

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 23, 2016

The Honorable John Carter
Chairman
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
B-307 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Carter and Ranking Member Roybal-Allard:

As you prepare fiscal year (FY) 2017 appropriations legislation for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), we respectfully request a small increase for the applicable account which provides funding for the Transit Security Grant Program (TSGP) to \$105 million. We also ask that TSGP not be combined with other grant programs.

We understand the Committee is under difficult funding constraints and agree that taxpayer dollars must be spent wisely. However, significant threats to the safety of our homeland remain. Federal funding must be continued at a sufficient amount to ensure security for the American people.

One sector which is heavily utilized and has unique security challenges is mass transit. There were over 10.7 billion passenger trips on mass transit in 2014 in the United States, covering all types of passenger rail and bus systems, according to the American Public Transportation Association. Americans should not fear riding the rails or boarding busses.

An attack on any of these systems could kill thousands, flood rail tunnels and stations, and cripple major metropolitan areas. And, the open and porous nature of mass transit systems makes them especially vulnerable. Terrorists are well aware of these facts and have targeted such entities many times, such as in the high-profile, deadly attacks in Madrid, in 2004, and London, in 2005.

In June 2009, the General Accountability Office summarized the issues facing mass transit security, writing the following:

According to [the Transportation Security Administration], transit officials, and transit experts, certain characteristics of mass transit systems, such as multiple access points and limited barriers to access, make them inherently vulnerable to terrorist attack and therefore difficult to secure. High ridership, expensive infrastructure, economic

importance, and location in large metropolitan areas or tourist destinations also make them attractive targets for terrorists because of the potential for mass casualties and economic damage.

The special challenges in securing mass transit systems and the potential disaster that could occur from an attack mean we have to be extra cognizant of providing the necessary resources for this transportation sector. One way the federal government addresses this serious security threat is through TSGP.

TSGP is a competitive grant program administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, with funds going to the owners and operators of transit systems. Funding is made available for these entities to secure their infrastructure and otherwise protect against terrorist attacks. Examples of possible uses for TSGP awards include surveillance training, public awareness campaigns, detection equipment, security cameras, and the hardening of infrastructure.


Additionally, we oppose consolidating TSGP into any larger, multi-purpose homeland security grant program as has been proposed by some in the past. Including TSGP in this manner and requiring mass transit security needs to be pitted against other homeland security challenges could mean mass transit security is not properly funded. Moreover, it is incumbent on Congress to make security for public transit a priority, and we do so in part by providing a distinct funding stream for TSGP.

In sum, we understand that the current budget climate makes funding choices difficult. However, we request that you keep in mind the consequences of failing to commit sufficient resources to protect mass transit systems used daily by millions of Americans. The small amount of money spent now could be dwarfed by the savings in lives and damage by preventing a horrific attack.


We ask that \$105 million be included in the applicable account which funds TSGP and that it be provided for as a separately funded program in the FY 2017 appropriations bill for DHS. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



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Member of Congress


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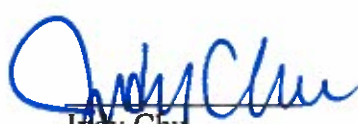
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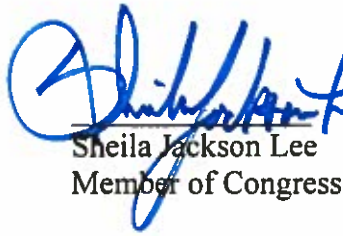
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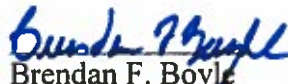

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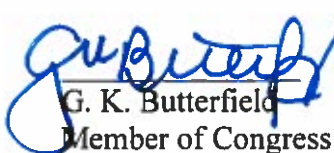

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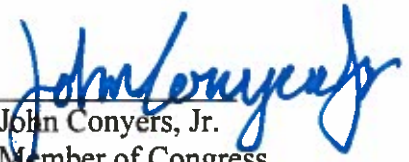

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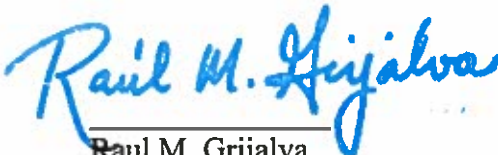
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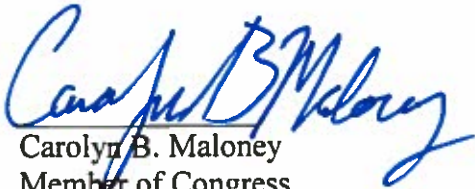
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