mayor Arredia and others, have made it a top priority to protect the people they represent and it is my intention to work in Congress to provide them with the federal dollars they need to accomplish this goal."