



# APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE DEMOCRATS

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## A FAILURE OF LEADERSHIP: REPUBLICANS CUT FIRST RESPONDER FUNDING BY 32 PERCENT

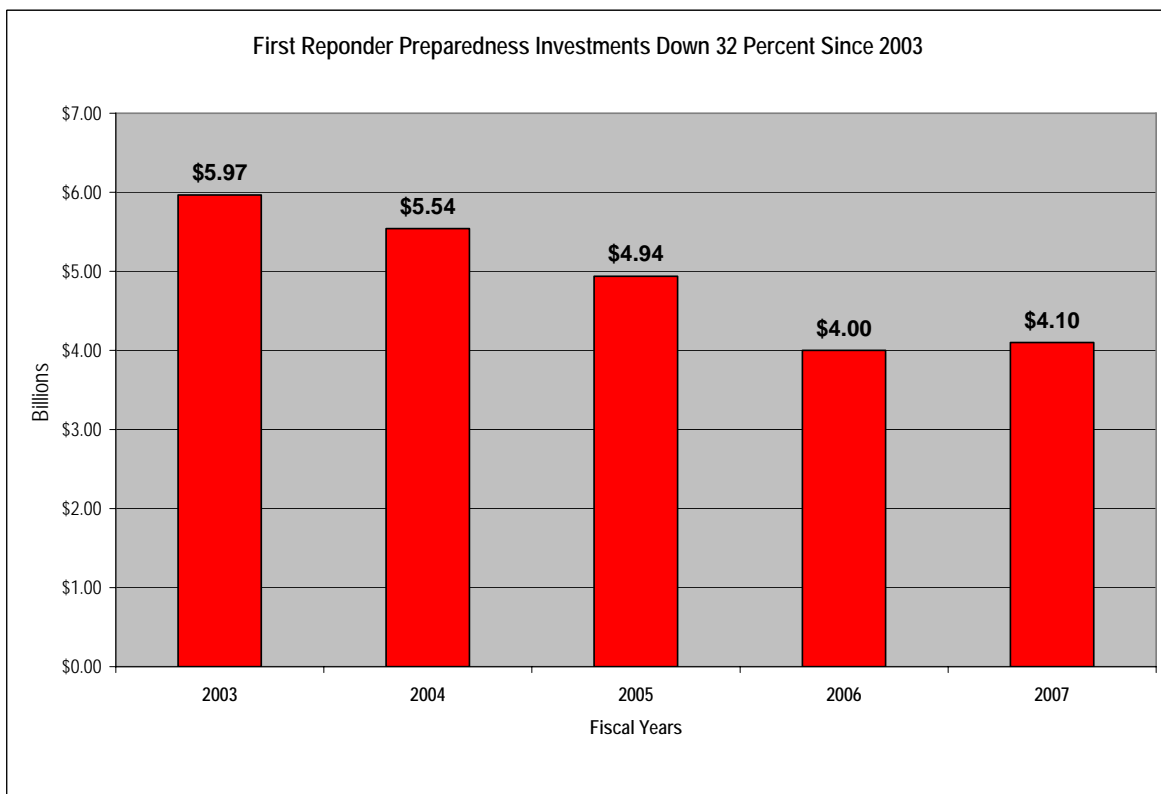
American families face tough challenges – declining wages, the rising cost of healthcare and college, and continued high energy prices. We've been told to "stay the course" in Iraq even as it becomes clearer every day that the President's policy was a colossal mistake. And the threat of terrorism – made worse by the Iraq war – remains a very real and serious threat. Yet, through their actions, and their inaction, President Bush and Republicans in Congress have made clear that they have no solutions.

For example, President Bush and the Republican Congress have cut funding for our nation's first responders. This year, House Republicans cut these investments by 32 percent compared to 2003 – from \$5.97 billion to just \$4.08 billion.

Republicans have cut first responder funding even as a recent report – withheld from public view by the Bush administration – reveals that America's firefighters still do not have the tools they need to respond to a terrorist attack. For example, this new report shows that:

- ✦ Fire departments only have enough portable radios for 36 percent of emergency responders per shift.
- ✦ 28 percent of firefighters per shift do not have self-contained breathing apparatus and 34 percent of all self-contained breathing apparatus is at least 10 years old.
- ✦ Only ¼ of all fire departments can communicate with all of their partners who may respond to catastrophes, such as other nearby fire department, state emergency responders and Federal agencies with response duties.

Now is not the time to cut funding for our nation's first responders. Yet, Congressional Republicans are slashing these investments in homeland security even as the threat of terrorism looms.



Note: The figure for FY 2007 includes funding provided in the FY 2007 Homeland Security conference report and the House-passed FY 2007 Science-State-Justice-Commerce appropriations bill.