



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 5, 2006

The Honorable Hal Rogers  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Homeland Security  
B307 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Martin Sabo  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Homeland Security  
1116 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Sabo:

As the conferees meet to resolve differences between the House and Senate-passed FY 2007 Homeland Security Appropriations bills, we strongly urge you to recede to the Senate funding levels for the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Firefighters (SAFER) and Assistance to Firefighters Grant programs.

As you know, the SAFER program, authorized in 2003, provides much-needed funding for career and volunteer fire departments across America to hire new firefighters and recruit and retain volunteer firefighters. This program is critical to the thousands of fire stations across the country currently operating short of staff. Indeed, two-thirds of all career and volunteer fire departments in our nation, located in both large cities and small towns, do not have sufficient personnel to adequately protect the public. The Senate bill includes \$127.5 million for SAFER which will help bring our nation's fire departments to staffing levels that will improve the safety of our firefighters and the communities they serve.

The SAFER program complements the very successful Assistance to Firefighters Grant program, through which the federal government provides funds for training and equipment to fire stations throughout the country. Since 2001, this program has positively impacted public safety by providing more than \$3 billion for infrared cameras, personal protective gear, hazmat detection devices, improved breathing apparatuses, advanced training and fitness programs, fire engines, prevention and education programs, and interoperable communication systems. This is the basic equipment our fire departments need to effectively respond to all hazards. The Senate bill includes \$552.5 million for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant program.

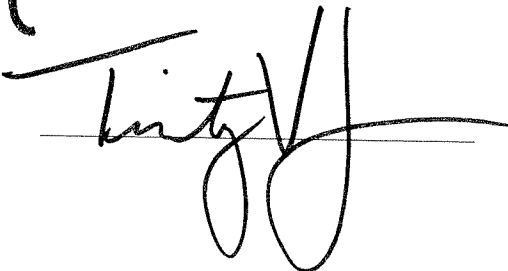
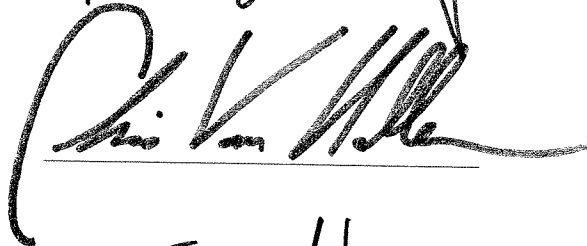
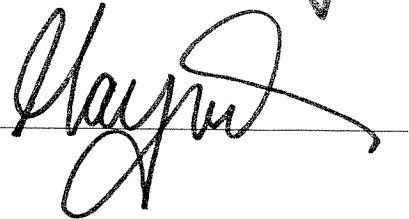
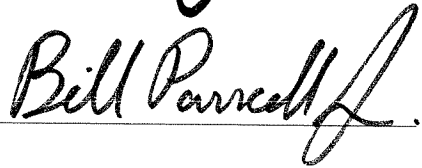
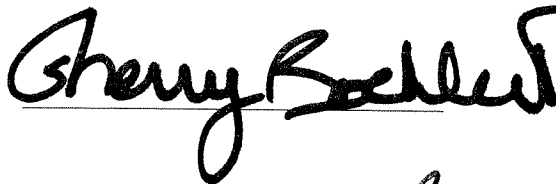
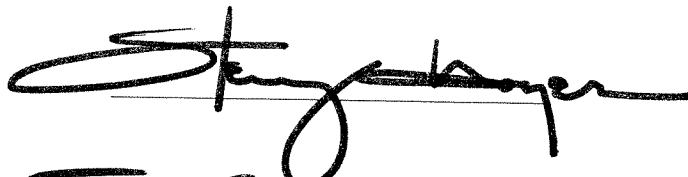
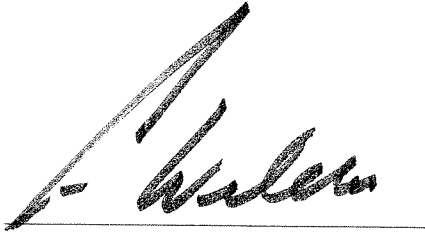
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We ask far too many of our first responders to risk their lives in our defense every day, too often with insufficient staffing, inadequate training and obsolete equipment, and we have an obligation to provide them the necessary resources to perform their jobs as safely and effectively as possible.

We thank you for your ongoing commitment to fulfilling this obligation, most recently evidenced during House consideration of the bill, and urge you to support the additional funding providing for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Firefighters (SAFER) programs in the Senate FY 2007 Homeland Security Appropriations bill.

We thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Boyd

Rush Holt

Chapman

Tom Allen

John B. Lamm

Jim McDermott

Todd R. Platts

Ree King

Steve Israel

Lincoln

Charlie Melancon

Paul E. Miller

Bobby McCallum

Jimmy Baldwin

Allert R. Lynn

Barth

Tom

Hyatt

Tim Murphy

Jack A. Sobush

Russ Simmons

Robert Wayne

Carolyn McCarthy

Jim Pustul

Therese Melton

Tom Ball

Tom Lanta

Tin Holder

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Paul Hoyer

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Ben Cant

Virgil Goode

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Eddie Bernice Johnson

Randy Hult

Vin Snyder

Joe Bradley

Michael R. McMurtry

Sue Kelly

Steven Roth

Blair Hertz

Donis O. Matsui

Paul Blumenthal

Corine Brown

Ed Case

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Alan Smith

Stephanie Smith

Harold

Heather Hills

Daniel Scott

T. J. Zi

Michael H. Michael

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Ally Dyle

Charles W Dent

Sam Jones

Marion Diamond

Al Steiner

Jane Harman

Gregory V. Costello

Michael Cap

Melissa A. Hart

Bill Delahunt

Pete Dwyer

Jane Camp

Mike Castle

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