

**STATE OF EMERGENCY: THE DISASTER OF  
CUTTING PREPAREDNESS GRANTS**

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**HEARING**

BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS,  
RESPONSE, AND COMMUNICATIONS**

OF THE

**COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

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## STATE OF EMERGENCY: THE DISASTER OF CUTTING PREPAREDNESS GRANTS

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS,  
RESPONSE, AND COMMUNICATIONS,  
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,  
*Washington, DC.*

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:03 a.m., in Room 311, Cannon House Office Building, Hon. Daniel M. Donovan, Jr., [Chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Donovan, Marino, Walker, Loudermilk, McSally, McCaul (ex officio), Payne, and Rice.

Also present: Representative King.

Mr. DONOVAN. The Committee on Homeland Security's Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications will come to order. The subcommittee is meeting today to examine the proposed cuts to grant programs in the President's fiscal year 2017 budget request.

Before we begin, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from New York, Mr. King, a Member of the full committee, be permitted to sit on the dais and participate in today's hearing. Without objection, so ordered.

I also ask unanimous consent to insert in the record a signed letter by 17 stakeholder organizations opposing the proposed grant cuts.\*

I now recognize myself for an opening statement.

As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications, one of my fundamental responsibilities is to ensure our Nation's first responders have the tools they need to protect this country and, God forbid, respond to the next terrorist attack. That is why my first hearing is focusing on the dangerous cuts to homeland security grants proposed in the President's fiscal year 2017 budget request.

The President's budget cuts more than \$500 million from programs that support States, cities, ports, transit systems, and fire services. This funding helps provide the training and equipment so critical to enabling our first responders to meet threats as varied as active-shooter scenarios, mass casualty events from a nuclear, chemical, or biological attack, and bomb plots targeting civilians in high-traffic areas.

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\*The information has been included as part of Hon. de Blasio's statement included for the record.

Such threats aren't just theories—in the nearly 15 years since the tragic attacks in 2001, law enforcement has thwarted sinister plots like these and more, including one involving an ISIS sympathizer in my own district. As this committee documented in a recent report issued by Chairman McCaul, there have been 75 terrorism plots against the West since early 2014. Forty-three percent of them were successfully executed, and the United States is the top target.

Law enforcement, including the New York City Police Department and Joint Terrorism Task Forces, deserve our thanks for keeping Americans safe. So far, there have been 81 ISIS-linked arrests in the United States, a number that will only grow as the organization continues to spread viral terrorism over the internet.

Proposing cuts to the programs that keep the homeland safe would be foolish in any case, but they are particularly outrageous at a time when our threat level is the highest it has been since 2001. It would seem that either the President doesn't believe these threats exist or he doesn't care. But make no mistake: This is not the time for the Federal Government to cut support to help our Nation's first responders combat terror attacks.

In discussing the budget proposal with the administration, we have heard various justifications for the cuts. They have told us that the cuts are a result of, "FEMA's successful investments in prior years." They have claimed that it is a result of unspent funding from prior years. They have told us that the cuts are the result of difficult budget decisions, and that this budget, "funds all of our vital homeland security missions in these challenging times."

The truth of the matter is, they have chosen to balance the budget on the backs of first responders knowing that many in Congress will vociferously oppose those cuts. We have heard time and again that these grant programs have made a difference. We heard it after the Boston Marathon bombings. We heard it after the natural disasters like Hurricane Sandy, which devastated my district, and the tornadoes in Moore, Oklahoma.

I am especially interested in hearing how the recent investments made by New York City using Federal Homeland Security grants, such as hiring additional counterterrorism officers this year, could be hamstrung by the sudden drop in Federal funds. New York City and other jurisdictions that benefit from Federal security grants have made real contributions to increasing our country's readiness to meet terrorist threats.

However, for local efforts to be truly effective, there must be a meaningful partnership with the Federal Government. Congress, and this committee in particular, has a history of bipartisanship when it comes to protecting our country and supporting first responders. We did it last year when we came together to permanently reauthorize the Zadroga Act to give 9/11 first responders the health treatment and screenings they earned, and I am pleased to be here today working with Ranking Member Payne to oppose these dangerous homeland security cuts.

[The statement of Chairman Donovan follows:]

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN DANIEL M. DONOVAN, JR.

MARCH 15, 2016

As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications, my fundamental responsibility is to ensure our Nation's first responders have the tools they need to protect this country and, God forbid, respond to the next terrorist attack. That is why my first hearing is focusing on the dangerous cuts to homeland security grants proposed in the President's fiscal year 2017 budget request.

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Such threats aren't just theories—in the nearly 15 years since the tragic attacks in 2001, law enforcement has thwarted sinister plots like these and more, including one involving an ISIS sympathizer in my district. As this committee documented in a recent report issued by Chairman McCaul, there have been 75 terrorism plots against the West since early 2014. Forty-three percent of them were successfully executed, and the United States is the top target.

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Mr. DONOVAN. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Payne, for an opening statement he may have.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Before I begin, I would like to congratulate Mr. Donovan on his Chairmanship, and thank him for holding today's hearing to explore the potential consequences of the proposed cuts to State and local homeland security grant programs.

I represent the 10th Congressional District of New Jersey. It is the home of Newark Liberty International Airport, the New Jersey Transit Authority, the Port of Newark-Elizabeth Marine Terminal, and a dense area of industrial facilities that the *New York Times* has coined the most dangerous 2 miles in America.

Over 100 potential terrorist targets are interspersed between homes and commuter corridors along that stretch. Those targets, coupled with the proximity to New York City, make the Newark-Jersey City metropolitan area regularly ranked among the most high-risk urban areas in the country.

Although it is a somewhat dubious distinction, it has brought with it critical Federal funding. From the Urban Area Security Initiative to port and transit security grants, Federal funding has helped northern New Jersey improve preparedness planning, achieve interoperable communication capabilities, and harden infrastructure targets.

Most importantly, Federal funding has supported important multi-jurisdictional exercises that challenge existing response capabilities so we can make them stronger. These human capital investments—planning, training, and exercises—cannot be one-off investments. Rather, they must be repeated over time, both to train new responders and to help seasoned responders know how to take on emerging threats.

Like many of my colleagues on this panel, I am very troubled by the administration's proposal to slash important homeland security grants in fiscal year 2017. In the 3½ years I have served as the subcommittee's Ranking Member, I have seen the domestic threat environment evolve, and our first responders are on the front lines.

I understand that the administration has proposed to slash Federal homeland security grant funds to comply with the budget caps, and I take issue with that. We cannot afford to balance the budget on the backs of our first responders. Instead, Federal first responders' funding should be robust and predictable so that the State and local governments can effectively plan for the future investments.

I am sure that the testimony we hear today will help us build the case to appropriators that strong homeland security grant funding should continue. Together, we can fight these cuts and win.

Additionally, I would be interested in learning the witnesses' thoughts on the new grants to counter violent extremism, or CVE, and the proposed Regional Competitive Grant Program. The Department has failed to provide Congress with much detail on either program, and I would be interested to learn if DHS has conducted any outreach to the stakeholders and community about them.

Particularly with respect to CVE grants, I am interested in hearing the witnesses' thoughts on what can be done to guard against certain populations being targeted or profiled. In the past, mosques in my Congressional district were the subject of surveillance by an out-of-State law enforcement agency.

Although the NYPD program was subsequently disbanded, it showed us first-hand the dangers of profiling, and I want to be sure that precautions to avoid such outcomes are taken as we make the new money available for CVE.

I want to thank the witnesses for being here today, particularly Sergeant Kierce, from Jersey City, New Jersey, and I look forward to their testimony.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I will yield back the balance of my time.

[The statement of Ranking Member Payne follows:]

STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER DONALD M. PAYNE, JR.

MARCH 15, 2016

I represent the 10th Congressional District of New Jersey. It is home to Newark Liberty International Airport, the New Jersey Transit Authority, the Port Newark-Elizabeth Marine Terminal, and a dense area of industrial facilities that the *New York Times* has coined “the most dangerous 2 miles in America.”

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Rather, they must be repeated over time, both to train new responders and to help seasoned responders know how to take on emerging threats. Like many of my colleagues on this panel, I was very troubled by the administration’s proposal to slash important homeland security grants for fiscal year 2017.

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We cannot afford to balance the budget on the backs of our first responders. Instead, Federal first responder funding should be robust and predictable, so that our State and local governments can effectively plan for future investments. I am sure that the testimony we hear today will help us build the case to appropriators that strong homeland security grant funding should continue. Together, we can fight these cuts and win.

Additionally, I will be interested in learning the witnesses’ thoughts on the new grants to Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) and the proposed Regional Competitive Grant Program. The Department has failed to provide Congress much detail on either program, and I will be interested to learn if DHS has conducted any outreach to the stakeholder community about them.

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Mr. DONOVAN. The gentleman yields.

The Chair now recognizes the Chairman of the full committee, the gentleman from Texas, Mr. McCaul, for any opening statement that he may have.

Mr. McCAUL. Thank you, Chairman Donovan. Let me congratulate you on your first hearing, your inaugural hearing. I kind-of like the sound of that.

Mr. DONOVAN. So do I.

Mr. MCCAUL. It seems like today's a New York day. I can't think of a more important topic, though, for you to hold your first hearing on.

I want to welcome the mayor of New York, and also my fire chief, Chief Rhoda Mae Kerr, who is also the president of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, and she's a friend of mine back home.

As Chairman Donovan noted, we are at our highest threat level since 9/11, and, in fact, I recently released a report examining the 75 ISIS-linked terror plots against the West, to date, up from 19 in 2014.

ISIS has reached an unprecedented level of terror plotting against the United States and our allies. Despite this growing threat, the President's budget falls short where we need it the most. Our city streets have become the front lines in the war against Islamist terror, yet the President proposes slashing funding to State and local first responders.

Let me just say for the record, I have been to New York many times. I know I am from Texas, but I know that New York is perhaps the No. 1 target in the Nation. It is very important that we keep New York safe from this very high-threat level that is out there.

We cannot let these cuts stand. I look forward to working with Chairman Donovan, and also the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Appropriations for Homeland Security, and our friends across the aisle to ensure that our first responders have the tools that they need to get this job done.

With that, I yield back.

Mr. DONOVAN. The gentleman yields back.

Other Members of the subcommittee are reminded that opening statements may be submitted for the record.

[The statement of Ranking Member Thompson follows:]

STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER BENNIE G. THOMPSON

MARCH 14, 2016

I have been responsible for overseeing how the Federal Government supports State and local preparedness and response activities for well over a decade—first as a Member of the Select Committee on Homeland Security in the 108th Congress and now as the permanent committee's Ranking Member.

It has been my job to make sure that we never forget about the devastating events of September 11, 2001. I take seriously the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission that, should our first responders be called upon once again to respond to a terrorist attack, they have the training and equipment they need to do so more safely.

I have worked hard to ensure that the Federal Government works with State and local governments to make the right investments with Federal grant dollars—to make sure that money is spent on building lasting capabilities rather than on equipment that may not last or work as promised.

From where I sit, I can say with confidence that Federal grant investments have worked. We saw the capabilities achieved with UASI funds in action after the Boston Marathon bombings in 2013.

Boston had used its funding to train and equip tactical and specialized response teams—including Explosive Ordnance Disposal detection and disruption—SWAT, and maritime units. The region used funds to host Integration of Bomb Technicians into Tactical Operations Training, which trained Improvised Explosive Device (IED) teams to operate with SWAT teams.

In 2011, Boston participated in a Joint Counterterrorism Awareness Workshop. That exercise included more than 200 participants from Federal, State, and local

governments and involved an integrated response to a 24-hour-long scenario in which multiple coordinated assaults occurred, much like the 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India.

These grant investments were critical to Boston's successful response to the marathon bombings. Indeed, former Boston Police Commissioner Davis testified before this committee that without grant funding, the "response would have been much less comprehensive than it was" and without the exercises supported through UASI, "there would be more people who had died in these . . . attacks."

Other cities and States across the country have echoed Commissioner Davis' praise of the grant programs. From achievements in interoperable communications capabilities, to emergency preparedness planning, to bolstering our ability to respond to CBRNE events, it is clear that homeland security grants yielded real results.

It is also clear that the threats we face are growing and evolving. From the November terrorist attacks in Paris to the December attack in San Bernardino, we have learned that first responders will be called on to thwart and respond to more unconventional attacks.

We must do everything in our power to help them be prepared to do so. That is why I was disturbed that the administration proposed cutting the preparedness grants by nearly half a billion dollars in its fiscal year 2017 budget request.

I would note that this is not the first time grants have been raided to balance the budget.

In fiscal year 2011, the first year the Republicans regained the Majority, targeted homeland security grants were cut from \$2.75 billion to \$1.9 billion, and we have seen the cuts continue ever since. This year, we have been told that the proposed grant cuts are the result of the administration's attempt to adhere to the arbitrary budget caps that continue to hamstring our ability to address evolving threats.

Cuts like these are penny-wise and pound-foolish. Until Congress decides to act on meaningful budget reform legislation, we will continue to find ourselves in a predicament of our own making: Deciding whether to fund DHS operations or first responder grants.

I thank our witnesses for being here today, and I look forward to their testimony. Their statements will serve as an important reminder of the value of grant investments.

Mr. DONOVAN. We are pleased to have two panels of very distinguished witnesses before us today on this important topic. I will now introduce our first witness.

Mayor Bill de Blasio is the 109th mayor of New York City. Prior to becoming mayor, Mr. de Blasio served 8 years on the City Council. In 2010, Mr. de Blasio was sworn in as New York City public advocate, the second-highest city-wide elected office. Additionally, Mr. de Blasio served on District 15 school board in Brooklyn and worked as the Department of Housing and Urban Development's regional director for New York and New Jersey area.

The witness' full statement will appear in the record. The Chair now recognizes Mayor de Blasio for 5 minutes.

Welcome, Mr. Mayor.

#### **STATEMENT OF HONORABLE BILL DE BLASIO, MAYOR, NEW YORK, NEW YORK**

Mr. DE BLASIO. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Donovan, I want to also congratulate you on behalf of 8.5 million New Yorkers. We are very proud that you have ascended to this role. It is important to our city, but it is also important to our Nation.

I want to thank Ranking Member Payne and all the Members of the subcommittee.

I want to also offer my thanks to Chairman McCaul, who has been doing so much to protect the security of all Americans, including all of us in New York City.

A special thanks to Congressman King and Congresswoman Rice, who have been regular partners in the work we do protecting New York City. We all are in this together in the metropolitan area, so I thank you.

I do want to also note, Mr. Chair, I want to offer again now publicly my condolences on the passing of your mother, Katherine. I would just say for the record, she had a lot to be proud of in the work that you have done in public service.

I want to thank the subcommittee for this opportunity to speak. This issue is so important to all of us. I am proud to be the mayor of America's largest city. On top of that, New York City is a crucial transportation hub, global economic hub; the center, obviously, of the American financial industry, among other industries; and one of the world's most visited places. For these reasons and more, New York is the most targeted city in the United States and one of the most targeted cities world-wide in terms of terror efforts directed against us.

Since 9/11, we have thwarted 20 terrorist plots—and I want to give all credit to the men and women of the NYPD and all of our other agencies who have done this extraordinary work—20 plots over 15 years, and that includes 4 in the past 2 years. Mr. Chair, we have submitted this list to the committee of each and every one of those plots to give some context.

We have also faced natural dangers, including Hurricane Irene, Superstorm Sandy, Ebola, and now the Zika virus. We have safely hosted every year the U.N. General Assembly and papal visits, including the one most recently in September, and also annually major National events like the New Year's Eve celebration in Times Square.

Twenty-four hours a day, 7 days a week, thousands of brave men and women are on the ground closely monitoring and pursuing every potential threat, but they can't do it alone. The Urban Area Security Initiative, or UASI, this funding is crucial to our continued safety.

First, UASI helps us prevent terror. UASI funding helps employ the people who keep us safe, like the NYPD intelligence specialists who monitor incoming information all day every day. Our new 500-plus officer Critical Response Command is a full-time counterterror force highly-trained, well-armed to deal with the challenges of today.

UASI is also critical to developing and acquiring the technology that protects us in the world of 21st Century threats, and that includes the Domain Awareness System, a web of 8,000 cameras and sensors linked to technology that can read license plates and detect radiation. It also includes the NYPD's counterterrorism helicopter that scans nautical vessels in our waters to guard against any nuclear devices. You have images here to show you that helicopter.

Second, UASI funds are also critical to our ability to vigorously respond to crises. UASI supports NYPD active-shooter tactical training for 3,500 officers so they can confront gunmen like those who brutally attacked people in Paris at multiple locations.

The New York City Department of Health uses UASI funding to identify and isolate diseases and bioterror.

The Fire Department of New York City has deployed UASI funds to acquire a fire boat that can filter out chemical, biological, and nuclear contamination to allow personnel to work in the midst of an attack. We have an image of the fire boat there.

So my message today is simple and urgent: We need the Congress to do its part to protect New York City and, in fact, all of the United States from security threats. That is why I am deeply concerned about the proposed fiscal year 2017 budget cuts to UASI.

New York State has roughly \$600 million in UASI and other funds from the fiscal year 2014 and fiscal year 2015 allotment, of which New York City received and spent about \$311 million, about half of the allotment for New York State.

Under the fiscal 2017 proposal, we are facing a 50 percent cut, 50 percent cut across the Nation, which would likely, of course, cut New York City's allocation in half as well, at a time when we are seeing more severe and more complex terror threats. We cannot reduce our commitment to public safety. We simply can't afford to stand back when these threats are becoming greater and more challenging. And remember, the effects of a catastrophe in New York City affect the entire Nation. After 9/11, the Dow dropped over 600 points, and the 2001 recession deepened.

Before concluding, I want to note that NYC taxpayers are investing a great deal of their own dollars to fight terrorism. For example, city funds are equipping our 36,000 police officers with new technology they can use to receive terror alerts, essentially giving us 36,000 counterterror officers at any given moment when we need them.

We have always relied on the Federal Government to be a strong partner. We need that partnership to continue. It is essential, not just for 8.5 million New Yorkers that call New York City home, but for all Americans.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify on this crucial matter.

[The prepared statement of Mr. de Blasio follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF BILL DE BLASIO

MARCH 15, 2016

Good morning Chairman Donovan, Ranking Member Payne, and Members of the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications. My thanks to the entire subcommittee for giving me the opportunity to speak with you about the importance of homeland security funding for America's cities.

While I can only speak for New York City specifically, I know the 27 other areas selected as Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) recipients consider these dollars to be absolutely essential to keeping their people safe. My message is simple and urgent: We need Congress to do its part to protect New York City and the United States from terror and other major security threats. That is why I am deeply concerned about the proposed fiscal year 2017 budget cuts to UASI.

Of the fiscal year 2014 and fiscal year 2015 allotment, New York State has roughly \$600 million in UASI and State Homeland Security Grant Program funds. New York City represents \$311 million of these, the entirety of which have already been allocated to keeping our region safe. Under the fiscal year 2017 proposal, we are facing a 50 percent National level cut to \$330 million. New York City's allocation would likely be halved as well. We cannot afford as a city or a Nation to reduce our commitment to public safety at a time when threats are increasing—in both number and complexity.

And let us be clear, it is not just funding year-to-year that matters here. Continuity over time is vital to keeping us safe. Preparations require planning. For ex-

ample, our counter-terrorism assets such as ambulances, helicopters, and fire boats were carefully designed and built for our needs.

Before the tragic events of 9/11, and since that terrible day, New York City has statistically been the No. 1 most targeted city in the United States and one of the most targeted cities in the world. Since 2001, we have thwarted 20 terrorist plots against New York City. We have prevented 4 such plots in the past 2 years alone. This heightened environment is widely recognized. The same week these cuts were announced, the Director of National Intelligence testified to the Senate Armed Services Committee that the threat from al-Qaeda and ISIL was now more layered and complex than any other time since 9/11. And in addition to man-made threats, New York has faced natural dangers—including Hurricane Irene and Super Storm Sandy, Ebola, Legionella, and the Zika virus.

Many of these challenges extend beyond the 5 boroughs. The UASI allocation for the New York City area includes Nassau, Suffolk, Westchester, Yonkers, with additional funds for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. We are the Nation's largest metro area, with a population of about 20 million people, close to 60 million tourists annually, and more than half a million hard-working Americans who commute into our city each day. For context, the number of commuters we receive daily is almost equal to the entire population of Baltimore, Maryland.

Our nimble and complete action to prevent threats from striking and to respond quickly and effectively in the event they do, depends on the resources provided by UASI. I would like to take you through just some of the ways that UASI helps us both prevent terror and be ready to meet it head-on with the most vigorous, proactive, and sophisticated response possible. And I want to acknowledge the extraordinary and tireless efforts of the brave men and women from a number of agencies who protect New York City—and clearly illustrate just how important UASI funding is to their work.

Every day, New York City has thousands of professionals on the ground constantly monitoring and working to prevent acts of terror. It is a never-ending endeavor that permeates every corner of our city and it starts with prevention.

For example, UASI provides the entire annual budget for vital programs like the New York Police Department (NYPD) Domain Awareness System. This web of 8,000 cameras—and growing—is linked to a network of license plate readers, radiation detectors, and biological sensors that act as an early warning system. We also use UASI funding to employ a number of NYPD's intelligence research specialists who pore over threat information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

UASI funding supports NYPD's counter terrorism helicopter specifically outfitted with radiation equipment that scans vessels before they enter New York Harbor to detect the possibility of a nuclear device—for example a dirty bomb hidden in cargo. This helicopter also patrols critical infrastructure that runs across miles of New York City like the Buckeye Pipeline that carries aircraft fuel to John F. Kennedy International airport.

UASI funds pay for vital equipment that allows our Bomb Squad to neutralize suspicious packages and live explosive devices every day. And UASI funds have allowed us to train and deploy a dozen Vapor Wake Explosive Detection K-9s, who can track a suicide bomber moving through a crowd, on the subway, or in open spaces like Times Square.

Now, UASI funds are also critical for our preparedness to respond to a crisis as it unfolds.

UASI funding sustains our new 500-officer Critical Response Command, specially-trained police officers assigned full-time to counter-terrorism. The same funds pay for the specially-designed NYPD escape masks that every police officer is issued to protect them in the event of a chemical attack on our streets and subways. Such a plot—the subway cyanide plot—was already planned by al-Qaeda, but was uncovered before it could be launched. And UASI funds support active-shooter tactical training for 3,500 street cops who may have to confront gunmen such as those who stormed the Bataclan Theater in Paris, or the office party in San Bernardino. Our goal is to extend this important training to 20,000 officers.

The New York City Fire Department (FDNY) Counter Terrorism Bureau counts on UASI funds to maintain the special equipment and training that would be used in a Mumbai- or Benghazi-type attack. It is important to note our fire department is also responsible for the city's ambulances. And Emergency Medical Service (EMS) is a vital part of our response strategy. Fire EMS is using these funds with their police partners to develop and train rescue task forces that can move in and remove the wounded even while an attack may still be in progress. FDNY has also used UASI funds to acquire a fireboat that houses a protective room with Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosive air filtration equipment allowing personnel to continue operations even under hazardous conditions.

The New York City Department of Health uses UASI funding to quickly identify and isolate diseases and acts of bioterror, and subsequently respond with vaccinations and other efforts on a mass scale.

Our Office of Emergency Management (OEM) relies on these funds to equip a state-of-the-art command center that would be the hub of coordinating efforts to maintain operations across multiple city agencies as well as consequence-management in the aftermath of a crisis. OEM also facilitates drills and exercises that keep our agencies at a level of preparedness for a threat that Federal officials have characterized as something that is not an “if” but a “when” scenario.

And these are just a few examples. UASI funds have a profound and wide-ranging impact on everything we do to prepare for, prevent, mitigate, and recover from disasters. Since September 11, 2001 New York City has been remarkably successful at staying ahead of those plotting to harm our people and reducing the impact of natural disasters and dangerous diseases. But we shouldn’t be lulled into complacency by our success. What we have been doing for the past 14 years has been nothing short of cutting-edge and we cannot afford to let that edge get even slightly dull. We must remember that disaster can strike any time.

We must also remember the effects of a catastrophe in New York City would cause suffering across our entire Nation. That’s why after the September 11 attacks we saw the DOW drop more than 600 points, the 2001 recession deepen, and the beginning of the War on Terror, which has cost the United States close to \$2 trillion so far.

New York City is a target because it is our largest city; a major port of entry; a hub for air, sea, rail, and road transportation; a capital of the United States economy; a globally-recognized symbol of democracy, and one of the world’s most visited places. We are proud to host large audiences at events such as the United Nations General Assembly, the recent visit of the Pope, our annual Thanksgiving Day parade, the Rockefeller Center Tree Lighting Ceremony and our New Year’s Eve celebration, and we are equally proud to have successfully kept everyone safe.

Before concluding, I want to note that New York taxpayers are contributing their fair share, investing a great deal of their own dollars to fight terrorism. For example, city funds are equipping every single one of our 36,000 police officers with a smartphone that will allow them to instantly receive terrorism alerts. That will, in effect, give us 36,000 counter-terrorism officers when we need them. Additional investments include vehicles, helmets shields, and other equipment for counter terror personnel, our shot spotter gunshot detection system that will isolate a gun-related incident across 60 square miles city-wide and the operations budget for the NYPD Harbor Unit that patrols our vast coastline. But we simply can’t maintain this posture without help from the Federal Government.

Until now, we have been able to rely on the Federal Government to be a true and strong partner. Today, we need that partnership to continue. As elected officials, our primary and most sacred obligation is to ensure the safety of those we serve.

That is as true in your districts as it is everywhere in our Nation. So I ask you, no matter where you come from: Take bold action to ensure the safety of cities across our Nation and fully fund UASI. This is tantamount to protecting not just the safety and economic vitality of New York City, but that of our region and the Nation as a whole.

It is essential—not just to the 8.5 million Americans that call New York City home—but to all Americans.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to testify on this critical matter.



## ATTACHMENT 1.—UASI MAYORS' LETTER

The Honorable THAD COCHRAN, Chairman,  
The Honorable BARBARA MIKULSKI, Vice Chairwoman,  
*Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510.*

The Honorable JOHN HOEVEN, Chairman,  
The Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, Ranking Member,  
*Subcommittee on Homeland Security, Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510.*

The Honorable HAL ROGERS, Chairman,  
The Honorable NITA LOWEY, Ranking Member,  
*Committee on Appropriations, United States House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.*

The Honorable JOHN CARTER, Chairman,  
The Honorable LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD, Ranking Member,  
*Subcommittee on Homeland Security, Committee on Appropriations, United States House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.*

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES ROGERS, LOWEY, CARTER, AND ROYBAL-ALLARD: We write on behalf of cities across the nation that would be significantly harmed by the deep funding cuts to the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) as proposed in the President's FY 17 budget. As Mayors, we share the strong belief that severe cuts to key homeland security grant programs directly jeopardize the safety of the citizens we represent. As the threat continues to grow, we ask Congress to restore these funds that are essential for cities to adapt and remain nimble in responding to evolving threats.

We are alarmed that the proposed cuts would translate into reductions across the spectrum of security. The UASI program is facing an almost 50 percent cut, from \$600 million this year to \$330 million next year. This funding is essential to many ongoing counterterrorism operations, investments in public safety communications, core competency training for police and fire, public health readiness and overall emergency preparedness.

These proposed reductions are particularly alarming in the wake of mounting global attacks in major cities like Paris and here at home in San Bernardino. In New York City, which continues to be the Nation's number one terror target, twenty plots have been thwarted since 2001 alone. To date, the only explanation provided for the recommended funding decrease is the need for hard choices in the current budget environment. This statement is not reflective of the need we see in the distinct communities we represent across the nation. Rather the equipment, training, system development and best practices that have resulted from access to UASI funds provide far reaching region wide benefits.

Reducing UASI funding destabilizes on-going security and intelligence gathering efforts that protect our citizens, commuters, and businesses. Law enforcement requires this funding to continue to procure the necessary equipment to detect potential chemical, biological, and radiological weapons. First responders utilize funds to train and develop innovative best practices to improve response and save lives. These investments in security preparedness are crucial for both the safety and security of our residents, as well as the countless tourists who visit our cities.

We are united in urging you to reject these proposed cuts and fully fund UASI. Heightened concern over terrorism and violent extremism at home makes adequate funding more critical than ever. It is in the interest of the security of our cities, and indeed the nation, to do everything possible to prevent any potential attacks. When

UASI is fully funded, local governments across the nation are empowered to better protect the people who call our cities home.

Sincerely,

BILL DE BLASIO,  
*Mayor of New York, NY.*  
ERIC GARCETTI,  
*Mayor of Los Angeles, CA.*  
MARTIN WALSH,  
*Mayor of Boston, MA.*  
STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE,  
*Mayor of Baltimore, MD.*  
MURIEL BOWSER,  
*Mayor of Washington, DC.*  
ED LEE,  
*Mayor of San Francisco, CA.*  
FRANCIS SLAY,  
*Mayor of St. Louis, MO.*  
MIKE RAWLINGS,  
*Mayor of Dallas, TX.*  
KEVIN JOHNSON,  
*Mayor of Sacramento, CA.*  
CHRIS COLEMAN,  
*Mayor of St. Paul, MN.*  
JEFF WILLIAMS,  
*Mayor of Arlington, TX.*  
KEVIN FAULCONER,  
*Mayor of San Diego, CA.*  
SAM LICCARDO,  
*Mayor of San Jose, CA.*  
MIGUEL PULIDO,  
*Mayor of Santa Ana, CA.*  
CAROLYN GOODMAN,  
*Mayor of Las Vegas, NV.*  
EDWARD MURRAY,  
*Mayor of Seattle, WA.*  
BETSY PRICE,  
*Mayor of Fort Worth, TX.*  
ANDY HAFEN,  
*Mayor of Henderson, NV.*

ATTACHMENT 2.—UASI COALITION LETTER FROM LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS, LAW ENFORCEMENT, AND FIRST RESPONDERS

*February 22, 2016.*

The Honorable HAROLD ROGERS,  
*Chairman, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.*

The Honorable JOHN CARTER,  
*Chairman, Subcommittee on Homeland Security, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.*

The Honorable NITA LOWEY,  
*Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.*

The Honorable LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD,  
*Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Homeland Security, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.*

*Dear Mr. Rogers, Ms. Lowey, Mr. Carter, and Ms. Roybal-Allard:* We write on behalf of local elected officials, emergency managers, port operators, transit operators, police chiefs, sheriffs, and the major fire service organizations to register our strong concern with the severe cuts to four key homeland security grant programs proposed in the President's FY (Fiscal Year) 2017 budget. In all these programs would be cut by 44 percent below FY 2016 levels. The Urban Area Security Initiative Program

would be cut by 45 percent, from \$600 million this year to \$330 million next year. The State Homeland Security Grant Program would be cut by 57 percent, from \$467 million this year to \$200 million next year. Public Transportation Security Assistance would be cut by 15 percent to \$85,000 next year, Port Security grants by 7 percent to \$93 million next year.

There is a certain irony to the proposed cuts. They come in the wake of terrorist attacks not just in cities abroad, but on our shores, in Chattanooga, San Bernardino and Philadelphia, for example. Further, the Department of Homeland Security's Budget in Brief highlights the programs' accomplishments, and offers no explanation for the cuts:

"Through a suite of homeland security grant programs, (DHS) provided critical support to the nation's preparedness for acts of terrorism and other threats and hazards. In 2015, FEMA awarded more than 600 grants to support state, local, tribal and territorial governments, transit agencies, port operators, non-profit organizations, and other partners in building and sustaining the 31 critical core capabilities described in the National Preparedness Goal. As a result of those grants, states and localities across the country reported capability increases in 12 of the 31 core capabilities compared to 2014. The federal investment in those capabilities pays off each day in communities across the country during incidents large and small. For example, much of the training and equipment used in response to the May 2015 AMTRAK derailment in Philadelphia, including lighting, tourniquets, and technical rescue capabilities, were paid for with grants provided by FEMA."

As you begin development of FY 2017 appropriations legislation, we urge you to reject these proposed cuts and to fund these critical programs at least at FY 2016 funding levels. At a time of heightened concern about terrorism and violent extremism at home, increased funding for them would certainly be justified. They play a vital role in ensuring that state and local governments are prepared to respond to future terrorist attacks and have the necessary resources to protect their communities and their residents.

If we can provide further information or assistance, please contact us through the U.S. Conference of Mayors' Public Safety Director[.]

Sincerely,

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PORT AUTHORITIES,  
 AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION,  
 THE ASSOCIATION OF STATE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIVE AGENCIES,  
 BIG CITY EMERGENCY MANAGERS,  
 CONGRESSIONAL FIRE SERVICES INSTITUTE,  
 INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS,  
 INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS,  
 MAJOR CITIES CHIEFS ASSOCIATION,  
 MAJOR COUNTY SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION,  
 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES,  
 NATIONAL FUSION CENTER ASSOCIATION,  
 NATIONAL HOMELAND SECURITY COALITION,  
 NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES,  
 NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION,  
 NATIONAL VOLUNTEER FIRE COUNCIL,  
 THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS,  
 U.S. COUNCIL OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EMERGENCY MANAGERS  
 (IAEM-USA).

ATTACHMENT 3.—TERRORIST PLOTS TARGETING NEW YORK CITY SEPTEMBER 11, 2001  
 TO PRESENT

1. BROOKLYN BRIDGE

In 2002, Iyman Faris, a U.S.-based al-Qaeda operative, planned to cut the Brooklyn Bridge's support cables at the direction of 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. However, as a testament to NYPD terrorism deterrence efforts, Faris called off the plot, indicating to al-Qaeda leaders that "the weather is too hot." NYPD's 24-hour coverage of the bridge, much of which was put in place following 9/11 and intentionally made highly visible, played a large role in Faris' decision to abandon the plot. Faris was arrested in 2003, pleaded guilty, and sentenced to 20 years in Federal prison for providing material support and resources to al-Qaeda, among other charges. Knowing that the city's bridges and critical infrastructure remain attractive terrorist targets, the NYPD maintains heightened security around such facilities.

## 2. SUBWAY CYANIDE ATTACK

In 2003, al-Qaeda had planned to release cyanide gas in New York City's subway system, which carries more than 5,000,000 passengers on an average weekday, as well as targeted other public places for attack. According to a U.S. Government official familiar with the plot, the plan was called off by Osama bin Laden's second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahiri, for unclear reasons. The NYPD took appropriate precautions after becoming aware of the plot.

## 3. THE PARACHAS

In 2006, Uzair Paracha, a Brooklyn resident, was sentenced to 30 years in Federal prison after he was convicted of attempting to help al-Qaeda operative Majid Khan enter the United States to attack gas tanks in a plot developed alongside 9/11 planner Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. In early 2003, Paracha impersonated Khan in dealings with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), and agreed to use Khan's credit card to make it appear Khan was in the United States rather than in Pakistan. He also was in possession of several identification documents in Khan's name, and written instructions from Khan on how to pose as Khan in dealing with the INS. Paracha was found guilty in 2005 on charges including conspiracy to provide and providing material support to al-Qaeda; conspiracy to provide, and providing funds, goods, or services to al-Qaeda; and identification document fraud committed to facilitate an act of international terrorism. Majid Khan pleaded guilty in February 2012 in a military court at Guantanamo to charges stemming from his involvement with al-Qaeda and admitted to the gas tank plot, planning to assassinate Pakistan's President Musharraf, and complicity in a 2003 bombing of a Marriot hotel in Jakarta, Indonesia. The NYPD cooperated with Federal authorities through the Joint Terrorism Task Force to uncover Paracha's plan.

Uzair Paracha's father, Saifullah Paracha, also was alleged to have aided al-Qaeda. The senior Paracha worked with Khalid Sheikh Mohammad to devise a way to smuggle explosives—including possibly nuclear weapons—into the United States using the New York office of Paracha's import-export business. Saifullah Paracha, who attended the New York Institute of Technology and worked in the city for over a decade, was arrested in 2003 after Uzair stated to authorities that his father was a militant.

## 4. NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE &amp; CITIGROUP HEADQUARTERS

Dhiren Barot (aka Issa al-Hindi) was sentenced to life in prison by a United Kingdom court in 2006 after pleading guilty to planning to attack several targets both in the United Kingdom and the United States, including the New York Stock Exchange, Citigroup's headquarters in Midtown Manhattan, and the Prudential Building in Newark, NJ. In addition, Barot filmed reconnaissance video during a trip to the United States in March 2001 that included shots of the World Trade Center. He also targeted the offices of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank in Washington, DC and hotels and railway stations in London. Barot was arrested by British police in August 2004 shortly after U.S. authorities raised the Terror Alert level based on intelligence that al-Qaeda had conducted extensive reconnaissance of financial institutions in the United States. NYPD responded to the alert by reaching out to New York's financial companies to discuss security, deploying tactical teams to high-threat locations, and increasing vehicle inspections. Seven of Barot's accomplices were given long prison sentences by a British court in 2007 for their involvement in the plot.

## 5. HERALD SQUARE

Shahawar Matin Siraj and James Elshafay plotted in 2004 to place explosive devices in the Herald Square subway station in Manhattan. Elshafay had already given consideration to potential targets by the time he met an NYPD informant in early 2004. In recorded conversations, Siraj expressed desire to bomb bridges and subway stations, and cited misdeeds by American forces in Iraq as a motivating factor. Siraj and Elshafay conducted surveillance of Herald Square station in late August 2004 and drew a crude diagram to aid in placing the explosives; they were arrested a few days later. Elshafay pleaded guilty to conspiracy to damage or destroy a subway station by means of an explosive. Siraj was found guilty in 2006 of conspiracy to place and detonate an explosive in a public transportation system; conspiracy to damage and destroy, by means of an explosive, a building or vehicle; conspiracy to wreck and disable a mass transportation vehicle; and conspiracy to place a destructive device in or near a facility used in the operation of mass transportation. He was subsequently sentenced to 30 years in prison. Shepherding the case

from initial lead to Federal prosecution required close cooperation with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York.

#### 6. PATH TRAIN AND WORLD TRADE CENTER RETAINING WALL

In July 2006, the FBI revealed it had uncovered a plot involving an attack on a PATH commuter train tunnel connecting New York and New Jersey, the placement of suicide bombers on trains, and the destruction of the retaining wall separating the Hudson River from the World Trade Center site in the hopes of causing massive flooding in the city's Financial District. The plot was uncovered in its early stages through a year-long FBI investigation that included the monitoring of internet chat rooms frequented by extremists, and involved at least 8 suspects spread over several countries. The plot's alleged mastermind, al-Qaeda affiliated Assem Hammoud of Lebanon, was taken into custody by authorities there. Hammoud said he was acting on orders from Osama bin Laden and that he was planning to travel to Pakistan to receive training at an al-Qaeda camp. Another suspect was arrested in Canada and a third in England.

#### 7. JFK AIRPORT

Beginning in 2006, 4 men plotted to detonate the jet-fuel storage tanks and supply lines for John F. Kennedy Airport in order to cause wide-scale destruction and economic disruption in an attack they intended to dwarf 9/11. Through the Joint Terrorism Task Force, the NYPD worked with the FBI, which placed an informant next to the principle plotter, Russell Defreitas, a native of Guyana and Brooklyn resident who was an airport cargo handler. Defreitas's accomplices were Abdul Kadir, a former parliamentarian from Guyana with admitted ties to Iran; Abel Nur of Guyana; and Kareem Ibrahim of Trinidad and Tobago. Relying in part on Defreitas' knowledge, the men conducted extensive surveillance of the airport, and traveled to Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago to attempt to secure the support of Jamaat al-Muslimeen, an Islamic extremist group operating in the region. The group also discussed contacting Adnan Shukrijumah, an al-Qaeda explosives expert believed to be in the Caribbean at the time. Kadir was sentenced to life in prison in 2010; Nur was sentenced to 15 years in 2011 after pleading guilty to material support the previous year; Ibrahim received life in 2012. All 3 were extradited to the United States to stand trial. Defreitas was arrested in New York and received a life sentence in 2011 after being convicted of conspiracy to attack a public transportation system; conspiracy to destroy a building by fire or explosive; conspiracy to attack aircraft and aircraft materials; conspiracy to destroy international airport facilities; and conspiracy to attack a mass transportation facility.

#### 8. TRANSATLANTIC PLOT

In a series of 3 trials spanning 2008 to 2010, 8 men were convicted in Britain of attempting to simultaneously detonate explosives in 7 airliners traveling from London to several North American metropolises, including New York. British authorities also sought Rashid Rauf, a 27-year-old Briton of Pakistani descent and prominent al-Qaeda operative, as a main suspect in the plot. After Rauf's arrest in Pakistan in August 2006, his detention led to the arrest of 25 additional suspects in Britain. Authorities believed the plan involved the use of peroxide-based liquid explosives that could evade air travel security measures in place at the time. The discovery of the plot involved cooperation between American and British authorities.

#### 9. SABRIHAN HASANOFF & WESSAM EL-HANAFI

Co-conspirators Sabrihan Hasanoff, a dual-citizen of the United States and Australia, and Wessam el-Hanafi, a Brooklyn resident who was extradited after his 2010 arrest in the United Arab Emirates, pleaded guilty to providing and attempting to provide material support to al-Qaeda and conspiring to provide material support to al-Qaeda. Hasanoff was sentenced to 18 years in prison in September 2013 and el-Hanafi was sentenced to 15 years in prison in January 2015. Both men admitted to supporting al-Qaeda in a variety of ways beginning in 2007 when the men developed contact with individuals they knew to be members of the group. Using aliases, Hasanoff and el-Hanafi funneled \$67,000 to al-Qaeda operatives overseas, and in 2008 El-Hanafi traveled to Yemen to meet with his contacts, swearing an oath of allegiance to Osama Bin Laden's organization. El-Hanafi also delivered money and electronics to the men during this trip, while at the same time teaching the Yemen-based individuals covert communication techniques using encrypted software. At the request of their Yemen-based associates and as directed by el-Hanafi, Hasanoff performed surveillance on potential targets in the United States including

the New York Stock Exchange. El-Hanafi forwarded the report to al-Qaeda, which viewed both men as operatives for a potential attack in the United States. The NYPD Detectives assigned to the Joint Terrorism Task Force assisted in the FBI investigation.

#### 10. LONG ISLAND RAILROAD

Bryant Neal Vinas, of Long Island, New York, traveled to Pakistan with an intent to die fighting against American forces in Afghanistan. He was later called to testify in the trial of Adis Medunjanin, one of Najibullah Zazi's co-conspirators in the September 2009 subway plot (see below). In his testimony, Vinas stated he was motivated by the preaching of radical Yemeni-America cleric Anwar al-Awlaki. He spent much of his time in Pakistan shopping for a group to join before ultimately ending up in North Waziristan in Pakistan's tribal areas in early 2008 and subsequently received over 5 weeks of terrorism training from al-Qaeda. In summer of 2008, Vinas spoke to al-Qaeda about targeting the Long Island Railroad using a suitcase bomb that would be left in a car and set to detonate. He drew maps of Long Island and showed that all LIRR trains passed through one tunnel when entering Manhattan; suggesting that an explosion in the tunnel would cause the most damage. Pakistani authorities arrested Vinas in November 2008 and he pleaded guilty in the United States to Federal charges of conspiracy to murder, material support to al-Qaeda, and receiving military training from al-Qaeda.

#### 11. BRONX SYNAGOGUES

In May 2009, 4 men placed what they believed were functioning bombs outside of Jewish targets in the Bronx neighborhood of Riverdale and additionally constructed plans to fire missiles at military transport planes at Stewart International Airport near Newburgh, NY. Suspect James Cromitie confided his desire to commit acts against the United States to a Federal informant in 2008 and aspired to travel to Afghanistan to become a martyr, and to join Pakistani extremist group Jaish-e-Mohammad. Cromitie recruited Onta Williams, David Williams IV, and Laguerre Payen to join him in the Riverdale attacks. By April 2009, the 4 targeted the Riverdale Temple and nearby Riverdale Jewish Center, and conducted surveillance at Stewart Airport. A Government informant supplied the group with an inert missile system and fake explosives. The group was arrested after they placed what they believed were functioning bombs outside of their Riverdale targets, convicted in 2010 and subsequently sentenced to 25-year terms.

#### 12. NYC SUBWAY PLOT

In September 2009, the New York City subway system was targeted for attack by 3 individuals who planned to set off bombs in the subway during rush hour shortly after the eighth anniversary of 9/11. Once Queens residents Najibullah Zazi and Zarein Ahmedzay, of Afghan descent, and Bosnian Adis Medunjanin had self-radicalized largely through listening to on-line extremist material, including teachings by Anwar al-Awlaki. The trio plotted to travel to Afghanistan to fight alongside the Taliban against American and coalition forces, and said they were motivated by American actions against Muslim populations overseas. Although in Pakistan in late August 2008, Ahmedzay and Medunjanin were turned around by Pakistani security forces while trying to enter Afghanistan in a taxi. In looking for another approach, the 3 canvassed mosques in Peshawar, Pakistan until they were put in contact with al-Qaeda representatives. They then traveled to tribal areas in North Waziristan, where they received terrorist training from high-ranking members who urged their return to the United States to carry out an attack at home—a request to which they acquiesced. Zazi received further explosives training from al-Qaeda and the 3 returned to the United States separately. In January 2009, days after his return to the United States, Zazi moved to Aurora, CO where he began to experiment with explosives and eventually constructed the detonation charges for the bombs that were to be used by the trio in attacking the subway. He remained in contact with Ahmedzay and Medunjanin while in Colorado, and drove to New York from Aurora in early September 2009 with the explosive charges in his vehicle.

The plot was thwarted through an intelligence tip received by the FBI and with the cooperation of the NYPD through the Joint Terrorism Task Force. Zazi and Ahmedzay pleaded guilty in 2010 to conspiracy to use a weapon of mass of destruction; conspiracy to commit murder in a foreign country; and providing material support to a foreign terrorist organization; they are awaiting sentencing. Medunjanin was convicted in 2012 of conspiring to use weapons of mass destruction, conspiring to commit murder of U.S. military personnel abroad, providing and conspiring to provide material support to al-Qaeda, receiving military training from al-Qaeda,

conspiring and attempting to commit an act of terrorism transcending national boundaries, and using firearms and destructive devices in relation to these offenses. He was later sentenced to life.

#### 13. TIMES SQUARE

Faisal Shahzad, a Pakistan-American residing in Connecticut, attempted to detonate a car bomb in Times Square on May 1, 2010. Like Vinas and the Zazi-trio before him, Shahzad received terrorist training in Pakistan's Waziristan region during a trip he made to the country from July 2009 until February 2010. The training was provided by the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), generally referred to as the Pakistani Taliban. Upon returning to the United States, Shahzad received \$12,000 in 2 separate payments from a TTP-associated co-conspirator to aid his plot. The bomb's failure to detonate had to do in large part with the inferior components Shahzad used; Shahzad was concerned that purchasing more effective ingredients as called for by his training would alert law enforcement. Shahzad was influenced, in part, by the teachings of Anwar al-Awlaki and in court, cited American foreign policy as a primary motivator for his actions. Cooperation between NYPD and the FBI led to his identification and arrest 53 hours after the attempted bombing, as he attempted to flee the country. Shahzad pleaded guilty to all charges against him and was sentenced to life in prison.

#### 14. MANHATTAN SYNAGOGUE

Ahmed Ferhani, a Queens resident born in Algeria, along with Mohammad Mamdouh, a Moroccan immigrant, were arrested in May 2011 in an NYPD operation in which Ferhani purchased a hand grenade, 3 semi-automatic pistols, and ammunition from an undercover detective. NYPD's investigation into the pair revealed their desire to attack a synagogue in New York City. Ferhani was indicted under New York State's anti-terrorism legislation and pleaded guilty in December 2012 to charges including conspiracy as a crime of terrorism and criminal possession of a weapon as a crime of terrorism. In his allocution, Ferhani stated that he agreed with Mamdouh to "develop a plan to attack and damage a synagogue in New York County or elsewhere in New York City using explosives" in an effort to coerce and intimidate the city's Jewish population. He further clarified that his motivation was to avenge the perceived mistreatment of Muslims worldwide. Ferhani was sentenced in March 2013 to 10 years in state prison after his guilty plea in December 2012 to terror-related charges for plotting to target New York synagogues. The case marks the first application of New York's terror laws in a terrorism case.

#### 15. RETURNING MILITARY TARGETED

Jose Pimentel, a native of the Dominican Republic and convert to Islam, was charged with plotting to detonate bombs in and around New York City in November 2011. He used instructions on how to build a bomb published by al-Qaeda's *Inspire* magazine. After a 2½-year investigation by the NYPD Intelligence Bureau, Pimentel was caught while assembling 3 bombs. Pimentel's targets included members of the Armed Forces who were returning from service in Iraq and Afghanistan. He also considered traveling to Yemen to participate in terrorist training and claimed to have emailed radical Yemeni-American cleric Anwar al-Awlaki but received no response. However, Pimentel successfully corresponded with Jesse Morton, the founder of the website Revolution Muslim, who was sentenced in June 2012 to 11.5 years in prison for using the internet to solicit violence against individuals to include the writers of the popular TV-satire South Park. Pimentel pleaded guilty and on March 25, 2014 was sentenced to 16 years in State prison and 5 years of post-release supervision for constructing improvised explosive devices to detonate in Manhattan, with the intent to harm United States military personnel and civilians.

#### 16. FEDERAL RESERVE

Quazi Mohammad Rezwanul Ahsan Nafis, a native of Bangladesh who was residing in the United States on a student visa, was arrested in October 2012 as he attempted to remotely detonate what he believed was a bomb in front of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York in lower Manhattan. Nafis came to law enforcement's attention in July 2012 when he unknowingly tried to recruit a confidential Government source to aid in his plan to attack the United States at home. Nafis told the Government source that he had al-Qaeda contacts abroad that could assist in the planning and execution of an attack. Nafis also drafted an article he hoped would be published in al-Qaeda's *Inspire* magazine, in which he asserted his desire to "destroy America" by attacking its economy. Nafis pleaded guilty in February 2013 to

attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction and was subsequently sentenced to 30 years in prison. The NYPD worked with the FBI in the case through the Joint Terrorism Task Force.

#### 17. THE BROTHERS PLOT

Raees Alam Qazi and Sheheryar Alam Qazi, Pakistan-born brothers from Florida, were arrested by Federal authorities in Florida in November 2012 for charges relating to a plan to bomb popular New York City landmarks including Times Square, Wall Street, and city theaters. Raees Qazi had traveled to New York allegedly to gain employment to finance the building of an explosive device and to select a target; he and his brother both were charged with conspiring to provide material support to terrorists and conspiring to use a weapon of mass destruction. Authorities searched Raees' home and found material and instructions related to the construction of an explosive device. Raees was reportedly seeking retribution for the deaths caused by drone strikes in Afghanistan. In March 2015, the Qazi brothers pleaded guilty in Federal court in Miami to 1 count of conspiring to provide support to terrorists and conspiring to assault 2 Federal employees. Raees Qazi pleaded guilty to an additional charge of attempting to provide material support to al-Qaeda. In June 2015, Raees and Sheheryar Qazi were sentenced to 35 and 20 years in prison respectively.

#### 18. ZALE THOMPSON

On October 23, 2014, a 32-year-old resident of Queens named Zale Thompson attacked 4 rookie New York City police officers in Jamaica, Queens with a hatchet. Thompson ran at the men as they posed for a photograph, hitting 1 officer on the arm and another in the head before being shot and killed by the other officers. Thompson expressed a variety of grievances in the years and months leading up to the attack, including about incidents of alleged police brutality—particularly against African Americans. Through frequent social media posts, he also advocated for jihad and insurgency against the United States as a response to the plight of Muslims globally. His social media activity and internet searches became increasingly consumed by jihadist propaganda in the days prior to his attack, as he frequented websites associated with al-Qaeda and the Islamic State of Iraq in the Levant (ISIL), and viewed articles discussing ISIL's beheadings of hostages. ISIL has lionized Thompson in 2 issues of its English-language magazine, *Dabiq*, as an exemplar for lone-wolf attackers.

#### 19. ASIA SIDDIQUI & NOELLE VELENTZAS

In April 2015, Queens residents Asia Siddiqui and Noelle Velentzas were arrested and charged with conspiracy to use weapons of mass destruction as well as other terrorism-related offenses following a joint investigation by the NYPD Intelligence Bureau and FBI. The defendants are alleged to have researched the construction of various types of explosives devices, including the car bomb used in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and pressure-cooker bombs such as those used in the 2013 Boston Marathon attacks; they also allegedly acquired some of the components to construct explosive devices, including propane tanks. The complaint charges that the defendants, who allegedly made statements backing violent jihad and supporting the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), sought to detonate explosive devices here at home. The 2 pleaded not guilty in May 2015; their case is still pending.

#### 20. ASPIRING ISIL FOREIGN FIGHTERS

In June 2015, following an FBI investigation, Queens resident Munther Saleh and Staten Island resident Fareed Mumuni were arrested for allegedly seeking to carry out an attack with pressure-cooker bombs on behalf of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) prior to joining the group overseas with other alleged co-conspirators, including New Jersey residents Samuel Topaz and Alaa Saadeh, who were also arrested. According to the criminal complaint, Saleh researched information about the construction of a pressure-cooker bomb and viewed images of various New York City landmarks and tourist attractions. Prior to their arrests, Saleh and Mumuni allegedly attempted to attack law enforcement officers before being subdued.

Mr. DONOVAN. Mr. Mayor, thank you for your insightful testimony, and I can't agree with you more. I would also like to publicly commend you for the team that you put together that protects our city every day, Police Commissioner Bill Bratton, Fire Commis-

sioner Danny Nigro, and my good friend, who accompanied you down here today, Joe Esposito, the head of OEM. So thank you for that.

Mr. DE BLASIO. Thank you.

Mr. DONOVAN. I now recognize myself for 5 minutes for questions.

Mayor de Blasio, as I mentioned in my opening statement, we have heard several reasons for the proposed cuts, one of which was the amount of money that has yet to be spent in prior funding cycles. Can you talk about the money that is in the pipeline and how, while it may not have yet been spent and drawn down, that money has already been obligated for various projects that are vital for your efforts to secure our city.

Mr. DE BLASIO. Well, that is exactly right, Mr. Chairman. Remembering that we are now seeing more threats than ever before and more complicated ones, we continue to innovate. This has been something that all our agencies do, and Commissioner Bratton is particularly well-known for constantly creating the concept of innovation in all we do in the NYPD, particularly in our counterterrorism work. That is why we came up with a new specially-trained, specially-armed counterterrorism group, the Critical Response Command. No city in America has such a developed apparatus at this point, and we need it because we are the No. 1 terror target.

But the simple answer to your question is: All dollars that have been provided are in the process of being spent. They have been obligated, as you said. We all know that the process of actually acquiring equipment, for example, requires a number of steps. We have to very carefully follow those steps under Federal guidelines, and we do. But that often takes several years to be done properly.

Every dollar is being spent and being spent on the kind of things that will prevent terror. Remember, our first mission, of course, is to prevent terror. NYPD has done that successfully now for 15 straight years, warded off those 20 attacks I mentioned.

But we also know if, God forbid, there was an instance of a terrorist attack, our job is to contain it and minimize it. That is why we put such an emphasis on the active-shooter training, on technology that would allow the fastest alert possible to our officers so they could intervene. We need to keep making those investments so we are prepared. But the bottom line is every dollar that has been allocated in the past has been obligated, is being spent effectively.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Mayor.

Commissioner Bratton has estimated that these cuts would cost an approximate amount of \$90 million reduction for the funding to New York City for the police department. Could you explain to the committee, what are some of the capabilities that the New York City Police Department would no longer be able to fund in the absence of the grant funding that is being proposed now?

Mr. DE BLASIO. Absolutely, Mr. Chairman.

We have a substantial domain awareness system, but we need to keep building on it as the threats intensify. If we did not have this funding, we would not be able to build out that domain awareness system further. We do have some explosive detection equipment, but, again, we need to add to that capacity.

One example I need to offer, in addition to all the other reasons why New York City is a target and why New York City is a challenging environment to protect and police, we just announced this week that we expect over 59 million tourists in the course of this year. It would be an all-time record. The amount of traffic, the amount of human intensity that happens on the streets of New York City every single day requires constant vigilance, and we need the technology to allow us to look for any and all threats.

Finally, I would say, you know that as the area around the World Trade Center has come back to full life and economic vitality, and that is growing every day, we know that that site, sadly, remains a particular target of interest for terrorist forces. We need to add additional vehicle screening in that area. We would not be able to do that without the funds that we have traditionally received from UASI.

Mr. DONOVAN. Wonderful. Thank you, Mayor.

My time is running out, so let me just ask one final question: Secretary Johnson is testifying before our full committee tomorrow on the Department of Homeland Security's budget for fiscal year 2017. What message do you have for the Secretary about any proposed cuts?

Mr. DE BLASIO. I will be seeing the Secretary later today. I have immense respect for him. He has been a great partner. But my message is we cannot protect New York City sufficiently without this funding. I believe it is a fair National priority to protect our largest city and a city that is so central to our National life.

I would say to him that we in New York City invest heavily in counterterrorism ourselves. For every dollar we receive from the Federal Government, we spend one of our own dollars as well. We spend the taxpayers' dollars of our city to protect our people and all the people who visit, those 60 million tourists, the 3 million people or so coming to town each day to work during the week. We are definitely going to be shouldering a big share of the burden, but we need our Federal partners to take their part in this effort to protect.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

My time is expired. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Payne, for questions.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mayor de Blasio, New York City has benefitted from significant homeland security grant investments, and rightfully so. What is your biggest fear if those programs are slashed?

Mr. DE BLASIO. My fear is we fall behind, Congressman. We have, over the last 15 years, since that horrible day of 9/11, innovated an approach to fighting terror, to preventing it before it happens. It has become a very refined approach and a very successful approach. It requires a close coordination of all of our city agencies, police, fire, emergency management, health, and others, but also close partnership with the Federal Government. I have to say, I think it is at an all-time high in terms of close cooperation and collaboration with FBI, Homeland Security, et cetera.

But I think there is a phrase we use in New York City that describes the situation: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." So far we have succeeded in preventing terror on a consistent basis.

Mr. PAYNE. Absolutely.

Mr. DE BLASIO. But as we saw in Paris, as we saw in San Bernardino, the challenges are greater. That is why we created a stand-alone counterterror apparatus, and why we need ever more commitment to technology and to a more refined approach. If the bottom drops out of that, if the leg is taken out of the stool and we are no longer able to invest in improving our approach, sadly, we will be creating vulnerability.

So Congressman, I would say, if one day we believe that the terror threats around the world are actually declining, well, that would be a glorious day where we could talk about the opportunity to reduce spending. But unfortunately, right now, those threats are increasing. They are becoming more complicated. Law enforcement is challenged to keep up with the capacity of terrorist organizations and their use of technology, which is one of the areas we most need to combat them with.

So I would argue, we cannot perform that role or engage in that fight against terror effectively without this funding.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you.

Also, the fiscal year 2017 budget request cuts UASI and the State Homeland Security Grant Program collectively by over \$.5 billion. Port and transit security grants would also be cut. There is no question that those programs yield real security benefits. Meanwhile, the budget requests \$49 million for counter violent extremism grants, though we have no idea what the program will look like or what benefit it will provide.

In light of these uncertainties, what activities do you think CVE grants should support, and how can these programs be carried out in a way that avoids profiling?

Mr. DE BLASIO. Thank you for the question, Congressman.

We do support the notion of the countering violent extremism program. We believe that it is more important than ever for government at all levels to engage all communities, build partnerships, share information, create an atmosphere that is more positive and hopeful than it may have been in the past.

We do not support profiling of any form. As you know, we have changed the policies of the previous administration to both more effectively police—because we do not believe those policies were the best way to counter terror—but also because if we create inadvertently a rift with any of our communities, it actually impedes the flow of information from the grassroots.

So I want to make sure it is understood, we feel this about all communities because there is different types of challenges and threats and different types of violence that could emanate from a variety of communities. But the common link is establish deeper communication and respect, bring law enforcement and community closer together, don't create a rift, and figure out other things we have to do through Government, whether it is in terms of education or efforts directed at young people to lift them up that actually increase the security of everyone.

So that core philosophy we believe in, like you, we look forward to more elaboration of the concept from the Federal Government, but we believe in the philosophy.

Mr. PAYNE. Okay. Thank you.

I had another question, but in interest of time, I will yield back and hopefully we have another opportunity to ask questions.

Mr. DONOVAN. The gentleman yields back.

The Chair will now recognize other Members of the subcommittee for questions they may wish to ask the witness. In accordance with committee rules and practice, I plan to recognize Members who were present at the start of the hearing by seniority on the subcommittee. Those coming in later will be recognized in the order they arrive.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from New York, Mr. King.

Mr. KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Again, Mayor, thank you for your testimony here today. As someone who was born and raised in New York City, my father was in the NYPD for over 30 years, I really tremendously admire the work that is done by all of the agencies, especially NYPD emergency management, my good friend Joe Esposito there; FDNY, Lieutenant Nigro. The job that you have is one which I don't think any of us envy. Maybe it is great to march in the parades, but other than that it's, you know, a lot of abuse and a lot of attention.

Even though Miss Rice and I represent Long Island, the fact is, people should realize that Nassau and Suffolk Counties, as well as Westchester are all part of the UASI. It is New York City, Nassau, Suffolk, Westchester, even parts of Rockland, and also, we have to closely coordinate with northern New Jersey. Whenever you go to any of the mock drills they have, you see how much coordination is involved.

Also, as you said, New York City and the region, New York City region is the No. 1 target in the country. It is important for the rest of the country to realize the tremendous expense involved in that. I mean, you have well over 1,000 police officers working full time in various types of counterterrorism. They also work with the State police, Nassau and Suffolk police, working with the FBI and the JTTF, and it is a constant, really, state of war almost, at least a state of preventing a war. So any cuts at all really can be catastrophic to New Yorkers.

I have been on this committee since the start, and I don't think there is any one method or any one line of defense that is going to stop an attack. What you need are multiple defenses out there, and you certainly train and hope that at least one of those is going to work, is going to stop the next attackers. You don't know where it is going to be coming from; it could be Times Square; it could be the Brooklyn Bridge; it could be the subway system; it could be anywhere.

So I just think all of us on the committee should stand as one, not as Republicans or Democrats or from New York or from the rest of the country, realizing how vital this is that the funding be continued. Also, I think it is important to realize that the NYPD or the FDNY or emergency management, when they are out there doing the job, that is really not a New York City function. That is the Federal Government's responsibility to protect local governments and local municipalities from being attacked. That is a Federal responsibility.

So if you are carrying out a Federal responsibility, at the very least you should be compensated for the work that you do. This isn't a gift. This isn't charity you are getting. I mean, you are doing the work that the Federal Government should be doing. The fact is, you are better equipped to do it in many ways.

But, again, to be shortchanging you at a time like this, when the ISIS threats have never been greater, when we still have al-Qaeda, we still have al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, and we have the self-starters. We have the people at home sitting in their apartment with the computer who, you know, can become radicalized.

So I am just going to give you the opportunity to expand on how essential it is that all of the city departments and the neighboring locales receive the funding they need on homeland security.

Mr. DE BLASIO. Thank you very much, Congressman.

Congressman, let me also thank you at the outset, and all of your colleagues. I know you played a particularly crucial role in finally passing the Zadroga Act. I want to thank you for first responders in New York and all over America and so many people who were affected by 9/11. That was such a profound victory. Thank you for your leadership.

Mr. KING. Thank you, Mayor.

Mr. DE BLASIO. You said it perfectly in that every single one of our officers at any given moment any day could be involved in counterterrorism activity. That means being aware that the smallest clue could lead to something much bigger, and that is why we put a big emphasis on training. So all of our officers are being trained to prepare for a variety of scenarios. That is why we need the active-shooter training, because instantly there may be a crisis. It is also why we emphasize technology, that now we are able with resources that we provide at a local level to, for example, put a description of a terrorist, an individual, out to all 36,000 officers instantly and now they are all at that moment looking for that individual. Or, again, an officer may see something on the ground that indicates the potential of a threat that then alerts everyone else to go into action.

So because we have been hit, we don't see this as an abstraction. We feel it very personally. We know this threat is very real because 20 times threats were attempted against us. We know that every one of our officers has to be vigilant at all times. So we will always pay our fair share, but I agree with your core point. For the Federal Government to step back and create a situation where a locality can't do all that is needed to protect against terror makes no sense at this moment in history.

It is such a pervasive threat that literally every one of our officers—and that extends, of course, to emergency management and fire as well—knows at any given moment they have to be involved not only in preventing but, God forbid, responding to an incident.

Mr. KING. Mr. Mayor, my time is expired. I just would like to add, I want to make sure we maintain the unity here today. I do have some differences with you and Mr. Payne on the whole issue of policing. But, again, you guys are doing a great job. Today is not the day to bring that up. I just want to again thank you for what is happening. Let's stay united today. We worked together on other issues. We will do it on this. I just want to put that on the record.

Mr. DE BLASIO. I thank you. My door is always open, Congressman.

Mr. KING. I know that as well. Thank you, Mayor. Thank you very much.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Mr. King.

The Chair now recognizes the Congresswoman from New York, Miss Rice.

Miss RICE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I just want to echo what my colleague Pete King just said. I think it is very clear the Federal Government is responsible for protecting the homeland. New York City is the prime target in the homeland, and it is really that simple.

So as someone who, like Pete, you know, whose district we share a border with the city, and as a former homicide prosecutor in Brooklyn, I just want to extend this committee's full appreciation to you, Mr. Mayor, and to Commissioner Bratton and the men and women of the NYPD. You have done an extraordinary job making the city safer under your watch, and that is a good thing for all of our nearby communities and for me personally, and for all of the members of the NYPD who happen to reside out on Long Island and in our district.

So I want to ask a question that I think goes to security both in the city and locally in my district. I am talking about the ongoing dispute between Apple and the Justice Department. I am troubled mostly by what I see as the unfortunately narrow stance that has emerged in what is and should be a complex debate.

As someone who cares more than anything about our security but also values deeply the privacy protections that allow us to live safely in the digital age, I wonder if the entrenched nature of this debate really does it justice. Does one side have to win and one side have to lose? Do we have to choose between being digitally safe or physically safe? Just your thoughts on that, Mr. Mayor.

Mr. DE BLASIO. Congresswoman, I think that is a fantastic question because I agree with you 100 percent. I think something has been missed here in this discussion. The companies involved, Apple and others, and their customers understandably want to protect their privacy, and that is an American value too.

But I have to say, I couldn't agree more with Director Comey and Commissioner Bratton and others who have said that if law enforcement doesn't have appropriate information to pursue terror threats and other violent crime, of course people will be literally physically endangered. So we can't have these two polar opposite sides staring at each other and not resolving the problem.

What I hope there can be found is a third way, if you will, wherein the Government has access to the information in a way that is provided voluntarily by these companies, obviously always with a court order and appropriate judicial process.

But I think the companies do owe it to the Nation to come up with a procedure for providing that information to law enforcement. I respect that they have some limitations that they are concerned about. I believe there is a reasonable process that can be determined to make sure that no piece of information that could stop violence is ever withheld, but at the same time respect privacy rights.

I believe there is a compromise that could be struck. I think it begins with the company stating their willingness to break out of the current paradigm and agree that they do have more power to help law enforcement, that it does not implicitly mean that they would be giving up privacy standards.

So that is what I hope we can all work on together, is a different approach that gets us to that very simple end goal, preventing violence.

Miss RICE. Couldn't agree with you more. The Chairman, one of our former colleagues, Cy Vance, came down here a year ago talking about just this whole encryption issue and what an obstacle it is to law enforcement, which is particularly problematic just given the daily threats that we face.

Just to go back to the money, so we are all talking about how much of a cut has been proposed. In a perfect world, what would you be asking for if the funds were—well, I shouldn't say the funds were unlimited because they are not, but maintain the status quo. Is that enough? Would you ask for an increase? Slight? Big? Give us some perspective.

Mr. DE BLASIO. Look, I will state the obvious: The first is to protect the consistent funding we have received, because we have depended on it. We have bluntly assumed it would be consistent given the environment we are all working in. I think we clearly want to go farther and continue to innovate. I talked to you about some of the areas that we need to do more on in terms of technology, for example.

So additional resources would help us do better. It is as simple as that. We want to continue this extraordinary work of preventing terrorists. It is in the interest of the entire Nation. So clearly, more resources would mean more technology, more training, more ability to stop terror, but at minimum, keeping consistent with previous funding.

I also want to say on the previous point, I thank you for standing up on the issue of the information that law enforcement needs. You understand as a former prosecutor. But I do ask of you and your colleagues, please stand up for all of us at the local level who are trying to prevent violence and stand up for law enforcement. I would like to believe this would be an area of bipartisan consensus. Let's work together to help those companies find an outcome that they can live with but that still prevents violence.

Miss RICE. Agreed. Thank you very much, Mr. Mayor.

I yield back.

Mr. DONOVAN. The gentlewoman yields back.

My colleague, Ranking Member Payne, had another question if, Mayor, you have time to entertain.

Mr. DE BLASIO. Of course. Yes.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mayor de Blasio, I know that this isn't an issue specifically within the scope of today's hearing, but I believe that it is related. First responders in my district, as well in New York, rely on T-band spectrum for radio communications. Unfortunately, the legislation that authorized FirstNet requires eleven jurisdictions, including

ours, to relinquish the spectrum by 2023, unless Congress acts to extend the deadline.

Can you share some of the concerns New York City's first responders have about their emergency communication capabilities in light of the deadline and the associated cost of transitioning off the T-band?

Mr. DE BLASIO. Thank you, Congressman. Yes, I share your view. T-band is a critical part of the work we do in terms of emergency communications. Disrupting that reality could prove to be very dangerous.

We have, as you know, a very highly-developed apparatus in New York City to protect our people and protect, again, the 60 million people who visit every year. It has to do with a number of agencies constantly working together in a very crowded, complex environment. The current communications structure allows us to do that work.

If Congress doesn't act and we have to relinquish the current approach, we fear a situation that is really disruptive. I think this is a case where there should be real care taken to not upset something that is working currently. We all appreciate innovation. We all appreciate opportunities to do things differently, but not if they undermine something that is working currently and don't replace it in an appropriate manner.

So right now, I would ask that, with your support, ask that the Congress act to reverse the T-band give-back, because we do fear the consequences otherwise.

Mr. PAYNE. Absolutely. You know, we talk about supporting our first responders and then we find circumstances, situations where something like this potentially could occur. I mean, we have a saying in Newark: "If you are going to be about it, stay about it." So to change and disrupt that is very troubling. So we want to continue to support our first responders. We expect a lot of them and they do the job, and so we need to give them the support they deserve.

Thank you.

Mr. DE BLASIO. Thank you very much.

Mr. DONOVAN. Mr. Mayor, I want to thank you for your valuable testimony and for clarifying for the Members of this committee the hollow excuses of the administration that there is \$600 million that New York City hasn't spent. I guess the administration doesn't know about bidding process, VENDEXing, and everything else that we have to do back home to assure that the quality of the product we are purchasing and the preparation and the training that we need takes time.

As one of the 8.5 million people who lives in the city that you lead, I thank you for all you are doing to protect me and my family.

Mr. KING. Mr. Chairman, could I make one final statement?

Mr. DONOVAN. You sure can. You are my mentor. You can.

Mr. KING. Mayor, you generously gave me credit for being involved in the Zadroga 9/11 Act. Miss Rice was also involved. But I know you think Dan Donovan is such a nice guy. As soon as that bill was passed, he said, King, you were here for 14 years, you couldn't get it done. He was here 4 months and it passed. So he

is taking all the credit for Zadroga. I think that should be on the record.

Mr. DONOVAN. I would have arrived earlier if I knew he needed the help, Mayor.

Mr. DE BLASIO. That is right. You just should have asked, right. Thank you, Congressman.

Chairman, thank you for your very generous statement. I just want to thank you for your leadership. As I said, it is essential to the people of New York City that you are in this role, and obviously, for all the people of this country. I want to thank you for your leadership.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Mayor.

This panel is dismissed. The clerk will prepare the witness table for the second panel.

Again, we thank you, Mr. Mayor, for all of your participation in this hearing.

Mr. DE BLASIO. Thank you.

[Recess.]

Mr. DONOVAN. I would like to welcome our second panel to today's hearing and thank them for their participation.

Mr. Jim Butterworth serves as the director of the Georgia Emergency Management Agency/Homeland Security, a position which he was appointed to in January 2015. Prior to his appointment, Mr. Butterworth served for 4 years as the adjutant general of Georgia. Previously, he served as a State Senator representing the 50th District in northeast Georgia. Mr. Butterworth is testifying on behalf of the National Emergency Management Association.

Welcome, sir.

Mr. BUTTERWORTH. Thank you, sir.

Mr. DONOVAN. Chief Rhoda Mae Kerr serves as the fire chief of the Austin Fire Department and previously served in the same position with the city of Little Rock, Arkansas. She was also the deputy fire chief in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Chief Kerr is the president and chair of the board of directors of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, and she is testifying in that capacity today.

Welcome, Chief.

Chief KERR. Thank you.

Mr. DONOVAN. George Turner was appointed as the 23rd chief of police for the city of Atlanta on July 9, 2010. He is a 32-year veteran of the Atlanta Police Department and has worked in all areas of the department, including the uniformed division and investigations. Chief Turner previously served as the deputy chief of the support services division, which consists of the corporate services section, 9/11 communications center, information services section, and training academy. Chief Turner also serves as the second vice president of the Major Cities Chiefs Association, and he is testifying in that capacity today.

Welcome, Chief.

Mike Sena is the director of the Northern California Regional Intelligence Center, the fusion center in the San Francisco Bay Area. He currently serves as the president of the National Fusion Center Association, which represents the 78 State and locally-owned and -operated fusion centers across the country. Mr. Sena is testifying on behalf of the National Fusion Center Association.

Welcome, sir.

Mr. SENA. Thank you.

Mr. DONOVAN. I now yield to the Ranking Member to introduce our final witness.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is my pleasure today to welcome Sergeant Greg Kierce, who serves as Jersey City's director of Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. Sergeant Kierce's professional background encompasses more than 30 years of law enforcement. He maintains a successful record of achieving law enforcement objectives, including reduced crime, greater public safety and security, and stronger relationships with the local community. He has demonstrated a proven ability to lead, coach, and direct law enforcement professionals to maximize the productivity and enhance workplace efficiency through process improvement.

I want to thank you for the time that you have allowed us to have you come down here before the subcommittee, and I look forward to your testimony.

Mr. Chairman, just before I yield back, for full disclosure, there is a possibility that Chief Kerr taught me to swim as a child at Camp Kiamesha back in New Jersey. So I just wanted to put that on the record. I yield back.

Mr. DONOVAN. The gentleman yields back.

Chief, we are not going to hold you to his inability to swim.

Welcome, Sergeant.

Thank you, Mr. Payne.

The Chair now recognizes Mr. Butterworth for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF JIM BUTTERWORTH, DIRECTOR, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY/HOMELAND SECURITY, STATE OF GEORGIA, TESTIFYING ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION**

Mr. BUTTERWORTH. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Payne, and distinguished Members of the subcommittee, my name is Jim Butterworth, and I am the director of the Georgia Emergency Management Agency and Office of Homeland Security. I am also the homeland security advisor to Governor Nathan Deal.

I am here on behalf of the National Emergency Management Agency or NEMA. I appreciate the opportunity to come before you today to discuss FEMA preparedness grants and the specific impact proposed cuts in the fiscal year 2017 budget could have on States across the country.

As stated, the administration's fiscal year 2017 budget proposals include significant cuts to many of FEMA's grant programs that support State and local disaster response. These grants have been used to enact many programs that did not previously exist in the scale needed, if at all, to address the new and ever-changing threats facing our Nation. It is impossible to imagine a scenario in which the significant proposed cuts do not affect the operational capabilities at the State and local level.

The threat of terror attacks here in the United States continues to evolve and increase. Chattanooga, Fort Hood, Boston, and now San Bernardino, all illustrate the need for continued investments. The growing number of novel events that can take unexpected

turns has prompted greater involvement by emergency management for its capability, experience, and flexibility to deal with issues as they emerge. While the country has made significant strides in our understanding of and preparedness for these events, this is not the time to scale back these efforts.

In Georgia, State homeland security grants have been utilized to develop and grow specialized programs, fund training and exercise, and build equipment caches that were beyond the reach of State and local governments to fund in traditional methods.

I have included several examples in my written testimony that illustrate the numerous programs that have been implemented in my State with support from these grants. These are only a small portion of the resources within Georgia that rely on homeland security grant funds for continued funding to maintain and sustain the capability that has been built in our State.

The issue we now face is that beginning with the decline seen in fiscal year 2011 cycle, many of the programs that once received annual funding are now only receiving funding on a rotating basis, roughly every 2 or 3 years. If funding were to drop further below their current levels, as they do in the current proposed President's budget, we would begin to see a contraction in the needed capability we have been able to achieve in Georgia.

In addition to the proposed cuts to the State homeland security grants, Georgia, like many States, would also feel the effects of the reduction of funds provided through the Urban Area Security Initiative, as has been discussed already.

GEMA/Homeland Security works in close conjunction with the Metro Atlanta, UASI, and the separate but critical funding allotment they receive allows GEMA/Homeland Security to leverage more of a traditional State homeland security grant funding to the benefit of lesser at-risk, yet still critical cities and regions across the State, multiplying the effectiveness of both grant programs in enhancing the capability of both urban and suburban public safety.

Three final points I would like to make: First, impacts to response and recovery capabilities do not stop at a State's border. Through mutual aid facilitated by the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, or EMAC, any decrease in funding reverberates across the Nation. This year, the administration proposes a 56 percent cut to the very platform that supports the sharing of resources across the Nation in times of crisis.

Using EMAC, much of the assets and capability built with homeland security grant funding is readily deployable to support emergency or disaster operations throughout the country. Funded at \$2 million, this system saves the Government money and is the backbone of a truly National response and recovery network.

We truly appreciate the administration's support for a fully-funded emergency management performance grant program. EMPG is the only source of Federal funding directed to State and local governments for planning, training, exercises, and key professional expertise for all-hazards emergency preparedness. EMPG stands as the beacon of Congressional commitment to ensuring communities and States are more ready to prepare, mitigate, respond, and recover from any number of emergencies and disasters.

Last, Federal funding for homeland security grant programs has decreased by more than 75 percent since the program's inception in 2003, yet the structure remains unchanged. Declining budgets at all levels of government have increased the need to leverage resources and to facilitate cross-jurisdictional coordination. We can no longer afford to operate in separate silos. Given these on-going challenges and the current fiscal environment, the need for reform of these preparedness grants has never been more urgent.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to address these critical issues in the emergency management community. It speaks volumes that your first hearing as Chairman of the subcommittee would be dedicated to the critical fiscal challenges facing the emergency management and homeland security community in these uncertain times.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here and to testify before the committee.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Butterworth follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JIM BUTTERWORTH

MARCH 15, 2016

INTRODUCTION

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Payne, and distinguished Members of the subcommittee. Mr. Chairman, I do want to take a moment to congratulate you on your new position on the subcommittee and thank Representative McSally for her commitment to emergency management and public safety. We are looking forward to working with you in this new capacity.

As stated, my name is Jim Butterworth, and I am the director of the Georgia Emergency Management Agency/Homeland Security. I am here on behalf of the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA), which represents the State emergency management directors of the 50 States, territories, and District of Columbia. NEMA's members, many of whom, like me, also serve as Homeland Security Advisors, are prepared to deal with an ever-changing and increasingly complex set of challenges that test traditional approaches to natural and man-made disasters. I appreciate the chance to come before you today to discuss FEMA Preparedness Grants at large and the specific impact proposed cuts in the fiscal year 2017 budget could have on States across the country.

PROPOSED CUTS THREATEN PROGRESS SINCE 9/11

In early February, the administration's fiscal year 2017 budget proposal was released and was met with concern from State, Tribal, and local emergency managers and homeland security officials. Significant cuts are proposed to vital FEMA Preparedness Grants. Overall, these programs would see a cut of 44 percent below fiscal year 2016 enacted levels. The Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) Program would be cut by 45 percent, from \$600 million for fiscal year 2016 to \$330 million in fiscal year 2017. The State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) would be cut by 57 percent, from \$467 million to \$200 million. Public Transportation Security Assistance would be cut by 15 percent to \$85,000 next year while Port Security grants are cut by 7 percent to \$93 million. It is impossible to imagine a scenario in which those cuts, as significant as they are, do not, over time, affect the operational capabilities at the State and local level.

The proposed cuts are incongruous with the current threat environment. The threat of terror attacks here in the United States continue to evolve and increase. While the country has made significant strides in our understanding of and preparedness for these events, this isn't the time to scale back those efforts. Chattanooga, Fort Hood, Boston, and now San Bernardino all illustrate the need for continued investments in strategic priorities. The Department of Homeland Security recognized the need for funding aimed at addressing CVE and coordinated/complex terror attacks through a new grant program funding in the fiscal year 2016 Omnibus. By proposing similar funding in 2017, it is clear this investment is not a fleeting effort and we are looking forward to engaging with DHS and FEMA to better

understand how that funding will be distributed, what will be eligible, and how success will be measured.

Emergency managers today, at all levels, must be prepared to deal with an ever-changing and increasingly complex set of challenges that test traditional approaches to disaster and emergency preparedness and response. The growing number of novel events that can take unexpected turns has prompted greater involvement by emergency management for its capability, experience, and flexibility to deal with issues as they emerge. Regardless of the amount of funding you push towards new priorities, however, the systems, structures, personnel, and capabilities built and sustained through years of dedicated investments must not be neglected.

#### *Homeland Security Grant Program*

Since the inception of the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP), NEMA has maintained support of these grants as critical resources to help State and local governments build and sustain capabilities to address various threats and hazards. As FEMA describes it, this grant program plays an important role in the implementation of the National Preparedness System (NPS) by supporting the building, sustainment, and delivery of core capabilities essential to achieving the National Preparedness Goal (NPG) of a secure and resilient Nation.

With the introduction and evolution of the Threat Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) process, States are becoming increasingly aware of their risks and creating partnerships with all critical stakeholders involved in addressing these challenges. As the risk assessment process improves, measuring progress towards common goals improves as well. The current process isn't perfect and the National Preparedness Report will continue to be refined over time.

In Georgia, SHSGP is crucial in supporting investments that help us in reaching the NPG and that have now been recognized as best-practice activities. The challenge we now face is ensuring these programs are funded at a level that allows them to continue to serve and protect the State as threats to homeland security and critical infrastructure increase and evolve. This challenge is only compounded by the dramatic decrease in SHSGP funds the State now receives compared to past years. Our funding for fiscal year 2015 is more than an 87 percent decrease from the amount (\$54 million) we received in the highest year of funding. The following are an example of programs in Georgia that utilized the SHSGP funding over several grant cycles to enact many needed and noteworthy programs that did not previously exist in the scale needed, if at all, to address the new threats facing our Nation:

- Fifteen multi-jurisdictional regional Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams, which give State-wide coverage for complicated technical rescues (ex: collapsed buildings and structures, wide-spread building and dwelling damage response), and provide command-and-control capability of disaster response assets for large-scale natural disasters or terroristic activity.
- Eight K-9 teams that assist in the recovery of the remains of those who die in natural disasters or terrorist events.
- Nine law enforcement teams that are trained and equipped to respond to an event where the involvement of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosives (CBRNE) would bar unprotected law enforcement from entering the scene.
- 52 Hazardous Materials Response Teams (HAZMAT) that enable local fire departments to detect, safely respond to, and rapidly mitigate extraordinary chemical events.
- 16 Bomb Disposal Units (BDU) and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) response teams, to handle the rapidly-increasing threat of bomb and explosive attacks across the State.
- 41 Bomb Dog Teams, to enable schools, colleges, Government buildings and special events to be safely checked and rapidly cleared of suspected explosives.
- Logistical support for the Georgia Information Sharing and Analysis Center (GISAC) facility, along with salary and IT support for 5 terrorism analysts and 2 Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) coordinators.
- 19 jurisdictions in the Georgia Terrorism Information Program (GTIP) program, that enables local law enforcement in the highest-threat urban areas of the State to communicate and collaborate on terrorist threat activity.
- Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources (CI/KR) Protection Team—a small team of GEMA/HS employees dedicated to providing site surveys and technical security assistance to identified CI/KR sites in Georgia.
- 70 local Citizen Corps teams, that have proven valuable in preparing local citizens to be more self-reliant in the first hours after a disaster or terrorist event, thus lessening the burden of first responders.

- The Georgia Interoperability Network (GIN), where 179 local and disparate public safety radio systems have been given a level of interoperability across the State not before possible.

#### *Urban Area Security Initiative*

The Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant program is designed to distribute Federal grant funding to an urban region composed of multiple local governments and first responder agencies rather than a single city. Our most critical urban centers are not islands unto themselves and often rely on infrastructure and support mechanisms far outside their city's political boundaries. According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the purpose of the UASI program is to support regional collaboration among local jurisdictions and emergency response organizations in order to build and sustain preparedness capabilities vital to preventing, protecting, mitigating against, responding to, and recovering from acts of terrorism. This regional approach to preparedness is an efficient and effective use of Government funding as it discourages an individualistic pursuit of equipment and encourages collaboration in training and exercising.

In the State of Georgia, we work with the Metro Atlanta UASI, to further the goals and objectives of DHS and the State in building an enhanced and sustainable capacity to prevent, protect, respond to, and recover from disasters and threats or acts of terrorism in the densely-populated and critically-vital metropolitan Atlanta area. GEMA/HS serves as a pass-through for DHS grant funding that supports the Metro Atlanta UASI's activities. Its governance is executed in the form of a senior policy group which consists of the mayor of the city of Atlanta (who serves as chairman) and the chairpersons of the county commissions, which make up its jurisdiction. The Metro Atlanta UASI was originally comprised of the city of Atlanta, Fulton County, and DeKalb County; however, in 2009, its jurisdiction expanded to include Clayton, Cobb, and Gwinnett Counties to better encompass the region and leverage the capabilities being built and sustained with traditional SHSGP funds.

The separate but critical funding allotment for the Metro Atlanta UASI allows GEMA/HS to leverage more of the traditional SHSGP funding to the benefit of other lesser at-risk, yet still critical, cities and regions across the State—multiplying the effectiveness of both grant programs in enhancing the capability of both urban and suburban public safety.

The Metro Atlanta UASI has built a great deal of capability and capacity with funds from past grant cycles to address the unique homeland security needs of this high-threat, high-density urban area, and to assist the surrounding local governments in the Atlanta region in building and sustaining their vital public safety capabilities. However, funding levels for recent years represents a dramatic reduction in funds compared to what was previously made available. Over the past few years, the Metro Atlanta UASI received approximately \$5 million annually in UASI-specific grant funds, compared to a high of more than \$18 million in 2006. These extensive cuts in funding mean that the UASI can only maintain and sustain existing programs, training, and equipment; it can no longer make new investments or expand outside the region. Any further reductions will cause a cascading effect on both grant programs, as established programs could no longer be continued at the basic maintenance levels they are at now. If we were the target of a terroristic attack or if struck by a major disaster, failure to sustain these vital programs could have catastrophic effects on the ability of the region to properly protect the infrastructure, economy, and the local populace so critical to our State and Nation.

#### MUTUAL AID SUPPORTS NATIONAL RESPONSE CAPABILITY

As explained above, cuts to critical preparedness grant programs impact individual States in substantial ways. Impacts to response and recovery capabilities, however, do not stop at a State's borders. Through mutual aid, facilitated by the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), any decrease in funding for building homeland security and emergency management capacity reverberates across the Nation. EMAC was the first National disaster-relief compact ratified by Congress since the Civil Defense and Disaster Compact of 1950. Since ratification in 1996, every State, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have enacted legislation to become EMAC members. All resources in a State can deploy through EMAC (fire-hazmat, law enforcement, public health, medical, mass care, animal response, emergency medical services, National Guard, public works, search & rescue, transportation, human services, engineering, agriculture & forestry, emergency/incident management).

Coupled with cuts to preparedness grants, the administration proposed a massive cut to the very platform that supports the sharing of resources across the Nation in times of crisis. FEMA's proposed 56% cut of funding to EMAC would effectively

roll EMAC back to 2003–2007 administrative levels. The 2008 increase in administrative funds was a direct result of the post-Katrina report completed in 2007 by the Government Accountability Office (GAO). Since that time, the EMAC structure has matured and evolved, and has played a crucial role in disaster response to thousands of events.

While the primary focus on EMAC training is inter-State mutual aid, EMAC is built upon a State's intra-State mutual aid program and resource inventory. Nationally, States have been working with the resource providers to inventory their resources and capabilities for both intra-State and inter-State use and pre-plan the sharing of resources through EMAC, using the Threat Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) process to help identify resource shortfalls. The direct impacts of budget cuts on EMAC are easy to visualize but what is less obvious is the resounding impact these cuts would have across the Nation. The National Guard Bureau (NGB) has built their J–3 Operations and Defense Support for Civil Authority (DSCA) around the use of EMAC for the deployment of State National Guard resources between States. EMAC truly is the DSCA backbone within NGB. Without a strong EMAC interface the Guard would have a hard time both deploying resources timely and efficiently thus delaying vital resources to disaster-affected areas.

NORTHCOM Director of Military Support (DOMS) process also relies on the EMAC process. DOMS is the Department of Defense's representative on the Catastrophic Disaster Response Group (CDRG). The CDRG is the National-level coordinating group that addresses policy issues and support requirements during a disaster, emergency, and/or terrorist event from NORTHCOM.

As this committee knows, all assets supported in part or entirely with fiscal year 2016 Homeland Security Grant Program funding that will be distributed this year must be readily deployable to support emergency or disaster operations through EMAC. To ensure a "National" system for use of that equipment EMAC is the only solution. The proposed budget cut to EMAC would be devastating for this essential program that facilitates efficient and effective resource sharing across the Nation.

#### BUILDING CAPACITY WITH EMPG

While NEMA is concerned with the cuts to critical preparedness grant programs like SHSGP and UASI, we did want to highlight a grant program that continues to be invaluable to the emergency management community. States and locals build capacity and enhance their capability to respond to disasters when they utilize the Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG). The fiscal year 2017 proposal requests sustained funding for this program at \$350 million.

EMPG is the only source of Federal funding directed to State and local governments for planning, training, exercises, and key professional expertise for all-hazards emergency preparedness. The money is often used to conduct risk and hazard assessments and support emergency operations centers which are the coordination hubs for all disaster response. The program also provides public education and outreach, enhanced interoperable communications capabilities, and the ability to manage State-wide alerts and warnings.

For example, in fiscal year 2015, EMPG significantly contributed to, among other things, planning, exercising, and mutual aid efforts. In total, 1,707 State and 5,733 local plans were developed, maintained, or updated using EMPG funds. EMPG supported 1,143 State-wide and 4,756 local and Tribal workshops, drills, and functional full-scale exercises, which benefited 96,361 State and 447,707 local participants. Without a comprehensive exercise program to complement the training efforts, the preparedness cycle would be compromised. Support from EMPG is crucial in maintaining mutual aid efforts across the various levels of government. In fiscal year 2014, EMPG supported 6,453 local and Tribal and 4,819 State-wide mutual aid agreements, memorandums of understanding, and memorandums of agreement with neighboring jurisdictions, non-profit agencies, Volunteer Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADS), and the private sector.

Recipients of this grant continue demonstrating a strong commitment; for every dollar of Federal funds invested, at least that much is matched by both grantees and sub-grantees. In the absence of these funds, State and local governments would struggle to maintain the personnel or capabilities necessary to build and sustain an effective emergency management system. EMPG stands as the beacon of Congressional commitment to ensuring communities and States are more ready to prepare, mitigate, respond, and recover from any number of emergencies and disasters. EMPG does far more, however, than provide funds for planning, training, exercises, and communications. EMPG must continue to be strengthened and maintained through shared investments.

## GRANTS STRUCTURE OF THE FUTURE

Federal funding for homeland security grant programs has decreased by more than 75 percent since the program's inception in 2003, yet the structure remains unchanged. Congress has recognized this continuing disconnect and included language in annual appropriations bills as recently as fiscal year 2012 to push for "long-overdue" and "bold" reform of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) administration of its State and Local Programs. (House Report 112-91 accompanying the Fiscal Year 2012 Homeland Security Appropriations bill (H.R. 2017), part of Public Law 112-33; September 30, 2011)

Important improvements have been made to processes for assessing risk and strategic planning, but the current grant program design can no longer achieve the type of accountability Congress demands and support the preparedness capabilities our communities need. Given these on-going challenges and the current fiscal environment, the need for reform of these preparedness grant programs has never been more urgent. In the fiscal year 2013 budget, FEMA provided a proposal to consolidate grant programs into a new National Preparedness Grant Program (NPGP). While not a perfect proposal, it did succeed in fostering a dialogue on our enduring challenges with the suite of 16 separate preparedness grant programs. After unsuccessful attempts in 3 consecutive budget proposals, the administration did not include the proposal in their fiscal year 2017 proposal but some consolidation has occurred over time. The tenants of comprehensive reform, however, remain just as important as they were in 2012.

Since 2003, the grant programs have allocated more than \$40 billion to State and local governments to build and sustain preparedness capabilities. The successful outcomes supported by this investment must be acknowledged. At the same time, the need to better align these grant programs with today's fiscal realities and operational challenges must also be recognized. At their inception, the grant programs were required to address an unknown threat environment after September 11, 2001. More than \$4 billion in funding was made available through State and local preparedness grants in fiscal year 2003 alone. In addition to fiscal changes, the environment now incorporates the new "all-hazards" focus stemming from lessons learned after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and subsequent multi-State disasters. A key lesson from those events is the importance of intergovernmental collaboration and integrating preparedness planning and response activities to ensure unity of effort.

Declining budgets at all levels of Government have increased the need to leverage resources and facilitate cross-jurisdictional coordination. We can no longer afford to operate in separate silos. Unfortunately, the current suite of grant programs perpetuates such separations and no longer reflects on-going efforts to align State and local capabilities with National preparedness objectives.

Today's dynamic threat environment requires a grants program that prioritizes investments based on risk while maintaining State and local ability to sustain prior investments that support National goals. Grant programs must be flexible and agile to address changing hazards and ensure local investments synchronize with State-wide and regional priorities.

Duplicative reporting requirements and increased administrative burden under the current framework also diminish return on investment (ROI) as more time and money must be spent on grants administration and management. Comprehensive reform would better facilitate maximum efficiency of taxpayer dollars and better enable accurate measure of ROI over time. This flexibility with accountability can represent the face of these reformed grant programs. For only through comprehensive changes to the existing structures can we achieve a more effective preparedness program for States and locals.

## CONCLUSION

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to address these issues critical to the emergency management community. This committee regularly affirms support for ensuring preparedness for our Nation's vulnerabilities against all hazards. It speaks volumes, that your first hearing as Chairman of this committee would be dedicated to the critical fiscal challenges facing the emergency management and homeland security community in these uncertain times.

Regardless of our country's fiscal situation, physical security, and economic security are not mutually exclusive. Emergency managers have been absorbing budget cuts at the State level for years and understand they must do more with less on a consistent basis. Under the current risk stature, however, reducing available funds under the State Homeland Security Grant Program could reverse much of the progress our Nation spent decades building.

As you develop the fiscal year 2017 budget for the Department of Homeland Security, we encourage you to utilize our membership as a resource and continue efforts to build a strong and robust emergency management baseline in our country. Together, we will carry on the initiatives so thoughtfully developed and supported by this committee over the years.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of NEMA and appreciate your continued partnership.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Mr. Butterworth. The Chair now recognizes Chief Kerr.

**STATEMENT OF RHODA MAE KERR, FIRE CHIEF, CITY OF AUSTIN FIRE DEPARTMENT, AUSTIN, TEXAS, TESTIFYING ON BEHALF OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS**

Chief KERR. Good morning, Chairman Donovan, Ranking Member Payne, and Members of the subcommittee. I am Chief Rhoda Mae Kerr of the Austin Fire Department. I also am president and chair of the board of the International Association of Fire Chiefs. I thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the fire and emergency services.

The IAFC is greatly concerned by the Draconian cuts to FEMA's grant programs in the fiscal year 2017 budget proposal. We also oppose attempts to convert the AFG and SAFER grant programs into terrorism preparedness programs. In the wake of an evolving terrorist threat, now is not the time to break a system that works.

The American taxpayers have spent more than \$40 billion since 9/11 on grant programs to improve the Nation's preparedness and response system. Overall, this funding has been spent wisely to make the Nation safer. By using the State Homeland Security Grant and the UASI programs, State and local governments have been able to develop terrorism preparedness capabilities that did not exist before 9/11. Local jurisdictions have used these grant funds to build and staff intelligence fusion centers, develop mass casualty response units, and construct regional interoperable communication networks. We would not have had the funding for these projects without Federal assistance.

In Austin, we were able to use FEMA-preparedness grants to fund annual CBRNE exercises. These exercises brought together all stakeholders: Fire, EMS, law enforcement, public health, city management, private sector, Federal and State partners, surrounding jurisdictions, et cetera. We were able to learn together how to respond to a potentially catastrophic threat. Also, we were able to make the necessary changes to improve our planning and operations for the future.

Federal funding is important. As Austin demonstrated, Federal grants incentivize regional cooperation and coordination among all the Federal, State, local, and private-sector stakeholders. These grants also support the implementation of NIMS, which allows multiple agencies to communicate and function effectively. The incident scene should not be the first time for everyone to meet. We are better prepared for responding to a future terroristic attack due to the planning and training supported by the State Homeland Security Grant Program and UASI.

The AFG and SAFER grant programs helped localities prepare for all hazards. The AFG grant program provides matching grants

for equipment and training. The SAFER grant program provides support for firefighter staffing. Both of these programs have improved the operational capabilities of fire departments across the Nation. When a major disaster or catastrophe occurs, the Nation relies upon neighboring local fire departments to provide critical mutual aid.

As Federal funding for FEMA's grant program has declined over the years, our main focus has been on sustaining the National preparedness and response system. That is why the IFC members are concerned by the proposed cuts in the President's fiscal year 2017 budget. The budget proposal would cut the State Homeland Security Grant Program by more than half, the UASI program would receive a 45 percent cut. Even the AFG and SAFER programs each would be cut by \$10 million from last year's appropriation. These grant programs are achieving their goals, and it is unwise to cut them. We must realize that the proposed cuts would occur in a dangerous and evolving threat environment.

Last year, the Nation witnessed terrorist incidents in Garland, Texas; Chattanooga, Tennessee; and San Bernardino, California. Each of these attacks involved different tactics and techniques. FEMA preparedness grants help us to analyze threat information at the State and local level and develop capabilities for these new threats. We are also concerned by the budget proposal's effort to convert the AFG and SAFER grant programs into terrorism response programs.

These programs are aimed at helping fire and EMS departments prepare for incidents as diverse as structural fires, HAZMAT incidents, wild land fires, and even acts of terrorism. We ask that Congress protect the funding for the State Homeland Security Grant Program and UASI program by at least maintaining the fiscal year 2016 appropriations level of \$467 million and \$600 million, respectively. For the AFG and SAFER grant programs, we ask that you fund each program at \$405 million, the fiscal year 2011 level. We also ask that Congress reauthorizes the AFG and SAFER grant programs before they expire in 2018.

Overall, the IAFC can attest to the fact that FEMA's grant programs play an important role in developing and sustaining the Nation's preparedness system. We ask that Congress maintain its support for these programs.

Thank you again for the opportunity to explain the importance of these programs to America's fire and emergency service, and I look forward to answering any questions that you may have. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Chief Kerr follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RHODA MAE KERR

MARCH 15, 2016

Good morning, Chairman Donovan, Ranking Member Payne, and Members of the subcommittee. I am Rhoda Mae Kerr, fire chief of the Austin Fire Department, and president and chair of the Board of Directors of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC). The IAFC represents more than 11,000 leaders of the Nation's fire, rescue, and emergency medical services. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the effects of cutting the preparedness grant programs at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

It is important to emphasize to the American taxpayers that the more than \$40 billion spent on FEMA grants have been used to develop a strong National preparedness and response system. From the fire and emergency service's perspective, I would like to highlight a few grant programs with the most relevance. The State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) and the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) help local fire and EMS departments to prepare for potential acts of terrorism by supporting planning, training, and equipment. The Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) grant program<sup>1</sup> (including the SAFER and Fire Prevention and Safety grants) help fire departments improve their baseline emergency response capability.

The IAFC is greatly concerned by the administration's fiscal year 2017 budget proposal. It would include Draconian cuts to the SHSGP and UASI program. Also, it would attempt to re-classify the AFG programs as homeland security grants. Additionally, the new budget would remove many of the separate accounts funding these programs and combine them under a new "Federal Assistance" account. Considering the growing threat of coordinated, complex attacks sponsored by foreign terrorist groups, we ask Congress to reject the administration's budget proposal. Now is not the time to break a system that works.

It is important to point out that the majority of the investments in preparedness are still made by local communities. As Federal grant funding continues to decline, local emergency response agencies will have to focus on sustaining our existing capabilities and using Federal funds wisely by learning from other grantees' past experience.

#### SUCSESSES OF THE CURRENT DHS GRANT SYSTEM

The current suite of FEMA preparedness grants are critical to building a National preparedness system. The great success of the Federal homeland security grant programs is that they provide an incentive for Federal, State, Tribal, territorial, and local jurisdictions to work together. By planning, training, and conducting exercises together, local fire chiefs, police chiefs, sheriffs, public health officials, emergency managers and State and Federal officials are able and ready to work together when an incident happens. This pre-planning and coordination prevents confusion during an incident and directly saves lives.

In Austin, UASI-funded training brought together all of the regional stakeholders, including smaller neighboring jurisdictions, surrounding volunteer fire departments, the U.S. Attorney's office, public health officials, and the city manager for annual exercises in response to mock chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or explosive (CBRNE) events. The UASI funds allowed the Austin region to complete training that it would not otherwise have been able to do, and brought all of the stakeholders together to learn how to work together in a catastrophic situation. In addition, Austin was able to purchase props and develop expertise with the initial Federal funding, so that the region could continue to host these annual exercises after the UASI funding expired.

The SHSGP and UASI grants also help local jurisdictions develop capabilities for responding to terrorist attacks. In the National Capital Region (NCR), UASI funds have been used to help the area prepare for a future mass casualty incident. The NCR used its funds to develop 8 Medical Ambulance Buses and Mass Casualty units, which can each transport 40 patients and treat up to 100 patients. In addition, learning from the lessons of the response to the 9/11 attack on the Pentagon, the NCR also used UASI funds to develop a patient tracking system. This system allows EMS personnel to use hand-held devices to scan a victim's triage tag, enter basic information about the patient's identity and pre-hospital care, and transport the patient to the appropriate area hospital.

In Clark County, Nevada, SHSGP, and UASI funds are used to support fusion center activities within the Southern Nevada Counterterrorism Center. These activities include suspicious activity analysis and reporting; evaluation and support of special events; multi-agency intelligence and information sharing; and the hardware and software to support these programs. The Federal funding also supports community outreach and education programs like "See Something, Say Something" campaigns; training and exercises; and the development of public/private partnerships to help protect the region.

These preparedness grants also support regional coordination. Jurisdictions that receive FEMA grants must certify that they are compliant with the National Incident Management System (NIMS). NIMS is based on the fire service's incident command system and allows multiple agencies to communicate and function effectively

<sup>1</sup> Popularly known as the "FIRE" grant program.

during an incident response. The need for effective NIMS implementation is vital, especially in the case of a complex, coordinated attack like the one in Paris which took place in multiple locations. As Austin's fire chief, I have found the Federal grant funds to be an effective catalyst for helping Federal, State, and local stakeholders to plan, train, and conduct threat-based exercises together. During the first hours of a major incident response, it is important that all responding agencies are familiar with each other and basic command-and-control functions to ensure an effective response and prevent confusion.

I also would like to highlight the important role that the AFG program plays in improving the Nation's preparedness. The AFG program uses a merit-based, peer review process to provide matching grants to local fire and EMS departments for equipment and training. The SAFER grant program uses a similar process to provide matching grants for hiring career firefighters and helping to recruit and retain volunteer firefighters. Here are some examples from the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) *Third Needs Assessment of the U.S. Fire Service* of how the AFG and SAFER grants are helping local fire and EMS departments:

- 51 percent of all fire departments that answered the NFPA survey do not have enough portable radios to equip all emergency responders on a shift. This percentage is down from 77 percent in 2001 and 75 percent in 2005.
- 48 percent of all fire departments that are responsible for EMS have not formally trained all of their personnel involved in EMS. This percentage is down from 54 percent in 2001 and 53 percent in 2005.
- 51 percent of all fire departments cannot equip all firefighters on a shift with self-contained breathing apparatus. This percentage is down from 70 percent in 2001 and 60 percent in 2005.
- 65 percent of all fire departments that are responsible for hazardous materials response have not formally trained all of their personnel involved in hazmat response. This percentage is down from 73 percent in 2001 and 71 percent in 2005.

As you can see, FEMA's homeland security grants are meeting their goal in providing training and building capabilities that local fire and EMS departments could not otherwise develop. It is important to recognize that Federal homeland security grant funding has decreased over the years. Currently, preparedness grants like the UASI and SHSGP programs are focused on sustaining existing capabilities. Meanwhile, the AFG and SAFER programs have shown remarkable progress in improving baseline emergency response capabilities, but a lot of work remains.

#### THE ADMINISTRATION'S FISCAL YEAR 2017 BUDGET PROPOSAL

The IAFC has serious concerns about the administration's fiscal year 2017 budget proposal. It drastically reduced many of these important grant programs: The SHSGP program would be cut by more than half to \$267 million and the UASI program would be cut by 45% to \$330 million. In addition, the AFG and SAFER grant programs would be cut by \$10 million each and be classified as terrorism preparedness grants with a priority given to applications that "enhance capabilities for terrorism response and other major incidents."

As my testimony demonstrates, the SHSGP and UASI programs are achieving their missions of building terrorism response capabilities that a jurisdiction would not otherwise be able to afford and serving as an incentive to bring together all stakeholders for major training and exercises. Because of the steady decrease in SHSGP and UASI funding over the years, most of these funds are being used to sustain existing capabilities. It is unwise to cut programs that actually are achieving their objectives.

It also is important to recognize that these cuts are proposed in a more dangerous threat environment. Last May, we witnessed an incident at the Curtis Culwell Center in Garland, Texas, involving 2 individuals inspired by communications with the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS). In July, an active shooter attacked a U.S. Naval Reserve Center and a military recruitment center in Chattanooga, Tennessee. In December, a husband and wife used active-shooter tactics with potential pipe bombs in San Bernardino, California. ISIS continues to threaten the U.S. homeland and we have learned that acts of terror can occur anywhere in the Nation. Grants like the SHSGP and UASI program help us to analyze threat information and develop capabilities to prepare for these new threats.

We also have concerns about the administration's attempts to convert the AFG and SAFER grant programs into terrorism response programs. These programs are meant to improve baseline capabilities for all-hazards response. Many fire departments around the Nation still have trouble meeting basic response requirements and the AFG and SAFER grant programs have proven successful at helping these

departments. Fire departments depend on each other to provide mutual aid in response to incidents as diverse as high-rise fires, wildland fires, and even acts of terrorism. It is important that fire departments around the Nation have basic emergency response capabilities, so that they can effectively aid each other during these incidents. The AFG and SAFER grant programs help support a Nation-wide response system that can escalate and respond to all hazards, not just acts of terrorism.

Also, we oppose the administration's attempts to set a priority for AFG and SAFER applications focused on terrorism response. As described in statute,<sup>2</sup> the major National fire service organizations meet annually to discuss the criteria for the upcoming year's AFG and SAFER grants. One complaint with the SHSGP and UASI programs is that FEMA changes funding priorities every year without much explanation. Priorities for the AFG and SAFER grant programs should be based on stakeholder-driven criteria and not bureaucratic whims.

The IAFC also opposes the fiscal year 2017 budget proposal's attempts to consolidate a number of programs, including FEMA's preparedness grants, the U.S. Fire Administration, the AFG and SAFER grant programs, the Emergency Management Performance Grants and other programs into one "Federal Assistance" account. Historically, these programs have been funded under separate accounts to ensure that the appropriations were spent in a transparent and accountable manner. Our concern is that this transparency and accountability will be lost if these programs are merged into a single "Federal Assistance" account.

#### CONCLUSION

I thank you today for the opportunity to testify about the importance of FEMA's SHSGP, UASI, AFG, and SAFER grant programs. This suite of grants plays an important role in building and sustaining the National preparedness system. The changes proposed in the fiscal year 2017 budget proposal would hurt the ability of the Nation's local fire and emergency service to protect their communities.

For fiscal year 2017, the IAFC urges Congress to at least continue to fund the SHSGP program at the fiscal year 2016 level of \$467 million and the UASI grant program at the fiscal year 2016 level of \$600 million. For the AFG and SAFER grant programs, we ask you to fund these programs at the fiscal year 2011 level of \$405 million each. This request is based on the steady increase in the cost of equipment. For example, the cost of personal protective equipment has increased by 11.4% since 2011 and the cost of self-contained breathing apparatus has increased by 15%. In addition, the cost of fire apparatus also has increased: The cost of pumper trucks, which represent 60% of the apparatus market, has increased by 14.6% since 2011 based on increased labor and materials' costs. To ensure continued transparency and accountability, we also recommend that Congress continue to fund these programs using the same appropriations account structure that has been used in the past. In addition, we urge Congress to reauthorize the AFG and SAFER grant programs which otherwise will sunset in January 2018.

I am grateful for the committee's leadership in addressing the needs of first responders as we prepare for an evolving terrorist threat. The IAFC looks forward to working with you during the fiscal year 2017 appropriations process to ensure that local fire and EMS departments are ready to protect their communities.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Chief Kerr. The Chair now recognizes Chief Turner.

#### **STATEMENT OF GEORGE TURNER, CHIEF OF POLICE, ATLANTA POLICE DEPARTMENT, ATLANTA, GEORGIA, TESTIFYING ON BEHALF OF THE MAJOR CITIES CHIEFS**

Chief TURNER. Thank you. Good morning, Chairman Donovan, and Ranking Member Payne. I appear before you today as the chief of police of Atlanta, the largest metropolitan region in the South. It is also my privilege to serve on the board of directors for Major City Chiefs as the second vice president. I represent every major urban area in our Nation, the communities that would suffer most from further reduction in Federal assistance for law enforcement.

<sup>2</sup> 15 U.S.C. § 2229(1)(2).

I speak today as one police chief on behalf of my colleagues from the 68 largest police departments in our country. I also received a letter of support from 17 organizations that represent local elected officials, emergency managers, port and transit operators, sheriffs, and major fire associations that have strong concerns about several severe cuts to 4 key homeland security grant programs. We ask the committee to consider the responsibility that each of you share with the chiefs of police protecting the American public from harm.

As we reflect on the events of Paris and San Bernardino, here at home, it is evident that preparedness for a terrorist attack is the highest priority than ever before. There is a certain irony to the proposed cuts. They come in the wake of terrorist attacks not just in cities abroad, but on our own shores, in Chattanooga, San Bernardino, and Philadelphia, for an example.

The proposed budget of DHS would reduce from \$41.1 billion to \$40.6 billion, a reduction of more than \$500 million. But the 2 grant programs which assist States and local agencies would be cut by \$537 million, more than the entire amount of the reduction of the Department of Homeland Security.

As a police chief, I have assigned personnel to Federal task forces and our regional fusion center. Every day we are asked to assist one of our Federal agencies or another. But funding from Washington does not even take up a small portion of the amount of money that Atlanta and the city police department provides. The same is true in every other major city in America. We are really subsidizing the Federal Government, because what we receive from Washington does not begin to pay the bill.

The world's busiest airport, Hartsfield-Jackson Airport, is protected by Atlanta personnel and a team effort from DHS that includes the model K-9 program we conduct with TSA. The Urban Area Security Initiative program funds purchases of specific equipment, including a robot that is equipped to board aircrafts. The Federal investment pays off each day in communities across the country during incidents both large and small. For example, much of the training and equipment used to respond to the May 2015 Amtrak derailment in Philadelphia were paid for with grants provided by FEMA.

Chairman Donovan and Ranking Member Payne, chiefs of police are grateful for all you do, and we look to you for leadership. To accept the proposed cuts would forfeit so much of what we have already invested in since the inception of DHS, and leave local agencies like mine on the fence to fend for themselves, with Federal agencies continuing to grow.

As a police chief, we have our common bonds with you. It is the safety of the public we are sworn to protect and serve. To this end, we implore that you restore balance to the partnership with DHS by protecting the funds which sustain the work of the subcommittee.

It is my pleasure to testify today. I look forward to any questions that you might have. I do want to talk about the fact that we need to continue to sustain the efforts that we have already pushed forward thus far in this partnership. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Chief Turner follows:]

## PREPARED STATEMENT OF GEORGE TURNER

MARCH 15, 2016

Chairman Donovan, Ranking Member Payne, and Members of the subcommittee, I appear before you today as the chief of police for Atlanta, the largest metropolitan region in the South. It is also my privilege to be on the board of directors and 2nd vice president for the Major Cities Chiefs, representing every major urban area in our Nation—the communities which would suffer most from further reductions in Federal assistance for law enforcement. I speak today as one police chief on behalf of my colleagues from the 68 largest cities in the United States.

## NEEDED SUPPORT FOR THE FRONT LINES OF PUBLIC SAFETY

As Mayor De Blasio has noted, local police and public safety officers today stand on the front lines of both preparedness and response, just as they did in New York and Washington, DC on September 11, 2001. But the proposed 2017 budget reductions represent the most drastic cuts in a downward spiral of declining help from Washington. In the face of the current threat, police chiefs agree with the title of today's hearing—it is indeed a disaster.

As the law enforcement witness in this hearing, I appeal to Congress not to abandon the officers who put their lives on the line every day. Forgive me if a term like “abandon” sounds like hyperbole, but for police officers in every major American city, I can tell you this is not empty rhetoric. There is no other way to describe the dramatic decreases in DHS support for local police and first responders. DHS funding for the combined grant programs in 2010 was more than \$3 billion. By 2016, the current fiscal year, it had fallen to half that amount. If Congress were to approve the cuts proposed for the coming year, law enforcement agencies could receive as little as a third of what was once provided by Washington.

Federal agencies and other parts of DHS have not suffered any sort of comparable reductions. Speaking for men and women in uniform on the front lines, we implore the committee to reverse this alarming trend and to strengthen support for public safety in your own communities back home.

## URBAN AREA SECURITY INITIATIVE (UASI)

We ask the committee to consider the responsibility that each of you shares with a chief of police—protecting the American people from harm. Major Cities Chiefs counts every one of the UASI cities in our membership and that means we have a direct tie to the important work of this subcommittee. As we reflect on the events abroad in Paris and in San Bernardino here at home, it is evident that preparedness for a terrorist attack is a higher priority than ever before. Major Cities Chiefs hosted San Bernardino officials at our last meeting and we heard first-hand what comprised their preparedness and response to the attack. It was a case study in the work of this subcommittee—it was all about preparedness. Whether from ISIS abroad or home-grown extremists, the threat is real and it haunts police chiefs every day. But the DHS programs designed to support preparedness and prevention efforts have been diminished as the threat has increased. UASI is a small shadow of what it once. The proposed budget cuts UASI to \$330 million. If you add the State Homeland Security Grant Program proposal for \$200 million, that is a total of \$550 million, just a third of the more than \$1.6 billion back in 2009 and 2010.

## PARTNERSHIPS TO PREVENT TERRORISM

In spite of these budget cuts, our work with the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice is stronger than ever before. We share intelligence, work joint cases, conduct preparedness exercises and all of these efforts make us stronger. Yet, funding for our Federal partners has grown while support for our partnership with DHS has been slashed to a fraction of what we received in the past.

We ask the subcommittee to consider if this a balanced partnership. The proposed budget of DHS would be reduced from \$41.1 billion to \$40.6 billion, a reduction of \$500 million. But the 2 grant programs which assist State and local agencies would be cut by \$537 million, more than the entire amount of the reduction for the Department of Homeland Security.

As a police chief, I have assigned many personnel to Federal task forces and our regional fusion center. Every day we are asked to assist one Federal agency or another. But funding from Washington does not even cover a small part of the cost to the Atlanta Police Department. The same is true in every other major American

city—we are really subsidizing the Federal Government—because what we receive from Washington does not begin to pay that bill.

#### LAW ENFORCEMENT TERRORISM PREVENTION PROGRAM (LETTP)

Congress intended for law enforcement to have a law enforcement set-aside comparable to line item programs for Fire Chiefs, Emergency Management, Ports, and other top priorities. But the intent of Congress has not been followed when it comes to LETTP, as it is no longer a stand-alone program and no longer a priority. Congress directed that LETTP should be funded at not less than 25% of the sum of SHSGP and UASI. Rather than maintain LETTP as a program and fund it at the required level, FEMA eliminated the program and merely applied the percentage to broad definitions in the other programs. For the proposed budget, that would represent about \$137 million, less than a third of the amount now proposed for cybersecurity and less than a third law enforcement funding in 2009 and 2010.

Unlike the other programs called out in legislation, terrorism prevention and law enforcement have somehow disappeared. There is no line item, no set-aside, and no separate program. Unlike the past practice where an LETTP amount was separately designated for each State, now only 2 programs appear—the State grant program and UASI. Following Paris and San Bernardino, LETTP is gone at a time when it is needed more than ever before.

#### FUNDING CONSISTENCY AND CONTINUITY

The process used by DHS to determine UASI funding continues to be both vexing and contradictory. For many of the major cities it has been a roller coaster ride of ups and downs. Police chiefs cannot even consider a preparedness budget when they do not know if they are “in or out”. Take the case of Las Vegas, obviously an iconic terrorist target with more and more venues growing each year. But according to the formula process, Las Vegas is a threat some years and not others. We would ask the committee to investigate how these decisions are made, in order to ensure consistency and continuity for preparedness planning in the years to come.

#### INVESTMENT AND SUSTAINMENT

Official reports indicate that Congress has invested upwards of \$40 billion across the Nation since DHS was established. As you look forward into 2017, I would suggest to the committee that you also look back on what you have already invested. I have been with the Atlanta Police Department every day since the September 11 attacks and I have witnessed all that DHS has done to help my department and our community. These efforts were never planned as one-time events. Baseline capabilities were reached, Federal standards were satisfied—but it’s my job to ensure that these preparedness capabilities are sustained. I cannot do so if the proposed cuts were to be approved by Congress.

An example of a success partnership is our work with TSA and other DHS components at the Atlanta Airport. The world’s busiest airport, the Hartsfield Jackson Airport is protected by Atlanta personnel in a team effort with DHS that includes a model canine program we conduct with TSA.

Sustainment is an on-going challenge. Exercises must be repeated for new and changing personnel. Equipment must be serviced and updated. Even batteries must be replaced. Virtually none of the DHS investments will last indefinitely. Mr. Chairman, to sustain those capabilities must be the highest priority for preparedness—the top priority of this subcommittee. Much will be lost without adequate resources for sustainment.

#### TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The September 11 attacks in New York and Washington, DC will always serve as a tragic reminder of critical gaps. Communications is a major responsibility for this subcommittee and it is a continuing challenge for chiefs of police and sheriffs across the Nation. We should never forget that hundreds of New York’s first responders perished without radio interoperability on September 11, 2001, and the agencies responding to the Pentagon were likewise unable to communicate with each other.

Investments in communications preparedness are also sustained by training and technical assistance provided by DHS. I call your attention to the DHS Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) which falls under your jurisdiction. Atlanta and other major cities have benefited greatly from efforts to sustain our mobile radio capabilities. Boston officials reported that emergency communications did not falter during the bombings, and attributed their success to preparedness training, exer-

cises and technical assistance. Atlanta area agencies have received OEC training and technical assistance on multiple occasions, attached as an appendix to my testimony, as a key example of the important work of this subcommittee. While the interoperable communications grant program came to an untimely end in 2010, we need to strengthen current communications capabilities and migrate to new broadband technologies. We recommend that the subcommittee continue to ensure that DHS has resources to sustain and strengthen vital assistance programs such as OEC.

#### LAW ENFORCEMENT INTELLIGENCE AND INFORMATION SHARING

We are grateful for the work of the Office of State and Local Law Enforcement (OSLLE) at DHS. Congress established that office to coordinate law enforcement activities and I can report to the subcommittee that it fulfills the intent of Congress every day. Likewise, we are working closely with the Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A) to strengthen our partnership with DHS, especially regarding the operation of our regional fusion centers.

In Georgia, we have had a number of militia cases and we are deeply concerned about home-grown extremists. For this reason, we strongly support DHS efforts to Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) and Major Cities Chiefs will engage with DHS leadership to roll out CVE initiatives in urban areas. To this end, Major Cities Chiefs has established a network of Intelligence Commanders from every major urban area, working together as our Criminal Intelligence Enterprise (CIE). Our intelligence personnel have designed a common approach to threat assessment and they share information to prepare and analyze similar and common threats. We are grateful to DHS officials for their partnership in this unprecedented endeavor to prevent and interdict the terrorist threat in our communities.

#### THE WAY FORWARD

Chairman Donovan and Ranking Member Payne, chiefs of police are grateful for all you do, and we look to you for leadership. To accept the proposed 2017 cuts would forfeit so much of what you have invested since the inception of DHS, and leave local agencies like my own to fend for themselves while Federal agencies continue to grow.

As chiefs of police we know our common bond with you is the safety of the public we have sworn to protect. To this end, we implore you to restore balance to our partnership with DHS by protecting the funding which sustains the work of this subcommittee.

#### APPENDIX A.—UASI FUNDING HISTORY

##### 2009

- UASI \$798,631
- SHSP \$861,265

##### 2010

- UASI \$832,520
- SHSP \$842,000

##### 2011

- UASI \$662,662
- SHSP \$526,874

##### 2012

- UASI \$490,376
- SHSP \$294,000

##### 2013

- UASI \$558,745
- SHSP \$354,644

##### 2014

- UASI \$587,000
- SHSP \$401,346

##### 2015

- UASI \$587,000
- SHSP \$402,000

## 2016

- UASI \$580,000
- SHSP \$402,000

## Proposed 2017

- UASI \$330,000
- SHSP \$200,000

## APPENDIX B.—DHS OFFICE OF EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANCE TO ATLANTA

*July 2009.*—Supported the development of an SOP for the Georgia Interoperability Network (GIN). Representative of Atlanta attended and provided comments on the draft (Held in Athens, GA).

*May 2010.*—Performed a Communications Unit Leader (COML) training in downtown Atlanta. Included attendees from various disciplines.

*July 2010.*—Performed an engineering coverage assessment for the State including the Atlanta Metropolitan area.

*August 2011.*—Presented an overview of the National Interoperability Field Operations Guide (NIFOG) and its underlying principles to 60 attendees in the Atlanta Metropolitan area from various disciplines.

*August 2012.*—Presented an overview of the National Interoperability Field Operations Guide (NIFOG) and its underlying principles to over 70 attendees in the Atlanta Metropolitan area.

*September 2012 to April 2013.*—Worked with personnel from the city of Atlanta to update their current Tactical Interoperable Communications Plan and then utilized the components of that plan to develop a Communications Field Operations Guide for the Atlanta Metropolitan area.

*April 2013.*—Performed a Communications Unit Leader (COML) Train-the-Trainer course in downtown Atlanta. This training is intended to build a cadre of instructors who are locally-based across the State so that the State may carry out their own COML courses.

*June 2013.*—Carried out a Public Safety Communications Center Operations Workshop in the city of Atlanta attended by and focused on personnel from public safety answering points (PSAPs) and dispatch centers across the State and city of Atlanta.

*August 2015.*—Performed a pilot delivery of the All-Hazards Incident Communications Center Manager Training, designed to prepare COMLs and Dispatch Supervisors and public safety communication professionals for managing all functions in the Incident Communications Center.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Chief Turner. The Chair now recognizes Mr. Sena.

**STATEMENT OF MIKE SENA, DIRECTOR, NORTHERN CALIFORNIA REGIONAL INTELLIGENCE CENTER, TESTIFYING ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL FUSION CENTER ASSOCIATION**

Mr. SENA. Chairman Donovan, Ranking Member Payne, and Members of the subcommittee, I would like to thank you very much for inviting me to speak on behalf of the National Fusion Center Association. FBI Director Comey testified last month that there were more than 1,000 active home-grown violent extremism investigations across the United States. In light of that, the President's fiscal year 2017 budget request for FEMA preparedness grants left us scratching our heads. I want to share some of the reasons why the proposal doesn't make sense.

Last month, more than 100 million Americans watched Super Bowl 50. The game was played in Santa Clara, which falls in my fusion center's area of responsibility. With the Santa Clara Police Department in the lead, our fusion center played a central role, coordinating with all public safety partners in protecting the Bay Area Super Bowl venues. Thousands of law enforcement, fire, EMS, critical infrastructure security, and private-sector personnel from

all surrounding jurisdictions and at all levels of government had access to interoperable video, voice, and data capabilities in one communications platform. We all were looking at the same common operating picture, with suspicious activity reports, positive license plate reader hits, and threats popping up in real time for analysis and response.

Our fusion center was able to give the National Operations Center at DHS headquarters here in the District of Columbia the exact same view throughout the event to ensure real-time situational awareness. Most of this capacity was built with UASI and SHSGP grant funds provided through our Governor's Office of Emergency Services, led by Mark Ghilarducci.

The Wisconsin State-wide Information Center has trained thousands of fusion liaison officers, also called terrorism liaison officers, across the State in how to recognize and report suspicious activity. Privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties considerations are a centerpiece of the training, and the result has been the establishment of a trusted information-sharing network across the State. That same model has been built at fusion centers across the country.

After the attacks in Paris, in my home town of San Bernardino, suspicious activity reporting through the fusion liaison network skyrocketed in Wisconsin and across the Nation. Analysts at fusion centers have been able to quickly receive those reports, vet them, and share information with the appropriate partners, including the FBI. They are connecting crucial data residing in State and local law enforcement databases to the Terrorist Screening Center encounters. That data would otherwise be out of reach for the FBI. It is now routinely shared quickly through fusion centers.

Those capabilities in Wisconsin and across the country were built on and are sustained through, today, the SHSGP and UASI funds. At the Boston Regional Intelligence Center, or the BRIC, 9 positive investigative leads were generated over the past year through analysis of publicly-posted social media. Three of these leads resulted in FBI full field investigations. Two of the leads, 1 to the FBI and 1 to the Rhode Island fusion center, proved to be critical in investigation of ISIL-inspired terrorists, leading to indictments by the U.S. Attorney's Office. Nearly all of the BRIC's counterterrorism analytical capabilities, which generate critical intelligence in these cases, are supported by UASI funds.

Immediately after the San Bernardino terrorist attack, analysts at the Joint Regional Intelligence Center, or JRIC, were developing intelligence on suspects and sharing it directly with the San Bernardino Police Department, sheriff's office, and the FBI. An alert sheriff's deputy, who had recently received training through the JRIC, called the fusion center to report that an individual matching the description of the person wanted in connection with providing weapons to the shooters was about to check out of a local area hospital. The fusion center immediately passed the information to the task force that was about to launch a manhunt for the individual, enabling them to call it off before it even started. Much of that capacity of the JRIC, used every day in support of criminal and terrorism investigations, was built and sustained by UASI and SHSGP funding.

To be blunt, Mr. Chairman, any reduction in these grants, let alone hollowing them out with a 50 percent cut, would be a devastating blow to the capability built in this country for threat detection, prevention, intelligence analysis, and information sharing. It would be a repudiation of the reality that everyone in public safety knows, that the State and local data, intelligence and community relationships, are the cornerstone of homeland security. Federal agencies, including the FBI, are asking fusion centers for more information and more partnerships and expect more capability all the time to support their missions at the Federal level, including terrorism.

Given all this, we have a hard time understanding why these cuts were proposed. The examples above are just a few of thousands of instances where my colleagues across the fusion center network are doing difficult but critically important work on behalf of the Federal taxpayers.

This committee has advanced some important legislation over the past year that would strengthen fusion center partnerships and capabilities. We hope that the Senate acts on those bills soon. But I can tell you for sure that if the SHSGP and UASI programs are cut, the objectives of those bills would be impossible to achieve. Congress should reject the budget request.

Mr. Chairman, now is the time to shore up those capabilities we've built, not to tear them down. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Sena follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MIKE SENA

MARCH 15, 2016

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Payne, and Members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify on this important topic. My name is Mike Sena and I am testifying today in my capacity as president of the National Fusion Center association (NFCA). I am currently the director of the Northern California Regional Intelligence Center (NCRIC), one of the 78 fusion centers in the National Network of Fusion Centers (National Network).

The President's fiscal year 2017 budget request for preparedness grants was shocking to us and all of our public safety stakeholders. We strongly oppose the drastic cuts because they would destroy capabilities that have developed across the National Network of Fusion Centers to rapidly gather, analyze, and share threat-related information, especially information related to terror threats. If Congress enacts the cuts into law, several fusion centers would likely close. Many would continue to exist, but their missions would focus almost exclusively on State and local priorities. This would create a massive blindspot for Federal homeland security and counterterrorism partners related to information gathering, analysis, and dissemination. In other words, we would wipe out many of the gains in terrorism prevention capabilities that have been built since 9/11 at a time when the threat picture—according to every CT leader in the Federal Government—has never been more dynamic.

Fusion centers bring together law enforcement, public safety, fire service, emergency response, public health, critical infrastructure and key resources (CIKR) interests, and private sector security personnel to understand local implications of National intelligence, as well as add State and local information and context to Federal intelligence, thus enabling local, State, and Federal officials to better protect our communities from terrorism and other criminal threats.

Federal support to fusion centers includes assignment of intelligence officers and analysts, technical assistance, training and exercises, linkage to key information systems, grant funding, and security clearances. These tools add critical value to the resources committed by State and local governments to make the National Network a foundation of homeland security information sharing. Over the past several years, the State and local share of budget resources allocated to fusion centers has grown

substantially. In fact, State and local governments now provide well over half of all operating funding for fusion centers.

Still, Federal support through FEMA Preparedness Grants—primarily the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) and Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI)—remains essential. State and local budget models vary widely across the National Network—from nearly 100 percent grant funded to nearly 100 percent State- or local-funded. The administration’s proposal to cut SHSGP by 57 percent, and UASI by 45 percent, would have a devastating impact on our ability to keep our States and Nation safe.

SHSGP dollars have helped establish and maintain Terrorism Liaison Officer (TLO) or Fusion Liaison Officer (FLO) networks throughout the country. Through these efforts, fusion centers have trained tens of thousands of first responders Nation-wide regarding appropriate recognition and reporting of suspicious activity with full recognition of privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties requirements. These are the individuals walking beats, responding to incidents, working around critical infrastructure sites, and developing relationships in every community every day. The TLO/FLO networks have helped to enhance our ability to share critical threat information by increasing our dissemination capabilities across our States, thus building a trusted information-sharing network. The information shared among these networks includes Officer Safety Bulletins, BOLOs, cybersecurity alerts, intelligence products, and numerous other informational products that further enhance our ability to keep our States safe. Our Federal partners often leverage this dissemination network to get critical threat information into the hands of State and locals.

Preparedness grant funds have also helped to improve dramatically our analytic capabilities across the country. Fusion centers provide local context and information to Terrorist Screening Center encounters, many times providing critical intelligence from State and local databases that is unavailable to our Federal partners. We also provide critical case support to criminal investigations that are transnational in nature, which in turn enhances our ability to provide these same services during a major criminal or terrorist event. Everything we do each day hones our ability to gather information from the field, rapidly analyze it, rapidly share it, and rapidly disseminate important information.

In short, the capabilities and relationships that we exercise daily in support of criminal investigative purposes are identical to those required for dealing with issues of Federal consequence like a terrorist attack. Preparedness grants helped build this capacity, and this capacity is put at risk by the fiscal year 2017 budget request.

Following are a few of the hundreds of examples across the country of how FEMA preparedness grants are enabling fusion centers to contribute to homeland security and public safety.

In 2014/2015, 9 positive investigative leads were generated by the Boston Regional Intelligence Center (BRIC) through analysis of publicly posted social media. The postings exhibited behaviors indicative of terrorist radicalization specifically related to ISIL. Three of these leads resulted in FBI “full field” investigations, and 1 preliminary investigation. Additionally, 2 of the leads, 1 to the FBI, and 1 to the Rhode Island Fusion Center, proved to be critical during an investigation of ISIL-inspired terrorists, leading to indictments by the U.S. Attorney’s Office.

Fusion centers have also used grant funds to establish, maintain, and enhance cyber threat coordination programs. Given persistent cyber threats and the threat of home-grown violent extremism, these funds are essential in building, maturing, and sustaining capacity across the country. For instance, the Alabama Fusion Center recently added a cyber mission and has conducted a Cyber Liaison Officer (CLO) training event where they brought together over 40 law enforcement, DOD, academia and private-sector professionals to discuss our mission, collaborate on cybersecurity, and gain a better understanding of the roles we all have in cybersecurity awareness, reporting, analysis, and investigation. This training could not have happened without the SHSGP grant awarded to Alabama.

At the Southwest Texas Fusion Center in San Antonio, FEMA Preparedness Grants are used by the fusion center to fund a platform to coordinate and exchange intel with fusion centers’ FLO networks, add functionality to tactical operations centers where fusion partners are exchanging all calls/all hazards information, provide joint law enforcement and fire department training on event planning and other media-driven events like active shooters, develop an advanced capability to house requests for information and intelligence, critical intelligence reports, and SARs, and maintain technology subscriptions and hardware used in delivering intelligence to fusion partners and the FLO network.

In Austin, Texas the Austin Regional Intelligence Center invests FEMA Preparedness Grant funding to support continual enhancement of analytical capabilities.

This includes systems that enable analysts to utilize the latest technology to analyze open sources for threats to the Austin region as well as gather information on large events that could impact LE resources, provide a local context and information to Terrorist Screening Center encounters often from State and local databases that are unavailable to our Federal partners, and provide critical case support to criminal investigations.

The proposed cuts to the FEMA Preparedness Grants would result in the loss of analysts who are subject-matter experts in a number of topics that include terrorism, human trafficking, and critical infrastructure protection. Additionally, much of the infrastructure we have worked to establish by way of software and other technology we use to accomplish analytical tasks would not likely be possible to maintain.

Most recently my center played a key role in the facilitation of communication between local, State, and Federal agencies during Super Bowl 50 in the San Francisco Bay Area. This was no easy task, but because UASI grant funds have enabled our investment in various technological capabilities, we were prepared to identify potential situations and empower security personnel to rapidly coordinate and respond. For instance, we deployed equipment that provided real-time collaboration and communications capabilities among all stakeholders including law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services, hospitals, and private entities including the NFL on any device that was being used by that particular agency. I know interoperability has been an important issue for this committee, and with the capabilities we acquired using UASI funds, we were able to make that happen in reality during the Super Bowl. Additionally, as you can imagine, we had an enormous amount of data coming in from all agencies involved with a security or emergency response component. Using software capability acquired using UASI grant dollars, we were able to rapidly filter and analyze that data for potential threats and make that information instantly available to all security stakeholders through a common operating picture. Without UASI funding, I do not believe that we would have been able to bring the same level of confidence in the security and preparedness that we had for Super Bowl 50.

Last year across the network, fusion centers processed thousands of requests for information (RFIs) which supported criminal investigations from homicide, human trafficking, and narcotics to terrorism-related cases and all things in between. Hundreds of those requests were from our Federal partners, which demonstrates how integral State and local data and intelligence is to the Federal Government's ability to identify, investigate, and prevent threats.

No other organizational structure can provide faster or more efficient access to State and local information that may support National counterterrorism investigations, or enable faster or more efficient situational awareness across relevant jurisdictions than that of the National Network of Fusion Centers. Each fusion center has methods of distribution across local, regional, and State-wide technical and personal networks that Federal investigative and intelligence agencies could not possibly build or maintain with their own resources.

To ensure that grant funding is being used for its intended purpose, the NFCA has joined other law enforcement associations on a letter to Congress urging that the Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Activities (LETP) requirement in the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (Pub. L. 110-53) be strengthened. The law requires that 25% of SHSGP and UASI funding be used for "law enforcement terrorism prevention activities" and specifies some of those types of activities including support for fusion centers. While States have latitude to allocate funding according to risk and priorities, we agree with the intent of the 2007 law and believe that terrorism prevention activities should be constant priorities, especially as grant funds have declined over the past 5 years. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) found in its November 2014 report on information sharing and fusion centers that in 2012 States inaccurately categorized about \$60 million in projects as "related to fusion centers" when in fact those funds did not support fusion centers. As we have suggested in our letter to Congress, requiring a Governor-designated State law enforcement executive to review the LETP portion of grant plans would help to ensure those funds truly support terrorism prevention activities.

Thanks to fusion centers we are sharing more information more effectively than ever before. This is happening despite the fact that no single entity has the authority to enforce effective information-sharing practices. Because of the decentralized nature of public safety in America, policies on sharing information cannot be dictated by any one organization. Common policies and practices have been developed by consensus through multilateral and interagency policy bodies—including the Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative (Global) and the Criminal Intelligence

Coordinating Council (CICC) and must be continually reinforced through day-to-day engagements between Federal, State, and local partners. As you might imagine, this is extraordinarily difficult to achieve in practice, but we have made excellent progress and are continuing to build on that progress. We are assisted in this work by the program manager for the information-sharing environment (PM-ISE), which provides critical leadership and resources enabling development of standards across multiple law enforcement and intelligence stakeholders. Congress should bolster support for the PM-ISE function to ensure this coordination can continue.

The National Network of Fusion Centers has come a long way since this committee's 2013 report called for the development of a National Strategy for the National Network of Fusion Centers. We worked with various stakeholders to develop and publish our National strategy in 2014, and continue to develop the implementation plan that will prioritize our actions through 2017 to achieve objectives under the strategy. In addition, this committee's 2013 report called for a Federal strategy to support the National Network of Fusion Centers. Working together with our Federal partners, we identified a dozen initiatives that will be joint priorities over the next several years. For the first time, there is a clear Federal strategy that directly supports the State and locally-driven National Network.

I am still often asked whether fusion centers duplicate the FBI's JTTFs. Given the extensive work done by this committee, you understand this difference, but I must reiterate the differences. As you know, JTTFs are Federally-run investigative bodies that support the FBI's unique mission to investigate terrorism threats in this country. Fusion centers play a much different role; they're not only information-sharing hubs in States and metropolitan regions. Fusion centers are where we train a cadre of terrorism liaison officers (TLOs), including police officers, firefighters, EMS workers, and our private-sector partners on indicators and warnings of terrorism. Fusion centers have the ability to catalogue critical infrastructure in each State and region and analyze incoming suspicious activity reports (SARs) against the National threat picture and against what we know about our critical infrastructure. We have the ability to then rapidly share information and intelligence among the entire National Network and with the FBI and DHS.

A case in point occurred during the lead-up to President Obama's second inauguration. In the National Capitol Region, multiple fire departments received suspicious inquiries about fire and EMS stations, equipment, and operations. These inquiries consisted of in person and email individuals asking how one becomes a volunteer and what it would take to drive a fire truck or other emergency vehicle. The incidences were submitted to the Northern Virginia Regional Intelligence Center and SARs were developed. Working with our Federal partners, it was determined that the same individual was involved in all the instances, and an emergency intelligence bulletin was developed. Without the analytical training and close working relationships that we have with developed with our first responder partners—through the Northern Virginia Regional Intelligence Center in this case—the pieces of this puzzle could have very easily not have been put together.

But often that SAR information has no nexus to terrorism. It's about drug dealing or gang activity or firearms trafficking or mortgage fraud. So the all-crimes approach gives us the ability to analyze that information and funnel it to the right place. And we know that, sometimes, information that at first blush appears to be criminal in nature—the Torrance, California gas station robberies, the smuggling of cigarettes in North Carolina, the sale of pseudoephedrine in California—actually is linked to terrorist activity. It does not make sense to try to separate crime and terror in our daily work of analyzing threat information and criminal activity. We have to knock that wall down. If we're going to continue to improve, we have to understand that the sharing of information makes communities safer. Our ultimate goal is to prevent terrorism. But in every community across the country there are violent crimes that terrorize neighborhoods and families and affect lives and businesses every day. Fusion centers are uniquely situated to do things that JTTFs or no other program can do. And FEMA Preparedness Grants ensure that these advances are maintained.

In another example from the Boston Regional Intelligence Center, last year the BRIC received information that on-line harassment and threats were made by individuals who were scheduled to attend the Pokémon World Championship being held at the Haynes Convention Center. The convention center notified the BRIC of this threat because of its long-standing partnership. BRIC analysis and the sharing of information with other agencies enabled quick validation of the threat. Extra precautions were put in place immediately, and as a result, the individuals making threats were arrested at the event. Found in their vehicle were multiple weapons with hundreds of rounds of ammunition. UASI funding helped to build those capa-

bilities and sustains them today. Without it—or with a 50% cut—these capabilities would likely be destroyed.

I would like thank this committee for its work on improving information sharing, and strengthening the mission of the National Network of Fusion Centers. This committee has advanced 3 bills through the House that would provide critical tools to aid in our abilities to keep the Nation safe. Specifically, H.R. 3598, the Fusion Center Enhancement Act, sponsored by Congressman Barletta, H.R. 3503, the DHS Support to Fusion Centers Act, sponsored by Congresswoman McSally, and most recently, H.R. 4401, the Amplifying Local Efforts to Root out Terrorism Act, sponsored by Congressman Loudermilk. You have done your job to move these bills forward, and hope your Senate colleagues consider these bills as soon as possible.

Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the National Fusion Center Association, thank you for inviting me to testify today. I commend your focus on ensuring that State and local governments receive the support necessary through the FEMA Preparedness Grants to keep our Nation safe. Federal, State, and local agencies must continue to be partners in this dynamic threat environment. We look forward to continuing to work closely with the committee to help meet those expectations.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Mr. Sena. The Chair now recognizes Sergeant Kierce.

**STATEMENT OF W. GREG KIERCE, DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT & HOMELAND SECURITY, JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY**

Mr. KIERCE. Chairman Donovan, Members of the committee, on behalf of Jersey City Mayor Steven M. Fulop, I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to Congressman Donald M. Payne, Jr., and Members of the committee for the opportunity to appear before you this morning.

The intent of the Urban Area Security Initiative program is to enhance regional preparedness in major metropolitan areas. The UASI program provides funding to address the unique multidiscipline planning operations, equipment, and training and exercise needs of high-threat high-density urban areas and to assist in building and sustaining capabilities related to terrorism prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery.

The Jersey City-Newark UASI includes Jersey City, Newark, as well as the counties of Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Morris, Passaic, and Union. The mission of the Jersey City UASI is to ensure the sustainment and enhancement of counterterrorism capabilities and planning and responding to natural and man-made disasters. According to the FBI and the director of the national intelligence, the United States faces a significant and growing threat from individuals in this country who are willing to conduct domestic mass casualty attacks inspired by terrorist ideology. In fact, the DNI has said he anticipates ISIS-inspired attacks within the United States in the year ahead.

The threat of violent extremism poses a great risk to the Jersey City-Newark UASI region due to its dense population, geographic importance, and target-rich environment. The total population associated with the Jersey City-Newark UASI is approximately 4,792,594, which equates to more than half of the entire population of the State of New Jersey, making this region one of the most densely-populated areas in the United States.

In the middle of all this is a section of the New Jersey Turnpike in Union and Essex Counties that run through what the FBI and Government officials from New Jersey have dubbed the most dangerous 2 miles in America for terrorist targets. This area includes

the largest port on the East Coast, Newark Airport, major rail lines, densely-populated cities, and chemical and petroleum plants. Former director of the New Jersey Office of Security and Preparedness Charlie McKenna described it best: "If you want to make New Jersey the heart of America or the heart of the northeast, the Turnpike is the aorta."

The Jersey City-Newark UASI region ranks 7 in the top 10 UASIs, based on DHS vulnerability and threats assessments. In addition to Port Newark and Newark Airport, the region is home to rail lines, bridges, and tunnels to New York City. Wall Street and other financial service firms house important front and back operations, including clearance and settlement services and other operations essential to the functioning of America's capital marketing, in Jersey City and Newark.

Since 2002, funding provided through the Department of Homeland Security Urban Area Security Initiative has afforded Tier 1 UASI regions to accomplish the following 10 goals. Goal 1 is strengthen CBRNE preparedness and response capabilities by acquiring the necessary equipment, training, and other resources needed by first responders to effectively detect, interdict, and respond to acts of terrorism or accidents involving CBRNE materials or agents.

No. 2, protect critical infrastructure and key resources along the region based on a systemic process of identifying and cataloguing infrastructure, conducting site visits and risk assessments, investing in target-hardening projects, and providing additional protective mitigation measures based on the current threat level.

No. 3, strengthen the information and sharing capabilities through collaborative partnerships with Federal, State, and local and private-sector stakeholders to better protect against and respond to terrorist threats, both foreign and domestic, incidents such as the active-shooter incidents.

No. 4, strengthen counterterrorism and law enforcement capabilities by continuing to improve our counterterrorism operations and partnerships across the region and by building specialized capabilities to address threats and acts of terrorism.

No. 5, enhance emergency management and response capabilities through the implementation of a proactive posture to prepare for the worst-case catastrophic scenarios at all levels of government.

No. 6, advance interoperability emergency communications through the efficient utilization and development of communication resources and procedures to ensure that our first responders can effectively communicate with each other during a major incident in order to protect lives and property.

No. 7, promote citizen and community preparedness by better preparing the Jersey City-Newark UASI region citizens and communities to be ready for disasters and other emergencies, including the ability to sustain themselves for 7 to 10 days after an event to assist their neighborhoods in the aftermath of a disaster.

No. 8, build back better from disasters and become more resilient against future events through thoughtful resiliency planning and by developing long-term recovery capabilities, mitigation initiatives, and other efforts to ensure the continuity of critical systems during a crisis.

No. 9, support health and emergency preparedness by readying the Jersey City-Newark UASI for a potential pandemic, and preparing local communities to distribute medical countermeasures on a large scale, supporting the ability of the health care community to surge bed capacity and other resources to manage large numbers of sick and injured during an incident.

No. 10, enhance community security capabilities through outreach and education, as well as by implementing programs and policies to prevent, protect, and respond to, recover from cyber attacks or other major cyber incidents in collaboration with key partners and stakeholders.

The proposed cuts to DHS UASI funding would have a significant negative impact on our UASI region's disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts. Hurricane Sandy and the continued threat of home-grown terrorism demonstrate how we must remain vigilant and prepared. Threats from terrorism and response and recovery efforts associated with natural disasters will not diminish because of the proposed budget cuts to the DHS UASI program. Even in the current fiscal climate we do not have the luxury of making significant reductions to our capabilities without placing our Nation at risk. If we continue to prepare for, respond to, and recover from evolving threats and disasters, we will need sufficient resources to sustain and adapt our capabilities accordingly.

In closing, I wish to offer a quote from your colleague and Ranking Member committee Member, Congressman Donald M. Payne, Jr. These grants are essential to making New Jersey a safer place for families to live and work, and they are critical to bringing economic security to the State. Following Hurricane Sandy, it is clear that we need to invest more to prepare for disasters and mitigate casualties as well as reduce the economic damages that result from these tragedies.

Thank you for affording me the opportunity to appear before you today.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Kierce follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF W. GREG KIERCE

MARCH 15, 2016

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According to the FBI and the director of national intelligence—the United States faces a significant and growing threat from individuals in this country who are willing to conduct domestic mass casualty attacks inspired by terrorist ideology. In fact, the DNI has said he anticipates ISIS-inspired attacks within the United States in the year ahead. The threat of violent extremism poses a great risk to the Jersey

City/Newark UASI region due to its dense population, geographic importance, and target-rich environment.

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In the middle of it all is a section of the NJ Turnpike in Union and Essex counties that runs through what the FBI and Government officials from New Jersey have dubbed “the most dangerous 2 miles in America” for terrorist targets.

This area includes the largest port on the East Coast, Newark Airport, major rail lines, densely-populated cities and chemical and petroleum plants.

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Since 2002, funding provided through the Department of Homeland Security Urban Area Security Initiative has afforded “Tier 1 UASI regions” to accomplish the following 10 goals;

*Goal 1.*—Strengthen CBRNE Preparedness and Response Capabilities by acquiring the necessary equipment, training, and other resources needed by first responders to effectively detect, interdict, and respond to acts of terrorism or accidents involving CBRNE materials or agents.

*Goal 2.*—Protect Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources across the region based on a systematic process of identifying and cataloging infrastructure, conducting site visits and risk assessments, investing in target hardening projects, and providing additional protective and mitigation measures based on the current threat environment.

*Goal 3.*—Strengthen Intelligence and Information Sharing Capabilities through collaborative partnerships with Federal, State, local, and private-sector stakeholders to better protect against and respond to terrorist threats, both foreign and domestic, and other incidents, such as active-shooter situations.

*Goal 4.*—Strengthen Counter-Terrorism and Law Enforcement Capabilities by continuing to improve our counter-terrorism operations and partnerships across the region and by building specialized capabilities to address threats and acts of terrorism.

*Goal 5.*—Enhance Emergency Management and Response Capabilities through the implementation of a proactive posture to prepare for worst-case/catastrophic scenarios at all levels of government.

*Goal 6.*—Advance Interoperable and Emergency Communications through the efficient utilization and development of communication resources and procedures to ensure that our first responders can effectively communicate with each other during a major incident in order to protect lives and property.

*Goal 7.*—Promote Citizen and Community Preparedness by better preparing Jersey City/Newark UASI Region citizens and communities to be ready for disasters and other emergencies, including the ability to sustain themselves for 7 to 10 days after an event and to assist their neighborhoods in the aftermath of a disaster.

*Goal 8.*—Build Back Better from Disasters and Become More Resilient Against Future Events through thoughtful resiliency planning and by developing long-term recovery capabilities, mitigation initiatives, and other efforts to ensure the continuity of critical systems during a crisis.

*Goal 9.*—Support Health Emergency Preparedness by readying the Jersey City/Newark UASI Region for a potential pandemic and preparing local communities to distribute medical countermeasures on a large scale, and supporting the ability of the health care community to surge bed capacity and other resources to manage large numbers of sick or injured during any incident.

*Goal 10.*—Enhance Cyber Security Capabilities through outreach and education as well as by implementing programs and policies to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from cyber attacks or other major cyber incidents in collaboration with key partners and stakeholders.

The proposed cuts to DHS UASI funding would have significant, negative impacts on our UASI regions disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.

Hurricane Sandy and the continued threat of home-grown terrorism demonstrate how we must remain vigilant and prepared. Threats from terrorism and response and recovery efforts associated with natural disasters will not diminish because of proposed budget cuts to DHS UASI program.

Even in this current fiscal climate, we do not have the luxury of making significant reductions to our capabilities without placing our Nation at risk.

If we are to continue to prepare for, respond to, and recover from evolving threats and disasters, we will need sufficient resources to sustain and adapt our capabilities accordingly.

In closing I wish to offer a quote from your colleague and Ranking committee Member Congressman Donald M. Payne:

“These grants are essential to making New Jersey a safer place for families to live and work, and they are critical to bringing economic security to the state. Following Hurricane Sandy, it is clear that we need to invest more to prepare for disasters and mitigate casualties as well as reduce the economic damage that results from these tragedies.”

Thank you for affording me this opportunity to appear before you today.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Sergeant Kierce. I now recognize myself for questions. I will ask all of you if you could just comment on this. I asked the mayor in the first panel the same question. I would ask all of you just to give me your opinion on this.

Secretary Johnson is going to be testifying before the full committee tomorrow on the Department of Homeland Security’s fiscal year 2017 budget request. What message would each of you give to the Secretary about these proposed cuts?

Mr. Butterworth. You could just go down the panel. Just your opinion.

Mr. BUTTERWORTH. Yes, sir. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the year-over-year investment has historically, especially since 2011, has been in somewhat of a decline. We have seen in recent years a holding steady, and that reflects very much a maintenance mode that we are in. We are not capable of expanding in the current environment from the local level to the State level. But the maintenance that we are doing, the recurring maintenance on a 2- to 3-year basis is critical. To further decrease those funds would change that cycle from a 2- to 3-year refreshment of any number of different forms of training, resources, hardware, to a 5- to 6-year cycle. I think those types of things, the wrong time right now to do that based on the current threat level.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, sir.

Chief.

Chief KERR. Thank you. I really would like to echo what Mr. Butterworth said, that the threat is still changing, the threat is still increasing, and yet we are going to cut back the funding that allows us to prepare and respond to those events. I have just a couple of numbers here that I wanted to repeat.

Fifty-one percent of all fire departments that answered a survey conducted by NFPA do not have enough portable radios to equip all emergency responders on a shift. This percentage is down from 77 percent in 2001. Fifty-one percent is still way too high.

So it just proves that the grants are working, but we have to continue to be aggressive and assertive at making sure that things like that are not happening across the country.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Chief.

Mr. Sena. I am sorry, Chief Turner. I am sorry.

Chief TURNER. Just really quick, sir, I would just echo both Chief Kerr and also Mr. Butterworth's comments. But I would just say this: We have to continue to build on our partnerships. If we are in a partnership, we have to provide the funding that is necessary for us to sustain what we are doing in the local areas. Then to take that further, as we continue to move into a different space, that technology continues to change, we have to be able to expand our network of intelligence, and we have to do that with funding at the local level.

Mr. DONOVAN. Chief, you will be assured that we will relay your message to the Secretary tomorrow.

Mr. Sena.

Mr. SENA. Sir, since September 11, we have built the capacity across the country that we have never had before in information sharing and fusion centers, data collection. All this capacity relies on grant funding to be effective. Although the State and local agencies that support and own fusion centers have given over half the money that goes toward fusion centers, we still need that support. It seems like every day we get farther away from September 11, I feel like they want to bring us back to September 10. There are too many lives that have been lost. We can't go there. Thank you, sir.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, sir.

Sergeant.

Mr. KIERCE. Just to echo my colleagues, and I think too the fact that we are fighting an unconventional level of domestic terrorism today shows the need that we have to at least sustain these grants at current levels. I would hope that Director Johnson fully understands, after hearing from my colleagues today and your folks, that we have to maintain this level of readiness.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you, Sergeant. I also would like to ask each of you to comment on how FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate had noted that the skills attained with these grants and programs are perishable, and that we have to constantly plan, train, exercise, refresh equipment, as you have pointed out, to ensure that we don't lose the capabilities that we have gained since September 11, 2001.

Would you be able to continue the training that you have been able to do so far with personnel in the absence of any Federal funding or in the absence of the funding that is being proposed to be cut?

Mr. BUTTERWORTH. The short answer is no, sir, we would not. We would have to drastically reduce the recurrence of that training and basically do more with less. We fully understand the idea of caps and the necessity to find efficiencies. I would submit to you, Mr. Chairman, that we have done that. The National Emergency Management Association, emergency managers across the country, and Homeland Security advisers as well, have found ways to do that. To further task the team with that would definitely get to the point of increasing the adversarial opportunities.

Mr. DONOVAN. My time is running out. I suspect that that would be true with all of you with purchasing and maintaining the equipment that you need to protect the jurisdictions which you are responsible to protect. Would that be accurate to say?

Chief KERR. I will just say that is absolutely accurate. I totally endorse Administrator Fugate's remarks about losing that capability and the capacity. It is really important that we maintain that and even build upon that.

Mr. DONOVAN. Chief Turner, you were going to say something?

Chief TURNER. Yes. I will just add that our problem is the attrition that we face. How do we train our individuals to get to the level that we need them to be? Without these funds, we fall short of that. We are doing everything we can to partner with our local and State partners and Federal partners. But the challenge with maintaining that becomes difficult without funds.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you very much, Chief.

As I said, my time has run out. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey, the Ranking Member, Mr. Payne, for questions.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This question is for all the witnesses as well. As I mentioned in my opening statement, I am concerned about the administration's proposal to cut the existing homeland security grant programs and divert funding to programs we know little about. Has DHS engaged with you on this vision for either the Regional Competitive Grant Program or the Countering Violent Extremist grants to this date? Are there thoughts or concerns about either program you would like to share with the committee? Mr. Butterworth.

Mr. BUTTERWORTH. Yes, sir. Thank you, Ranking Member Payne. I appreciate the opportunity to comment on both of those. No. 1, we have not been contacted directly about the competitive grants. Quite frankly, how that process would play out remains a bit of a mystery at our level. To transition to the CVE program, we saw the value with our deputy director of Homeland Security in Georgia. We began conversations several months ago to have discussions about the countering violent extremism, where it would be placed, what level would be appropriate. We have built a program in Georgia, and we are excited to see the opportunity.

We are encouraged by the investment that Congress and the administration has made to the end of countering violent extremism. We look forward to the opportunity of a productive conversation. But to this point, unfortunately, we haven't had those at the Federal level. We continue to do that at the State level, and look forward to those conversations. Thank you, sir.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you.

Chief KERR. I would echo the fact that there have not been any conversations and we have not been consulted or asked what we think about that or how it could be more effective. I would just say that, you know, at this time, it is so important that we are involved in our destiny and involved in how we can best prepare our responders, who then in turn can best protect the community. We can't do that if we don't know what is happening and we don't know where the funding is going to come from.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you.

Chief TURNER. I would just simply say this, that through Major City Chiefs, I do not believe that we have been approached and briefed. Then second, as it relates to the CVE, I think that one thing that we have done, we have to continue to celebrate our di-

versity, as we do in Atlanta. But the question is how we work more aggressively with those communities. We do that through community policing initiatives. We will need additional funds to be able to expand the programs that we put in place.

Atlanta is the third-most visited city in America, most diverse city in the South. It is clear for us that we have got to do more than less, and being able to communicate with all the various different communities.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you.

Mr. SENA. Sir, CVE is a big core of what fusion centers do, and what we are built to do is to identify those threats. We haven't been consulted on this project or this grant proposal for a program. It is one of those things that we don't want to see the current situation where the grants we are looking at are being cut for a new program that we know nothing about. We know what we are doing here as far as that coordination and effort. We need to expand that and we need more resources to do it. But I am in great fear that they will be taking money from one side to fund another side that we know nothing about.

Mr. KIERCE. Pretty much echoing my colleagues, Congressman. I think that we, through the UASI group, have had no interaction with the Federal Government as far as how these new programs are planned out. I think, you know, from the CVE perspective, if that developed, that is home base, it is law enforcement working within the community, knowing the people that you serve, and developing relationships and ensuring that the trust between law enforcement and the people that you serve is there.

I think that we have to maintain—the current level of readiness is critical. Depending on the local taxpayers to bear the burden of substituting the dollars that we would be losing by Homeland Security I think is just intolerable.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you. I will yield back at this time.

Mr. DONOVAN. Thank you. The gentleman yields back.

At this time the Chair recognizes Mr. Loudermilk from Georgia.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize I missed the earlier part of the committee. I was chairing another committee hearing. But this is something very important to me. I am going to direct my questions to my good friend Mr. Butterworth, as we both served in the State Senate together. He was also the adjutant general of the Georgia National Guard, and now in his current position is fully aware of the emergency preparedness, the status, and the threats that face the State of Georgia.

Let me kind of summarize what we face here in Georgia. We have the busiest airport in the world, Atlanta Hartsfield. We have 130-plus medium- and small-sized airports throughout the State, 2 of the busiest import-export ports in the Nation in Savannah and Brunswick, Georgia. Atlanta is the headquarters of many Fortune 500 companies. We also have the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, the home of several top research universities, as well as the financial center of the southeast. Weather is also a consideration in Georgia, as we are susceptible to tornadoes, as well as hurricanes coming from the Gulf Coast or the Atlantic Ocean.

Mr. Butterworth, with your knowledge of these, as well as the growing threat that we face from terrorism, how significant are

these cuts in our ability to prepare and respond to whether it is a natural disaster, violent extremism, or a target against our citizens?

Mr. BUTTERWORTH. Thank you, Congressman. The first answer is it is highly disastrous. The first thing I would say, it is nice to see you. Thank you for the job that you do for Georgia in representing us very, very well.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Thank you.

Mr. BUTTERWORTH. We certainly appreciate your time in that regard.

Detrimental would be another term that I would use. Urban search and rescue teams would be cut in half. We currently have 15. K-9, or explosive ordnance disposal teams, we currently have 9 in regional areas. Those will be cut in half, if not larger. The Information Sharing and Analysis Center, the fusion center in Georgia would largely go unfunded. Currently, we put \$1.4 million of Department of Homeland Security funds into that facility. That would largely go unfunded because of other areas that would have to be shored up, for lack of a better term. It is highly detrimental to the end result.

The Emergency Management Assistance Compact. I was encouraged in the earlier discussion, earlier panel, Congressman, Mayor de Blasio used the term that we coined in Georgia, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." I was encouraged to hear him say that. I would also apply that to the EMAC operation itself. EMAC would largely go unfunded as well.

As you know, if an area is impacted, it is typically not defined in one State, it is across State borders in many cases. There is the opportunity, as we saw in South Carolina last fall with the flooding, we provided individuals specifically to help them in the recovery process. All of those things would be detrimentally impacted. We certainly would appreciate your help in that regard. Thank you, sir.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Thank you. It is interesting that you brought up the fusion centers. Two weeks ago, we passed on the House floor the ALERT Act, a bill that I authored, and that was a strong bipartisan support in this committee, as well as no opposition on the floor. The ALERT Act was in response to the Task Force on Foreign Fighter Travel that I served on. When we realized that we needed to have a force multiplier for our Federal agencies regarding countering terrorism and CVE efforts, and that our local law enforcement were perfectly positioned to do that, but there were bureaucratic hurdles in the way. The ALERT Act removed those bureaucratic hurdles, but yet all of the training and resources would be funneled through the fusion centers as the center.

So even though we are making great strides with providing better engagement with local and State resources with our Federal regarding terrorism, what I am understanding is if we lose the funding for the fusion center, then none of this would have any effect. Is that true?

Mr. BUTTERWORTH. Yes, sir. That is exactly true. The fusion center is definitely the focal point for intelligence—obviously, intelligence gathering, information sharing, and analysis. I think that impact would basically force us to go blind in many respects. I

defer to my panel colleague Mr. Sena in that regard, specifically on the fusion center topic. But we would definitely be operating largely in the blind.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Mr. Sena.

Mr. SENA. Yes, sir. Every year we train hundreds of thousands of officers across the country on suspicious behaviors, the things to look for. If we lost this funding, that training wouldn't exist. We would not have the eyes and ears of State and local law enforcement to support us in gathering that information, nor would we have the training on privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties protections for the folks on what they can legally collect. All that would be gone.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Okay. I see my time has expired, Mr. Chair. Chief Turner.

Chief TURNER. Thank you. I would just really add 2 things. The funding from Homeland Security allowed us to do something very unique in the city of Atlanta, and that is to begin the stand-up of a video integration center that allows us to bring cameras into one centralized location. Since that initial funding, we have expanded that network of cameras above 6,000 cameras that come into one centralized location. It gives us the kind of situational awareness that we need to make strong decisions as we partner with GEMA and all of our Federal and local agencies to deal with challenging issues.

As you know, we host the largest 10K road race in the world. The Peachtree Road Race is a challenge for us in that we entertain more than 60,000 runners and more than 300,000 spectators. How do you deal with that without the kind of situational awareness that we need from programs that are provided by the homeland security grants that we previously received?

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Chief Kerr.

Chief KERR. Thank you. I just wanted to add that, besides all of your law enforcement personnel that are trained on suspicious activity reporting and all those things, in Austin, Texas, we are also a part of our fusion center, and we have a member that sits on the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force, and that there are many more eyes out there that can be part of like a threat liaison officer program. We wouldn't have those things if we didn't have the funding and the support of the Austin Regional Intelligence Center. I just wanted to add that it is more than just our law enforcement people that are helping, but there is firefighters out there that are your eyes on the ground.

Mr. LOUDERMILK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My time has expired. I yield back. But I encourage our Members, it looks like we have a lot of work to do to correct this problem.

Mr. DONOVAN. You are absolutely right. Just to continue in the vein that you were just speaking, Chief Kerr, Chief Turner, and Mr. Sena, last week the American Enterprise Institute released a report that claims that fusion centers are redundant to Joint Terrorism Task Forces, and that eliminating fusion centers or incorporating them into JTTFs would strengthen State and local information-sharing and intelligence activities.

Fusion centers, my understanding is, fusion centers serve as a focal point for gathering and sharing vital homeland security infor-

mation between Federal Government, State, and front-line law enforcement and first responders, including fire service, as you said, Chief, emergency managers, public health, as well as the private sector. The primary mission of the JTTFs is to conduct terrorism-related investigations, which means the ability to share information with first responders would be limited because of the fear that leaked information could compromise an open investigation.

So eliminating fusion centers or combining them with JTTFs doesn't make sense to me. You are the experts. Have any of you seen the AEI report? If you have, I would appreciate your comments about their proposal. I open that up to the panel.

Mr. SENA. Sir, I did read the report and was as dumbfounded as the budget. You know, this budget proposal doesn't make any sense to us, and neither did the report. Very ill-informed. It did not have the details in that report that show what fusion centers really are. They are State and locally-owned and -operated. As Chief Kerr reported, you know, it is more than just law enforcement.

We have lots of folks that work with fusion centers. We bring those people together, and we look at a broad range of threats to our communities, everything from narcotics trafficking to threats in the community, from criminal gangs and organized crime groups. We don't know, and my experience has been where are we going to find that CVE threat? Where are we going to find the terrorist threats? Oftentimes I have found them through regular criminal activity, or through sources of information from criminal activity. That is the role of fusion centers, to bring all those pieces together.

There is no way that State and local law enforcement, anyone sitting on this panel is going to say, you know, our partners in the FBI should take over this mission. Even our partners in the FBI don't believe they should take over this mission. This is a State and local mission where we leverage all of our authorities, and we also bring our Federal partners along to work with us in our fusion centers. We do a great job, and it is through collaboration. It is not just focused on terrorism. Although it is a key cornerstone of what we do, we look at all the threats to our local community, and we serve every member, fire, emergency medical personnel, emergency management, and the law enforcement community.

Mr. DONOVAN. I agree you do do a great job.

Chief Turner.

Chief TURNER. I would just really echo what he just said and then just add this: That both our fusion center in the State of Georgia as well as our Joint Terrorism Task Force, we have to work continually together. They have 2 separate missions, but at the same time they work very closely together. The Atlanta Police Department has members in both of those centers. Quite frankly, if we did not have those 2, then we would be trying to do what our largest city in America does regularly, and that is do it on their own. The New York City Police Department has a tremendous amount of resources that they provide to the homeland.

Cities like Atlanta, with more than 2,500 employees, cannot do this work alone. We have to rely on the joint centers, as well as the Joint Terrorism Task Force and the fusion centers, so that we can work collectively to be able to resolve the challenges that face each and every one of us.

Mr. DONOVAN. I think, Chief, you hit a vital point that dispels the argument, the fact that these are 2 distinct responsibilities that are undertaken by these 2 entities, and that the elimination of 1 or joining the 2 could jeopardize our ability to protect our Nation.

The Chair now recognizes our Ranking Member for our final questions.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to talk about a topic that is very important to me. This question is, once again, for all the witnesses. Since I joined this panel in 2013, I have worked hard to promote programs and policies that advance interoperable communications capabilities. Unfortunately, the Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant has not been funded in half a decade. I suspect the cuts to homeland security grants will only further undermine interoperable communication efforts.

Can each of you talk about how the elimination of the Interoperable Emergency Communications Grant Program has affected interoperability efforts and how grant cuts might further hinder interoperability goals? Sergeant Kierce.

Mr. KIERCE. Congressman and Mr. Chairman, interoperability communication still is a challenge among the public safety folks. In Jersey City, Hudson County alone, with the 12 different municipalities you have operating on different frequencies, and there again, when you are called to a major event, many times basic fire services aren't able to communicate with firefighting ground operations. It is the same thing with the police departments.

In Jersey City alone, we have several law enforcement agencies, both the sheriff's department, Port Authority Police, Jersey City Police, and other law enforcement agencies, all operating under different frequencies and bandwidths. Since my involvement with UASI in 2002, interoperability has been a communications nightmare. The cuts in funds has led towards a failure in communications as a whole.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you.

Chief TURNER. I would just simply add that one of our biggest challenges in interoperability is not just—in large cities we do fairly well. The investment has been made, and we have systems that are in place that we can communicate. However, the challenges are those small agencies, even university police.

Just recently, we had a conversation with some of our Atlanta university-centered police departments that really do not have the network to be able to communicate in a crisis. So we have to expand the program to be able to bring all of those smaller agencies into the network.

Chief KERR. I would echo my former colleagues here, their comments, but then add the University of Texas into that, and make sure that we include the capital and all the different police agencies that do not have interoperable communications in the Austin-Travis County area. We are fortunate in regard to the fire service in that we dispatch for all 15 fire departments that are part of Travis County. So we do have that interoperable communication and we are able to make that work. It is a huge difference when you have that. But when funding starts getting cut and you are not able to enhance that interoperable communications, things are

going to happen, and we are not going to be able to address them as we should.

Mr. BUTTERWORTH. Thank you, sir. A quick comment. Going on some of my previous background as an Air Force aviator, I have seen the issue that having interoperability is—the problem of not having that interoperability brings. One airplane that I flew had 8 different radios in order to facilitate different communications, immediate communications, with individuals both in the air and on the ground. I saw on more than one occasion the operation worked to a detriment because first-hand communication was not capable. I have also seen in the first responder world in Georgia, multijurisdictional problems, just like Chief Turner has referenced, across the State is a challenge.

We, to that end, have initiated and perpetuated a recurring training cycle of interoperability, where we bring jurisdictions from all over the State of Georgia and put those interoperability capabilities in a close geographical location to facilitate better communication. That has made an incredible difference in the State of Georgia. I know my peers in other States have done the same thing.

If these cuts become reality, those training opportunities would be minimal, and it would be an extremely detrimental impact to interoperability capabilities. Thank you, sir.

Mr. PAYNE. Yes.

Mr. SENA. From my perspective, voice, video, and data, textual data, are critical to saving lives. Without these grants, the equipment that we currently have in use would no longer be able to be maintained and we would lose that capability. So it is something that for me, during the Super Bowl, was an incredible asset to be able to share information, both the voice capability and actually video and textual, show them in real time, not only showed people in our region what was going on, but showed people in District of Columbia what was happening in real time. That would be gone.

Chief TURNER. If I could just make one last point. In my 34 years of policing, when I first came on the police department, we had a radio that had 6 channels. Our problem is there are so many channels and talk groups on our radios. If we don't have these funds, we don't have the ability to continue to train the individuals that are coming into this business. Funding for training is absolutely essential for us to be able to be effective as we move to try to mitigate challenges that come our way. Thank you.

Mr. PAYNE. Well, I would like to thank all of you for your testimony today. It has been very enlightening and informative as well. You are our eyes and ears and the people on the ground and first responders, and we appreciate the work that you do and the testimony that you have brought today.

So with that, Mr. Chair, I will yield back.

Mr. DONOVAN. I join my friend, Congressman Payne, in thanking you for what you do for the citizens of our Nation and your commitment to protecting them and their safety. I want to thank you all for your valuable testimony today, and for my fellow Members for their questions.

The Members of the subcommittee may have some additional questions of the witnesses. We will ask that you respond to those in writing.

Pursuant to Committee Rule VII(e), the hearing record will be held open for 10 days. This subcommittee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:05 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

