



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS

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June 13, 2017

The Honorable Michael McCaul
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman McCaul:

On behalf of the nearly 12,000 fire and emergency service leaders of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), I express our support for Title VI of the amendment in the nature of a substitute to the Department of Homeland Security Authorization Act of 2017 (H.R. 2825). This legislation will play an important role in helping our nation's fire and emergency service personnel to respond to the escalating number of threats that we face.

As recent events have shown, the terrorist threat presents a wide variety of tactics and techniques. For any type of terrorist attack, local first responders will be the first on-scene and will have to provide an immediate response. This fact means that local first responders must be ready to respond to explosives; active shooter incidents; complex, coordinated attacks; and threats of biological or chemical terrorism. The federal government can provide valuable training and equipment as incentives to help states and local governments develop multidisciplinary approaches to future threats.

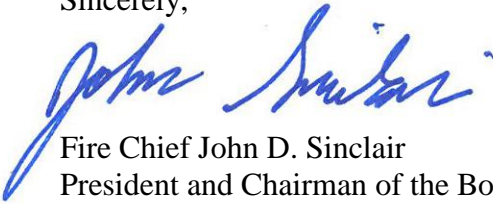
Title VI of the substitute amendment has a number of provisions that will help local first responders, including:

- Annually authorizing \$800 million for the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) program and \$600 million for the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) from Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 through FY 2022.
- Allowing the use of SHSGP and UASI funds to develop medical preparedness and surge capacity in case of a biological attack, including medical kits to protect first responders and their families;
- Protecting the grant programs, like SHSGP and UASI, from consolidation by the Federal Emergency Management Agency without congressional authorization;
- Authorizing a grant program to help emergency response providers plan, train and prepare for complex, coordinated attacks;
- Expanding the role of the Chief Medical Officer to authorize the development of policies to protect first responders from the medical effects of acts of terrorism; and

- Protecting the Office of Emergency Communications, which is a valuable resource for improving public safety communications interoperability, from elimination or consolidation without congressional authorization.

The IAFC appreciates your leadership in ensuring that local first responders are prepared to mitigate the increasing number of threats facing our nation. An effective response by local first responders at the beginning of a terrorist attack will help save lives and reduce the success of an act of terrorism. This legislation will help the nation's fire and EMS personnel prepare for these threats. We urge the committee members to support your substitute amendment to H.R. 2825.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "John D. Sinclair". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

Fire Chief John D. Sinclair
President and Chairman of the Board

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