



Statement of Senator Feinstein on Changes to Homeland Security Grant Funding

January 3, 2006

“At least on the first reading, I think the plan makes greater sense than what has been in place to date. Under the plan, it will mean:

- **More emphasis on a regional approach** – with five California regions eligible for funding including Los Angeles/Long Beach and the San Francisco Bay Area, which clearly face the greatest threats in California in terms of population and infrastructure.

With this regional approach, it will be absolutely critical for mayors, city councils, and boards of supervisors to move quickly to set up a process for the development of a regional application, potentially through the established regional government associations.

- **A broader focus that includes natural disaster preparedness** – As Hurricane Katrina so tragically illustrated, threats to the homeland can come in many forms. Our nation must be prepared to deal with all kinds of threats. This will help fund efforts needed to deal with both terrorist attacks and a major natural disaster, such as evacuation plans and interoperable communications.
- **More consideration of the consequences of an attack or disaster** – so that the cost in human and financial terms, in addition to factors such as population, critical infrastructure, are considered when determining how much funding is given.

While this appears to move our nation toward more risk-based funding, it does not address the statutory small-state minimum, where all states receive .75 percent of homeland security funding regardless of the actual risk. I believe this minimum is the wrong policy and should be changed. So I will continue to work with Senator Cornyn to try to pass legislation that reduces this minimum.”

Following is a summary of the Cornyn-Feinstein bill. It would:

- **Direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to allocate funding to homeland security grants based on risk analysis.** This direction covers the four major first-responder grant programs administered by Department of Homeland Security in addition to some grants for seaport and airport security - called “covered grants” in the bill, including:

- 1) The State Homeland Security Grant Program;
- 2) The Urban Area Security Initiative;
- 3) The Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program; and
- 4) The Citizens Corps Program.

- **Reduce the “small state minimum” to .25% per state.** Current practice requires each state to get .75% of much of the grant funding. That means 37.5% of the funds are marked for distribution before any risk analysis.
- **Require grants be designed to meet “essential capabilities.”** Essential capabilities are what we get for the money spent – the ability to address the risk by reducing vulnerability to attack and by diminishing the consequences of such an attack by effective response.
- **Ensure that States quickly and effectively pass on Federal funds** to where they are needed so that Federal funds are not held back.

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