

APRIL 3, 2003

**SCHAKOWSKY FAULTS GOP LEADERSHIP FOR SHORTCHANGING STATES ON HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDS**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today said it was inexcusable for Republicans to defeat a Democratic effort to provide states with much needed homeland security funds, including money for first responders, port and infrastructure security, and nuclear plant safety. Schakowsky joined her Democratic colleagues in an attempt to add \$2.5 billion for homeland security to the mammoth \$74 billion emergency funding bill that will pay for the war in Iraq.

"The war in Iraq has exacerbated the homeland security challenges we are facing here at home," Schakowsky said.

"Every single municipality in my district has informed me that their homeland security needs are desperately under-funded. One firefighter in my district told me that he prays every day when he goes to work that no terrorist attacks will occur because the city he works in, despite its committed efforts, does not have the necessary resources to respond," she continued.

Schakowsky added, "Firefighters and police officers from my district have been deployed to the Persian Gulf and their departments do not have the funds to hire replacements. Coast Guard cutters patrolling the Great Lakes for suspicious vessels have been redeployed to the Persian Gulf. And our public health infrastructure is not equipped to handle terrorist attacks that have been identified as greater threats to our security than Iraq."

The Democratic proposal contained, among other provisions:

- \$150 million for firefighter assistance grants;
- \$300 million for training and equipping police, fire and EMS personnel;
- \$350 million for purchasing communications equipment for first responders;
- \$150 million for state and local bio-chemical response;
- \$132 million to protect dams, bridges and other critical infrastructure;
- \$250 million for port security; and
- \$87 million to protect domestic nuclear plants and radioactive materials.

Schakowsky added that while she still remains opposed to the war in Iraq, she does support providing "the troops with the resources they need in the Persian Gulf. And we need to support our frontline troops at home - our local first responders."

**"My constituents want an assurance that their government is doing everything possible to protect them and their families. Unfortunately, this Republican Congress failed to deliver that assurance," Schakowsky concluded.**