

The attached letter was mailed to the following members of Congress:

Senator Norm Coleman
Senator Susan Collins
Senator Mike DeWine
Senator Richard Durbin
Senator Bob Graham
Senator Frank Lautenberg
Senator Carl Levin
Senator Joe Lieberman
Senator Trent Lott
Senator John D. Rockefeller
Senator Pat Roberts
Senator John Sununu
Senator George Voinovich

Congressman David Dreier
Congresswoman Jane Harman
Congressman Peter Hoekstra
Congressman Duncan Hunter
Congressman Henry J. Hyde
Congressman Robert Menendez
Congressman James Sensenbrenner
Congressman Ike Skelton

October 22, 2004



The Honorable Susan Collins
172 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Collins:

On behalf of the Midwestern Governors Association (MGA), I write today to reiterate the viewpoints expressed in a letter sent by the National Governors Association on October 19, 2004. I want to elaborate on the section of the letter regarding the First Responder grant program provisions to be considered in the 9-11 intelligence bill conference report, specifically emphasizing the importance of agriculture and the safety of the nation's food supply.

The MGA appreciates the efforts of Congressman Cox and Turner and support their proposal to establish essential capability for first responders. We agree that this kind of technical-based, comprehensive assessment is urgently needed so all states and local communities can ensure the highest possible level of safety for our citizens. As governors from Midwestern states that provide a large part of the nation's food supply, we respectfully submit a few additional comments about the First Responder grant program:

1. We recommend that Biological Threats be defined to include threats to human and animal health;
2. We request that the Task Force include an expert from the animal and plant health field; and
3. We urge the conference to require as much cooperation and coordination as possible with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The MGA supports the consensus positions of the nation's governors as expressed in their October 19, 2004 letter. As Midwestern governors, we appreciate every effort made to consider these provisions most broadly, and look forward to agriculture being more fully incorporated in the final conference report.

Sincerely,

John Hoeven
Governor of North Dakota and Chairman,
Midwestern Governors Association

cc: Senator Bill Frist
Speaker Dennis Hastert
Senator Tom Daschle
Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi
Congressman Christopher Cox
Congressman Jim Turner

MIDWESTERN GOVERNORS ASSOCIATION

641 East Butterfield Road
Suite 401
Lombard, Illinois 60148-5651
Tel: 630.810.0210
Fax: 630.810.0145

Washington Office
444 North Capitol Street, NW
Suite 401
Washington, DC 20001-1512
Tel: 202.624.5460

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North Dakota

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Past Chair, 2001
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Iowa



October 19, 2004

The Honorable Susan M. Collins
Chair
Senate Governmental Affairs Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Madam Chair:

As you begin conferencing the House and Senate-passed "9/11 legislation", we write to offer the perspective of the nation's Governors on language that would authorize first responder grant funding through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). We appreciate the deliberation that Members have put into this crucial issue and the opportunity to share our comments.

The nation's Governors:

- Oppose provisions of S. 2845 that would allow for direct funding to local entities. Consistent with our long-standing principles, Governors believe that the only way to ensure that homeland security funds are spent in a way that maximizes efficiency and effectiveness while avoiding duplication and gaps in coverage is to require that all funds be distributed through the states. We support the concept of regional applications, as established in H.R. 10, provided that language remains in the bill requiring consultation and coordination with states and allowing Governors to expressly disapprove of regional applications that do not fit with statewide homeland security priorities.
- Support the establishment of a single fund for first responders within DHS, guided by the goal of bringing all states to a minimum level of homeland security preparedness. The findings of the Task Force on Essential Capabilities for First Responders, as created in H.R. 10, should be closely considered. Any mechanism used in determining minimum preparedness levels, minimum capabilities, and future funding decisions should be inclusive of state and local officials who are experts in the subject matter.
- Support language in S. 2845 that would codify the requirement that states pass through funding to local entities within 60 days of receiving their grants from the Department of Homeland Security.
- Request that the portion of homeland security funding that represents the state minimum be distributed within 30 days and that these funds be available for immediate use for approved administrative and program purposes.
- Oppose the provision in H.R. 10 that requires states to match a portion of federal homeland security funds.
- Support allowing states to continue to use 3%, at a minimum, of their homeland security funding for administrative purposes.
- Support provisions in both bills that exclude certain pre-9/11 grant programs from this authorization, but urge the conferees to include the more comprehensive list of exempted

programs contained in Section 403 of S.2845.

- Support provisions in S. 2845 that would establish both a Homeland Security Information Clearinghouse to provide much-needed technical assistance and best practices information and an Interagency Committee to streamline the current federal multi-agency homeland security funding process. We request that the Interagency Committee specifically include the Department of Agriculture as well as those already named in S. 2845.
- Support language in H.R. 10 requiring the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish and update, in consultation with relevant public and private entities, voluntary national consensus standards for first responder training and equipment.
- Support provisions in both bills that would allow the use of homeland security funding for overtime costs related to the elevation of the threat alert level of the Homeland Security Advisory System and for the cost of training exercises, including a stipend for volunteer personnel. We support the broadening of these provisions to include intelligence and counterterrorism activities, as specifically delineated in H.R. 10.

We appreciate your willingness to consider our views as you complete action on this critical legislation.

Sincerely,

Governor Ruth Ann Minner
Co-Lead Governor
Homeland Security

Governor Mitt Romney
Co-Lead Governor
Homeland Security