



February 25, 2011

The Honorable Daniel Inouye, Chairman
The Honorable Thad Cochran, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington DC, 20510

The Honorable Mary Landrieu, Chairman
The Honorable Dan Coats, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
United State Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye, Ranking Member Cochran, Chairman Landrieu, and Ranking Member Coats,

The National Fusion Center Association (NFCA) strongly opposes the amendment to the FY 2011 Continuing Resolution adopted by the House on February 18 that would limit the number of metropolitan areas eligible to receive Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) funds to only 25 localities.

We encourage the Senate to remove the restriction and reinforce the intent of Section 2003 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as amended by the 9/11 Commission bill, authorizing risk-based designation and funding of UASI areas. Setting an arbitrary limit on the number of locations is contrary to the intent of Section 2003, which is relevant and necessary to address the growing and evolving threat including homegrown violent extremism.

Focusing UASI resources in only 25 areas would limit the effectiveness of homeland security efforts in critical parts of the country. Representative Nita Lowey, the amendment's sponsor in the House, cited the Najibullah Zazi and Faisal Shahzad cases in her floor statement to highlight the need for focusing UASI resources on the highest risk areas. While New York and other areas clearly have a need for resources, we suggest that the Zazi and Shahzad cases are prime examples of why terrorism prevention resources through UASI should not be limited to the 25 highest risk areas. Zazi's operation was planned in Denver and was interdicted before New Yorkers were terrorized. With the House amendment, Denver could lose all UASI dollars. Shahzad's operation was planned in Bridgeport, CT and due to the vigilance of New York citizens and a technical malfunction his plan failed. With the House amendment, Bridgeport could lose all UASI dollars.

The reality is that the localities with the highest risk of being attacked are often *not* the localities where those attacks are being planned and can be interdicted. UASI's risk-based funding supports

terrorism *prevention* activities in important areas. Many UASI locations use part of the funding to support fusion centers, which play a central role in local-state-federal information sharing related to suspicious activity. Fusion center efforts to receive, analyze, disseminate, and gather threat information are central to our nation's efforts to prevent terror attacks. By cutting back to only 25 UASI locations, resources to support these critical operational capabilities in many areas would be removed and our ability to prevent attacks would be weakened.

UASI funding distribution must be threat-based and risk-based, but Congress must understand that the capabilities UASI supports are needed much more broadly than in 25 areas. On behalf of our nation's 72 state and urban area fusion centers I strongly urge the Senate to avoid arbitrarily limiting the number of locations eligible to receive UASI resources in the FY 2011 Continuing Resolution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "W. Ross Ashley, III". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent "W" and "A".

W. Ross Ashley, III
Executive Director