

**CONGRESSWOMAN SHEILA JACKSON LEE (TX-18)**

**STATEMENT BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY**

**MEMBER DAY HEARING ON  
HOMELAND SECURITY AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR FY2021  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2020  
3:05 P.M.  
2008 RAYBURN**

*Chairwoman Roybal-Allard, Ranking Member Fleischmann and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee:*

- As a senior member of the Committees on the Judiciary and on Homeland Security, let me offer my appreciation and thanks to Chairwoman Roybal-Allard and Ranking Member Fleischmann for the difficult work and choices that must be made to produce a truly bipartisan Homeland Security spending bill, and for your commitment to providing the resources needed to secure our homeland.
- Madam Chairwoman, I understand that my entire statement will be made part of the record so I will keep my remarks brief. In the few minutes allotted I wish to highlight several programs that warrant the Committee's continuing attention and support.

**I support \$20 billion for Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program**

The Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program within FEMA takes a forward-looking approach to prepare for a disaster before it occurs. Mitigation enables communities to recover more quickly when a disaster strikes, and ultimately saves money associated with costly disaster recovery efforts. In fact, it is estimated that each \$1 spent on mitigation saves roughly \$3 to \$4 on disaster spending.

**I support \$8.5 billion for TSA to fully address additional requirements in screening processes and procedures**

These additional requirements will allow TSA the opportunity to more fully address the additional requirements identified last year in response to finding from covert testing of screening process and procedures. \$3.0 billion to support FTE Transportation Security Officers (TSOs), to ensure effective screening operations and maintain an appropriate staffing level at checkpoints.

**I support \$60 million for University Programs, Homeland Security Centers of Excellence for HBCUs**

The Centers bring together leading experts and researchers to conduct multidisciplinary research and education for homeland security solutions. The Centers are authorized by Congress and chosen by the Science & Technology Directorate through a competitive selection process. Each Center is led by a university in collaboration with partners from other institutions, agencies, laboratories, think tanks, and the private sector.

**I support robust funding for the FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grants program**

FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grants reduce disaster losses and protect life and property from future disasters. Mitigation includes community risk reduction, improved resilience of critical infrastructure, risk reduction for vulnerabilities from natural hazards and climate change, and initiatives to reduce future risks. Projects must provide a long term solution.

**I support \$435 million for the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program**

At minimum, fund the SAFER Grant Program at the \$435 million. This program, authorized in 2003, provides much-needed funding for career and volunteer fire departments to hire new firefighters and recruit and retain volunteer firefighters. This program is critical to the thousands of fire stations across the country that are currently operating short of staff and to those seeking to retain current first responders in the face of the economic downturn and recovery.

**I support \$765 million for the Urban Area Security Initiative**

I respectfully request FY 2020 funding levels of \$765 million for the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI). UASI funds are provided to urban areas across the country that are at high-risk of terrorist attacks. These funds are used for planning, operations, training and exercise to prevent, respond to, and recover from acts of terrorism.

**I support \$125 million for Transit Security Grant Program**

I request \$125 million for the Transit Security Grant Program (TSGP). Mass transit systems have unique security challenges, and one way the federal government fulfills its obligation to secure our homeland is by assisting localities in protecting them. TSGP provides critical funds for public transit entities to shield against terrorist attacks. Our request also asks that TSGP be kept separate and not consolidated into a larger grant program.

**I support \$60 million for Urban Area Security Initiative Nonprofit Security Grant Program**

The Nonprofit Security Grant Program was designed to ensure at-risk nonprofit organizations that serve as community centers can acquire and install equipment to secure themselves against a potential terrorist attack. It is vital to the security of vulnerable non-profit facilities that the program is funded at \$60 million in order to upgrade security measures, such as installing cameras, physical barriers, or controlled entry systems which protect communities from threats and disasters.

**I support \$60 million for National Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) Response System**

This is an important program that has been used in responding to earthquakes, hurricanes, and tornadoes, as well as the 9/11 attacks and the Oklahoma City bombing. Increased federal funding would relieve the burden on cash-strapped local governments and provide training and equipment for these valuable US&R teams.

**I support \$25 million for immigrant integration and citizenship programs within U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)**

These funds will assist the more than 8.8 million legal permanent residents who are currently eligible to realize their dream of U.S. citizenship, and will help ensure the full and successful integration of immigrants into our society at a critical time in the evolution of our national immigration policy.

**CONCLUSION**

Madam Chairwoman, I thank you and the Ranking Member for your leadership and for extending me this opportunity to share some of my priorities with you.