

GAO to Investigate Anti-Terrorist Grant Program

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August 23, 2006

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Washington, DC - The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has approved a recent request by Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-05) and six of her House and Senate colleagues for a review of the criteria and eligibility process for the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant program. This review comes after the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) January announcement that revised guidelines for the UASI program may make both Sacramento and San Diego ineligible for the grant funds next year. Joining the Congresswoman in placing this request are Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, House Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie Thompson, and Representatives Bob Filner, Mike Thompson and Susan Davis.

"I have seen first hand the importance of this funding for the safety and security of Sacramento and have been working to secure these necessary funds." Congresswoman Matsui continued, "As the capital of the largest state in the nation, it is common sense that Sacramento should be eligible for funding to protect its citizens from potential threats. Unfortunately, repeated attempts for answers from DHS have left my colleagues and me seriously questioning DHS's risk assessment process that put Sacramento's anti-terrorist funding in jeopardy. I look forward to GAO's report and am hopeful that it will shed light on this very important matter."

The text of the letter follows:

August 17, 2006

The Honorable Doris O. Matsui

House of Representatives

Dear Ms. Matsui:

We received your letter dated June 12, 2006, jointly signed by a number of your colleagues, requesting that the Government Accountability Office provide information on the Department of Homeland Security's criteria and process for determining eligibility for the Urban Area Security Initiative grant program.

GAO accepts your request as work that is within the scope of its authority. To fully respond to your request, GAO plans to initiate work on this project in about two months when it is expected that staff with the required skills will be available. Your request has been assigned to Norman J. Rabkin, Managing Director, Homeland Security and Justice. Mr. Rabkin or a member of his team will contact your office to discuss the request and options for helping you meet your needs.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Rabkin (number withheld) or Mr. Larry Malenich, Assistant Director for Congressional Relations, on my staff at (number withheld).

Sincerely yours,

Gloria L. Jarmon

Managing Director for Congressional Relations

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