Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 9, 2004

Honorable Tom Ridge
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Naval Security Station
Nebraska and Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20393

Dear Secretary Ridge:

We write to urge you to immediately provide additional funds to New Jersey, specifically to Newark and Jersey City, under the Homeland Security Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) and to request that you provide us with the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) rationale for making considerable cuts to New Jersey's Fiscal Year 2005 allocation. As you know, on December 2, 2004, the two New Jersey cities that receive monies under this program, Newark and Jersey City, had their funding drastically cut for FY2005 despite the fact that both cities continue to face a significant threat of terrorist attacks. Under the FY2005 UASI allocations, Jersey City's homeland security funds will drop by 60 percent, from $17 million in FY2004 to $6.7 million in FY2005. Newark will see a 17 percent reduction in funds, from $14.9 million to $12.4 million.

We believe that the decision to cut homeland security funding for New Jersey is both incorrect and dangerous for a number of reasons. New Jersey is the most densely populated state in the nation. ***The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has placed more than a dozen New Jersey sites on the "National Critical Infrastructure List" and has called the area between Port Newark and Newark International Airport the "most dangerous two miles in the United States when it comes to terrorism."*** Our state in particular requires a greater portion of homeland security aid due to its vast number of potential targets of terror, such as the largest seaport on the East Coast, the third busiest airport in the country, our four nuclear power plants, and the six tunnels and bridges that connect New Jersey to New York City.

As evidenced by the August 2004 decision to increase the DHS Terror Alert Level for Newark in response to intelligence indicating that the Prudential Financial building there could be a target of an Al-Qaeda attack, New Jersey continues to face unique terrorism threats because of our critical infrastructure, assets, population density, and location. We therefore request that you provide us with the Department of Homeland Security's rationale for cutting UASI funding to New Jersey, specifically to Newark and Jersey City, and we urge you to promptly revisit this decision and provide New Jersey's First Responders with the funding that they require to keep our people safe from terrorist attacks. We look forward to your kind and prompt reply.

Sincerely,

Steven A Rothman

STEVE ROTHMAN
Member of Congress

Robert Menendez

ROBERT MENENDEZ
Member of Congress

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