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## Inglis questions use of Homeland Security money

### Associated Press

GREENVILLE -- U.S. Bob Inglis, R-S.C., is questioning some spending of Homeland Security Department funds -- even though his hometown of Greenville has spent more than \$2 million of that money in the past two years.

Inglis says he isn't criticizing local officials. But he thinks the federal government should not be trying to equip every local government to fight terrorism.

Some of the equipment Greenville has bought with its money includes an armored personnel carrier, a mini-robot and a bomb response truck.

The armored vehicle is assigned to Greenville County's SWAT team, Sheriff Steve Loftis said.

But it can be used by other agencies statewide.

Loftis said he thinks all the purchases, which were approved by regional and state officials, are vital for the county's preparation for disasters and terrorist events.

"I think we are much better prepared now than we were prior to 9/11," he said.

"The Homeland Security money has assisted us in purchasing rather expensive items that normally the (County) Council might not be able to find money for in the budget."

### Main objections

Inglis said that would be fine if the money was available, but he said the federal government has spent more than \$95 billion during the past two fiscal years on Homeland Security and has a deficit of \$300 billion.

"The federal government can't remodel every firehouse and buy every new police radio in the name of Homeland Security," he said. "We can't be buying armored personnel carriers when we've got them available in the National Guard."

U.S. Sen. Jim DeMint, R-S.C., finds no fault in the Homeland Security grants process.

"The Department of Homeland Security is one of the only federal agencies that does not receive congressional earmarks," he said.

"Instead, money is provided through competitive grants and formula funding which states determine how to distribute.

"Having this type of oversight and competition for federal dollars helps maintain transparency and accountability of taxpayer dollars."

Inglis said Homeland Security spending highlights the need for Congress to discuss the issue of who does what in government.

"You've got to wonder whether we're really protecting the high-value targets or whether the money is being spread out to a lot of low-value targets," Inglis said.

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