

INTRODUCTION OF THE URBAN  
AREA SECURITY INITIATIVE IM-  
PROVEMENT ACT OF 2007

**HON. DORIS O. MATSUI**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, January 5, 2007*

Ms. MATSUI. Madam Speaker, national security is our highest priority. Congress has created risk-based grants to direct limited federal funds toward areas facing higher threats, in order to ensure that our country is protected against and prepared for any future terrorist attack.

Over the past year, however, my attempts—along with the efforts of a bipartisan coalition of my colleagues—to work with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to address concerns about one of those risk-based grants, the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), have been fruitless. This experience has led me to question whether we are successfully directing funds as this grant was intended.

For this reason, I am introducing the Urban Area Security Initiative Improvement Act of 2007. Using the information I have gleaned over the past year, this legislation will ensure the grant functions as it was proposed. It will also make certain that instead of making arbitrary decisions, DHS uses conclusive data to inform its policy.

The questions surrounding the UASI grant arose last January, when DHS released a list of 35 urban areas considered eligible to apply for UASI funding through the FY 2006 process. Eleven additional areas, including Sacramento, the Congressional District I represent, were placed in a second group and notified that their UASI funding may be terminated in future years if they did not meet the new risk assessment standards.

When DHS announced that Sacramento's UASI funds may be in jeopardy, the decision seemed unwarranted. Sacramento has a population of almost two million people, and is the capital of California—the most populous state in the nation and the sixth largest economy in the world. The city is also home to dozens of critical federal and state government buildings and much of the state's water, electricity, and telecommunication systems are managed from Sacramento. To suffer an attack would have repercussions beyond our region.

Immediately after learning about the changes to the UASI program, I requested meetings with DHS officials to understand their new risk assessment guidelines. After unsatisfactory responses from DHS, I led a coalition of my colleagues to demand information regarding DHS's revised guidelines for eligibility in an effort to urge them to change their policy.

The Chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, colleagues from San Diego and Sacramento, both of California's United States Senators and I requested a Government Accountability Office (GAO) investigation into the UASI grant process. The preliminary findings of that investigation were completed in mid-December. GAO analyzed the risk methodology and the effectiveness of the assessment, in addition to reviewing planned

changes to both in the upcoming year. The report confirmed that DHS had made many arbitrary decisions during their UASI determination that skewed the outcomes of the risk-scenarios and grant awards.

Of particular concern is that DHS arbitrarily cut the number of eligible cities to 35 and created a second group of 11 of which were only able to apply for "sustainment" funding. Additionally, DHS assigned arbitrary values to assets and population without running a study of how the variation in the output of models (numerical or otherwise) used for such awards can be manipulated—a process commonly referred to as a "sensitivity" analysis. This analysis would have ensured that any changes to these values have little or no impact on the ranking of each urban area.

Both 9–11 and Hurricane Katrina demonstrated the role our first responders play in any incident, whether an act of terrorism or mother nature. And the Urban Area Security Initiative is a critical component to ensuring the preparedness of those brave men and women and, ultimately, our nation's preparedness. We all recognize that we need to direct our limited resources towards the most at-risk locations. However, and DHS has acknowledged this, they have overlooked critical infrastructure. These arbitrary decisions may have influenced the outcome of the UASI grant. This is poor national security policy and in an era when national security is a priority, it is unacceptable.

DHS will shortly be announcing those urban areas that will be eligible to apply for funding. However, Sacramento and all heavily populated urban areas will have to worry each year about whether DHS will arbitrarily change the number of eligible cities and thus, if they will even be able to apply for funding. This places significant and undue burdens on our regional homeland security efforts, as first responders attempt to prepare for and protect against any future threat, without knowing from year to year whether they can even apply for funding.

That is why I am introducing this legislation today. The UASI Improvement Act will allow the 100 most populous urban areas, as determined by the census and the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, to apply for UASI funds. While each urban area does not have to apply, this will guarantee that those urban areas who believe they need the funding or who find that they meet the eligibility guidelines as determined by DHS will be able to at least apply for these vital funds.

The bill also mandates that DHS conduct a sensitivity analysis. The GAO found DHS's decision to arbitrarily assign values during the risk-assignment without conducting a sensitivity analysis to be a significant flaw in the UASI grant determination process. By conducting such an analysis, DHS will have conclusive data rather than uninformed decisions to guide their decision-making.

Our local law enforcement and first responders continue to do an incredible job understanding the threats facing our country and are working hard to prevent and prepare for an attack. And while these heroes are doing their jobs, the federal government needs to do its job. Part of that is providing leadership by setting standards and the other is to provide resources. My concern is that the federal government has been shirking its responsibility,

and so I am introducing legislation to make sure that Sacramento and all at-risk urban areas have the funding they need.

Madam Speaker, the Urban Area Security Initiative Improvement Act will guarantee that our most at-risk urban areas will have access to necessary federal funds, which our first responders and law enforcement need in order to protect our citizens. I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass this bill in the newly-elected 110th Congress.

TRIBUTE TO LARRY KING

**HON. BILL SHUSTER**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, January 5, 2007*

Mr. SHUSTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a true giant in the transportation community and a dedicated servant of the citizens of Pennsylvania, Larry King. After more than 30 years of service, Mr. King will be retiring from Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDot) later this month. While Larry's retirement is certainly well deserved and will provide him with more time to spend with his wife Betty and their family, all of Pennsylvania will feel the impact of his departure.

Larry joined PennDot in 1969 and has served in a variety of positions with a special focus on planning and programming. In 1991, Mr. King was appointed to serve as Deputy Secretary of Planning. In that role, he was responsible for overseeing the statewide planning process, maintaining the Commonwealth's 12 year plan and the management the state's highway and bridge program which consist of a yearly budget of roughly \$1.25 billion. Additionally, Larry was charged with the difficult task of ensuring that projects moved forward in a timely and cost efficient manner.

In his time at PennDot, Larry has been a tremendous resource for members of the Pennsylvania Congressional delegation. He never hesitated to share his expertise with Members or our staff. When Congress took up the historic Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), it was Larry's counsel that Members sought in their effort to ensure that Pennsylvania received its fair share of highway and transit funding. I think we all can agree that Pennsylvania certainly benefitted from his counsel. Larry not only possesses an intimate knowledge of the federal process, he also holds a true passion for improving transportation within the Commonwealth. Indeed, I remain convinced that there is not a road in Pennsylvania on which Larry King has not traveled.

For more than 30 years, Larry has remained dedicated to serving the citizens of Pennsylvania and the Commonwealth has benefitted exponentially from his service. The numerous projects that have moved forward under his watchful eye will greatly benefit not only Pennsylvanians, but all who travel through the Commonwealth. While we all wish Larry all the best in his retirement, we must also let him know how much he will be missed. Thank you, Larry, for your many years of service and your friendship.