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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
 WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6025
www.senate.gov/appropriations

April 17, 2002

Honorable Tom Ridge
 Director
 Office of Homeland Security
 The White House
 Washington, DC 20500

Dear Director Ridge:

The purpose of this letter is to renew our earlier invitation to you to testify before the Senate Committee on Appropriations in the matter of the security of our homeland.

Last week, we held two days of hearings on the defense of the homeland. We heard from people on the frontline of our homeland defense about the need for more resources to hire, equip, and train emergency response personnel. Witnesses testified to the need for clear direction from the Federal government on such issues as accurate and detailed threat assessments, standards for interoperability of communications systems, standards for our state and local emergency health care systems, and guidance on how all levels of government and the private sector should work together to secure our nation from terrorist attack.

The hearing testimony revealed a plethora of basic problems, from incompatible broadcast and communications systems, to security clearances mired in bureaucratic red tape, to National Guard troops stretched thin and, in some cases, expected to guard areas without arms. Senators heard the frustrations of state and local officials who are receiving reports of little or no real direction from the Federal government in assessing risk and pinpointing vulnerabilities. We heard from experts on terrorism that our vulnerabilities can be easily exploited using little money and weapons fashioned from widely available sources. During these two days of hearings, the Committee was told of valiant efforts by good citizens, but also of little guidance about coordination, prevention of duplication and waste, or effective use of resource sharing from the Federal government.

The Honorable Tom Ridge
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After listening to many hours of detailed testimony, it became even more evident that the Committee needs to hear directly from you, the individual who has been put in charge of homeland defense activities by the President, about the Administration's strategy for a comprehensive national domestic defense plan. Consequently, we continue to seek your testimony on this matter of vital national importance. Again, we assure you that we have no interest in taking testimony about your private advice to the President.

As has been pointed out in testimony, we must act, and act quickly, to address these new challenges. This will mean rising above the usual bureaucratic turf battles; figuring out how to address a problem which crosses the jurisdictions of numerous Departments and agencies; building a new flexibility into our solidified government structures; and thinking about federal, state and local relations in a new way.

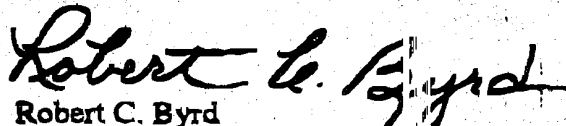
The Committee will conduct additional hearings on the defense of the homeland on April 23, April 25, April 30, May 2, and May 9, 2002. We will invite Cabinet officers with various homeland defense responsibilities to testify in support of those components. However, this is no substitute for having the one official testify whom the President has designated as responsible for coordinating the Executive Branch's efforts to detect, prepare for, prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from terrorist attacks in our nation's homeland. You may elect any of the above five dates that you prefer for appearing before the Committee on Appropriations; if you will let the Committee know of your preference, we will be pleased to accommodate your wishes in this regard.

Thank you again for your courtesy and cooperation.

Sincerely yours,



Ted Stevens
Ranking Member



Robert C. Byrd
Chairman

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