

House Passes Matsui Amendment to Increase Homeland Security Funding

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Washington, DC - Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (D-CA) today joined with Representatives Joe Crowley (D-NY), Vito Fossella (R-NY), and Scott Garrett (R-NJ) to pass an amendment to the 2008 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act that provides a \$50 million funding increase for the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant program. After debate on the floor of the House of Representatives, the Matsui-Crowley-Fossella-Garrett amendment passed by a vote of 244 to 174. Upon passage of the amendment, Congresswoman Matsui said, "I am proud to be part of this bipartisan amendment. I have long been impressed by local law enforcement officers and first responders in the Sacramento region and throughout the country. When it comes to public safety, federal funds must accompany federal mandates. With this in mind, my colleagues and I offer this an amendment to add \$50 million to the UASI grant program." UASI is designed to fund designated activities in high-threat, high-risk urban areas to prevent, protect against, and respond to terrorist attacks and catastrophic events. Sacramento has benefited greatly from UASI, receiving over \$28 million over the previous four years, including \$7.3 million last year. Previous funding from this grant was used to construct the Sacramento Regional Homeland Security and Training Center, as well as on gas mask filters, first responder training, and communication equipment upgrades. Continued Matsui, "This increase in federal dollars will allow at-risk cities across the nation to plan for disasters efficiently and properly. It gives these cities tools to equip themselves with the radios, protective gear, and training that they need. Each day, our first responders and law enforcement officers tackle nearly impossible tasks. This increased funding will help them do their jobs. In the process, it keeps our country safe and secure." The Matsui-Crowley-Fossella-Garrett amendment will now be added to the 2008 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act (H.R. 2638), which will be voted on later this week.

Below is text of Congresswoman Matsui's statement [as prepared for delivery]: "Mr. Chairman, last year, the Department of Homeland Security made significant changes to our homeland security effort. They announced that for the first time areas such as Sacramento, San Diego, and Las Vegas were at-risk of losing their UASI grant funds. "Since learning of the changes to the UASI program, my colleagues and I have worked tirelessly to ensure that our most at-risk urban areas receive the funding they deserve. As a result, DHS has modified their UASI grant process. DHS's formula now includes more critical infrastructure such as dams and levees, and has also added a tiered system. "While I am glad that my work has ensured that Sacramento and other at-risk urban areas were eligible to apply for UASI funding this year, I believe my work is not done. "I have spent much of my time in the district working closely with local law enforcement and first responders on Homeland Security. I have seen first-hand their tremendous efforts to protect the millions of people living in the Sacramento area from a terrorist attack. "In January, I had the honor of attending the opening of the Sacramento Regional Homeland Security and Training Center. The new center was built using a wide range of federal Homeland Security funding, including UASI. The Center will improve intelligence sharing by housing all levels of law enforcement in one facility. This is just further proof of the truly unparalleled regional cooperation among Sacramento's law enforcement and first responders. "I have long been impressed by the local law enforcement and first responders in my community and throughout the country. And now we need to make sure that Congress is giving them the necessary resources to do their job. "And so my colleagues Mr. Crowley, Mr. Fossella, Mr. Garrett and I have offered an amendment to add \$50 million to the UASI grant program. While I commend the Chairman and Ranking Member for adding \$30 million to the program, I believe an

additional \$50 million is warranted. Our first responders and law enforcement tackle impossible tasks daily. This increased funding will help in pursuit of their mission—to keep our country safe and secure. “I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.”

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