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NEEDS OF THE FIRE SERVICE

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SPACE

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

OCTOBER 11, 2001

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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CONTENTS

	Page
Hearing held on October 11, 2001	1
Statement of Senator Allen	17
Statement of Senator Cleland	12
Prepared statement	12
Statement of Senator Kerry	3
Statement of Senator Wyden	1

WITNESSES

Buckman III, Chief John M., President, International Association of Fire Chiefs	36
Prepared statement	39
Burris, Jr., Kenneth O., Chief Operating Officer and Acting Administrator, U.S. Fire Administration	21
Prepared statement	23
Dodd, Hon. Christopher, U.S. Senator from Connecticut	5
Ingram, Robert, Battalion Chief, City of New York Fire Department	48
Prepared statement	50
Pascrell, Jr., Hon. William, U.S. Representative from New Jersey	14
Prepared statement	16
Plaugher, Edward P., Chief, Arlington County Fire Department	52
Prepared statement	54
Schaitberger, Harold A., General President, International Association of Fire Fighters	30
Prepared statement	32
Turner III, James E., Executive Secretary, Delaware Volunteer Fireman's Association, on behalf of the National Volunteer Fire Council	55
Prepared statement	57
Weldon, Hon. Curt, U.S. Representative from Pennsylvania	8

APPENDIX

Article from The Washington Post, placed for the record	77
Rockefeller, Hon. John D., U.S. Senator from West Virginia, prepared statement	77

NEEDS OF THE FIRE SERVICE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2001

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SPACE,
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:35 p.m. in room SR–253, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Ron Wyden, Chairman of the Subcommittee, presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RON WYDEN, U.S. SENATOR FROM OREGON

Senator WYDEN. The Subcommittee will come to order.

The Subcommittee on Science, Technology, and Space is acutely aware that information technology and scientific information are critical to combating terrorism. The Subcommittee has already begun efforts to improve scientific research in fighting terrorism, targeting key fields such as aviation technology that has been suggested by Senator Allen of Virginia.

The Subcommittee is going to hold hearings shortly to consider the creation of what I call NET Guard, the National Emergency Technology Guard, the technology equivalent of the National Guard that I proposed after the September 11th attacks to enable volunteer specialists from the Nation's leading technology companies to quickly recreate and repair compromised community communications and technology infrastructures.

In each of these areas, this Subcommittee intends to work closely with the Bush Administration and in a thoroughly bipartisan way. However, I am of the view that, no matter how good your technology and your science are, it always comes down to people. That is why today's research is so important.

Our country has more than a million firefighters, and the Federal Government must be a better partner in working to ensure that these dedicated, courageous Americans have the tools that they need to do their jobs.

Today the Science, Technology, and Space Subcommittee has the jurisdiction over the United States Fire Administration and is going to hear firsthand from firefighters about what is needed to afford them the human and the technological resources to confront future events effectively and as safely as possible.

On September 11th the firefighters of New York and Arlington, Virginia, were the first responders to a disaster of extraordinary proportions. They more than met the task that faced them, despite immediate infrastructure challenges. In New York, the collapse of

the World Trade Centers destroyed $47 million in equipment in just seconds, from pumper trucks to satellite units. At the Pentagon, I understand that responders faced daunting communications problems across varying radio frequencies. Again in New York, firefighters were stricken with mass casualties among their own, a huge loss of personnel.

Now, as we hear that further acts of terrorism are possible, we also hear the call from our first responders for support and help. We will hear today that two-thirds of all fire departments nationwide operate with inadequate staffing, that 75 percent of our Nation's firefighters are volunteers, and that most fire departments cannot afford the technologies that could make their work safer and more effective.

As we hear today's testimony, we will listen for opportunities to act, to guarantee that as Americans ask these public servants to put themselves in harm's way for our protection that our government is doing all that is necessary to ensure their success and safety.

There are three opportunities that I would like to note briefly. First, while the Federal Government has aided local police departments, spending more than $11 billion annually, Congress offers just $100 million in direct aid to local fire departments through the Firefighter Investment and Response Enhancement Act, or FIRE, statute. To illustrate very clearly the limits of that Federal grant money, I would like to share some startling numbers.

With $100 million available, last year fire companies across this Nation applied for $3 billion in assistance. The testimony that I have read makes it clear that additional resources are needed, and they are needed now. This is not the time to wait for a tortuous legislative process to begin equipping fire companies. The Congress has already appropriated $40 billion in emergency supplemental funding to respond to the events of September 11th.

Today, therefore, I am sending a letter to the Office of Management and Budget requesting that $600 million of that money be allocated immediately for additional fire grants. I want to see this funding help local departments on two fronts: making sure that they have the equipment and the training they need. They ought to be able to get those funds now.

Second, the Subcommittee wants to make sure that the Federal resources that are available are appropriately and widely used. To that end, we are looking at the coordination among training programs. Currently weapons of mass destruction response training is offered by the Department of Justice and by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The General Accounting Office has repeatedly criticized the lack of coordination and communication between these programs. It is my understanding that, despite improvements, these programs can still be confusing and duplicative.

My bottom line is we either consolidate these programs or clearly differentiate them so that doubled-up efforts do not waste the time of our first responders or the resources of the government. We are going to hear pleas today for a single point of government contact in training for first responders instead of multiple contacts at the Department of Justice and at the Federal Emergency Management Agency. It is my hope that Governor Ridge's Office of Homeland Se-

curity will take a look at this idea and eliminate some of the current confusion and duplication and commit the Subcommittee's efforts to help that outcome.

Third, I intend today to ask about how information technology specialists, through the National Emergency Technology Guard that I have suggested for similar approaches, could back up our firefighters as they respond to emergencies. There must be ways that our Nation's best and brightest technology professionals, who would like to do so on a volunteer basis, could assist with the communications and monitoring systems to help keep firefighters on top of a developing situation, be in a better position to hear from each other and from other experts as they independently assess the situations, such as compromised buildings and threats that are posed at disaster sites.

Finally, today we want to hear from those who were on the scene on September 11th and who represent the firefighters across the country. The best way to honor the brave firefighters who fell doing their job in New York is to support their colleagues still in service.

We have a distinguished panel today. We are going to introduce them briefly, but Senator Kerry of Massachusetts has long been a leader on these issues. He has got a very tight schedule and, I want to recognize Senator Kerry at this time.

STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN KERRY,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

Senator KERRY. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. Thank you for your excellent statement. I simply adopt by reference many of the proposals and the common sense approach that you have outlined in your opening. Those are precisely some of the avenues that we ought to be pursuing, and I thank you for your leadership in having this hearing and proceeding forward as the leader of the Science, Technology, and Space Subcommittee.

I apologize to a number of the witnesses, but we have the aviation security bill on the floor, and I am one of the co-authors of that legislation. We have also got the Amtrak amendment, of which I am a co-sponsor. So we are dealing with security on a lot of fronts here, and I beg your indulgence.

It is really coincidental, but it is a fact that we are here today on the one-month anniversary of the attacks in New York. I want to thank our colleagues from the House for coming over and testifying. Their schedules are busy as ours and their leadership is important to this.

I particularly want to thank the representatives of our fire forces across the country and especially, of course, those from New York who are here with us today to share their wisdom about how we need to proceed.

We in Massachusetts just a little over a year ago felt the extraordinary pain of the loss of six firemen in one blaze in a warehouse in Worcester, and we watched the incredible outpouring of support, but just the entire city's fabric just torn apart for a period of time in ways that were both remarkable and comforting in the sense of how people responded.

That was six. The concept of 343 or so missing and lost is incomprehensible in terms of the loss to a department, the loss to a com-

munity. Both New Jersey and New York are feeling that pain in very significant ways.

We fought hard in the Congress for a long period of time to try to respond to that with the FIRE Act, and now we need the respond in other thoughtful, sensible ways. I would just like to share, the way this has impacted people. I will share this with my colleagues very quickly. These are three letters of many that came from the Conway Grammar School in Conway, Massachusetts.

This one says—these were sent to me, but also they were sent to New York: "Dear Rescue Workers: Thank you for going to New York and rescuing those hurt and heartbroken people. Some day I want to be just like you. If a building was about to collapse, you would go in and save as many people as you could. Sincerely, Matt Brown." "Dear Rescue Worker: Thank you for risking your life for all of those thousands that were in the building. You were very brave to do that, and I will be sure to donate lots of water and anything else you need. I feel really bad about the terrorism. Sincerely, Emily Sanderson." "Dear Firefighter: Thank you for saving people. I wish I could be helping you. I think your job is important. Some day I want to be a firefighter. Your friend, Tyler Bates."

All over the country people have been touched by the danger that people face, that sort of comes home to a greater degree than ever before. What we know, what Senator Wyden knows and I know, Senator Dodd and others, is that there is much we can do and have to do to be better prepared to deal with terrorism. On the front lines of terror in any local community in our country there are going to be firemen and police officers and emergency rescue personnel.

Just today in the *Boston Herald*, headline: "Hub Fire Chief Warns Department Not Prepared for Terror Attack." An article goes on about the things that need to be done now to prepare for the capacity to respond to terror. Because of the nature of the weapons and because of the coordination issues and a whole lot of other issues, this is larger than what we have faced previously.

So this hearing is very timely, very important. Your testimony is going to be very important, and I am confident that we can fashion a response here that is worthy of the effort and that keeps the Congress together in a bipartisan way.

I will say as one note of caution—Senator Dodd is here, who is the original sponsor—we fought awfully long and hard to get the FIRE Act through and it was not easy. We finally did. But the level of demand now for those funds versus the amount of money available which Senator Wyden has referred to, $100 million versus $3 billion, not to mention what will now come forward as a consequence of these attacks, only underscores to us the imperative of helping our local departments to be prepared for the future.

That is the only way that we can do our jobs properly and permit you to do your jobs properly, to protect the American people, and they obviously demand nothing less.

So, Mr. Chairman, thank you for doing this. Again, my apologies for other business, but count me in on trying to adopt as much of this as fast as possible as we can. Thank you.

Senator WYDEN. Senator Kerry, thank you for an excellent statement. You have a long history of advocating for the firefighters and

the FIRE statute and in other areas. This Subcommittee is going to be a bully pulpit to try to assist the firefighters and particularly the senior leaders of the Senate, you and Senator Dodd in those efforts.

We know you have got to go to the floor. We just appreciate your coming.

We have got three very distinguished colleagues with a long history of involvement in this issue. Senator Dodd, you have been doing yeoman's work on behalf of the firefighters for a lot of years. I thought your floor amendment was so good, I really tried to jumpstart the work by saying that I hope that the OMB will release some of the money, $600 million, even before your legislation passes, and I wrote them to that effect. So your work is being paid attention to in a lot of corridors.

We will make your prepared remarks a part of the hearing record and just welcome anything that you'd like to say today, Senator Dodd.

STATEMENT OF HON. CHRISTOPHER DODD,
U.S. SENATOR FROM CONNECTICUT

Senator DODD. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me at the very outset thank you for your support and the letters to Mr. Daniels at the Office of Management and Budget to get them to move expeditiously on including some of these dollars as part of the emergency assistance programs.

I feel like we may start a firm here, Curt Weldon and Bill Pascrell and myself. We have been working together now along with, obviously, many others both here in the Senate and the House as members of Congress with our various firefighter groups around the country over the last number of years.

The FIRE Act, which you and Senator Kerry both graciously referred to, was an effort that involved a lot of people, and certainly Bill Pascrell, who is the former Mayor of Paterson, New Jersey, knows firsthand how difficult it is at the local level of government to get the kind of support and assistance you need for these kind of security measures. Certainly, policing we have supported over the years in a bipartisan fashion. As Bill Pascrell will tell you, the other side of that equation needs to be addressed, and we are going to try and do that with the expansion of the FIRE Act and other things we want to talk to you about today.

Congressman Weldon, of course, served as a firefighter, so this is not just a subject matter to which he brings an intellectual passion, but prior to his service in Congress knows firsthand what it is to be involved in the dangerous work of refighting.

There are a million people every day, Mr. Chairman, who put on that uniform one way or the other to go out and try and protect our citizenry from the kind of, I hesitate to use the word, normal sort of problems we think about. Every 3 days we lose one in this country, a firefighter. Fairly high statistics. Of course, they are dwarfed by what happened on September 11th.

I recall just a few months ago as we were arguing for the adoption of the FIRE Act we talked about Worcester and the six firefighters who lost their lives in that horrendous blaze. Who would have thought then that we would be talking about a situation

where 344 people lost their lives in New York City in a matter of hours or less.

So the need to do something in terms of equipment I think is obvious. I think the FIRE Act; what we have done already is an amendment to the DOD bill. You will hear from Congressman Weldon with some other ideas that they may expand on all of that, going in the right direction, to see to it that our departments, the paid, volunteer, the combination departments, are going to have the equipment they need.

The second is manpower. I think with the SAFER Act, which is again a bill that we believe is going the help a lot, 75,000 firefighters over the next 7 years. We have a diminishing number of fire departments. Again, the numbers are pretty overwhelming. I think Bill Pascrell will tell you that something in the neighborhood of 60 or 65 percent of our departments are undermanned around the country, and that those numbers are getting harder each year. So we are going to need to beef up these departments and provide them with the manpower.

The third leg, if you will—first machinery; manpower—is information. John Larson, our fellow colleague from Connecticut, I know has introduced some legislation to deal with the information issues.

So Mr. Chairman, this Committee has been so terrific on these issues over the years and we are very, very grateful, I certainly am, to you, to certainly Senator Hollings of South Carolina, to John McCain, who last week when we had a chance to put that FIRE Act on the DOD bill, John McCain said go ahead and do it. Obviously, the jurisdiction falls within this Committee, but we had an opportunity in that bill to do something. That kind of leadership from Senator Hollings and from Senator McCain is something that I know all of us appreciated very, very much.

So we are going to be looking to you in a sense now with these other ideas to see if we cannot move forward. I think people have a deep sense of appreciation. It does not need to hear from a Senator and public servants like ourselves. Today we take a moment to remember what happened a month ago in our country, a date that will forever live as a date of darkness here for what our country suffered from.

As we talk about what can be done, we talk about the people who lost their lives, the families who will suffer forever because of the human loss, I cannot think of any better way than to start talking about what we can do to minimize the kind of hardship that our Nation has suffered as a result of these savage attacks.

One of the pieces is this. It is not all of it. It is not going to solve every problem. But I think most people recognize today that that other side of the equation of domestic security will depend upon people at the local level having the tools, the manpower, and the information necessary to do their jobs.

I notice the presence of our good friend from Georgia, Max Cleland, who again has been a tremendous—was an early, early sponsor, co-sponsor of the FIRE Act, has been a great champion of these issues; very grateful to him for the tremendous support he offered you, Mr. Chairman, myself and others when those bills were on the floor, again on the Armed Services Committee and so played a very important role when the DOD bill was being consid-

ered and we wanted the Department of Defense authorization bill to include the FIRE Act. It was Max Cleland who also stood up and said this is a worthwhile thing to do.

In a sense, it does fall under—we do not send soldiers into battle ill-equipped and we cannot send firefighters into a blazing building ill-equipped. So we are trying to close those gaps with these various measures.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I would ask unanimous consent that these prepared remarks be included in the record and to say to Curt Weldon, to Bill Pascrell, how deeply grateful I am and I know America is for the remarkable leadership they provided in the House side, and I look forward to working with them again and we hope in a little more expeditious fashion than other battles we have had to go through. But we think the message is clear.

Senator WYDEN. Without objection, Senator Dodd, we are going to put your prepared remarks into the record. The fact that you have brought the Dodd passion to this cause all these years is just tremendously helpful, because there is no question that those three pieces of the puzzle—machinery, manpower, and information—are what this is all about.

You have taken the lead in terms of making sure we are going to adequately fund machinery and manpower. We are going to make a special effort on this Subcommittee to focus on information issues. Before you came I talked about an idea that I have talked about with some of the country's leading technology firms, a sort of information technology equivalent of the National Guard, people who could rush in with brains and talent and equipment and back up firefighters and other emergency personnel when the wireless systems are down and the hard-wired communications systems are down.

So we are going to work very closely with you to both get the funds and the necessary creativity to make sure that when we face these kinds of tragedies in this country that we are deploying all of the possible resources.

We thank you for an excellent presentation.

Senator DODD. Your co-chair Senator Allen as well, who I know over the years has been a good supporter of these efforts as well, I thank him for his support last week, 2 weeks ago I guess it was now, on the DOD bill as well.

Senator WYDEN. Let us do this. We have been joined by Senator Allen and Senator Cleland. Congressman Weldon and Congressman Pascrell have been waiting a long time. Senator Allen, if you and Senator Cleland are agreeable, we will hear from Congressman Weldon and Congressman Pascrell and then we will hear your opening remarks.

Congressman Weldon, your name is synonymous with the cause of supporting firefighter. The Firefighters Caucus, which there are 435 members in the House, and I guess you probably have 460 members over there who belong to the Firefighters Caucus at this point.

Mr. WELDON. Plus the Senate.

Senator WYDEN. Right, and I think it is because of your leadership that all of us have been so willing to get involved.

Please proceed as you choose.

STATEMENT OF HON. CURT WELDON, MEMBER, U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. WELDON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As a former colleague of yours in the House, you were out there long before you came to this body on these issues, and we appreciate that personal commitment that you have made.

To our friends on the Committee from both sides of the aisle and to my good friend here, who has been a champion, and my good friend over here and Congressman Hoyer who could not be with us, we are all in this together.

As you mentioned and Senator Dodd mentioned, I would not be in politics were it not for the fire service. I grew up in a fire service family, so this is not an issue to me; these are my brothers and my sisters, and I come to speak on their behalf today.

Joining us in this very important hearing, Mr. Chairman, I have the New York State Fire Administrator, Jim Burns, if you would not mind him being acknowledged.

Senator WYDEN. I would like very much for him to rise, please.

Mr. WELDON. Jim, do you want to stand.

We also have Deputy Chief Bob Ingram from the New York City Fire Department. Mr. Chairman, if you want to hear from somebody who was on the scene, Chief Ingram is the Deputy Chief of the department and was there.

Senator WYDEN. Chief, if you would rise so we could recognize you, too. Thank you, Chief.

Mr. WELDON. Tom Woods, Chief of Training for the New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control; Brian Rousseau from Technical Rescue; and two attorneys from New York, Brian Cullen and Josh Toas. We had them in a briefing earlier today on the House side to learn lessons from the New York incident and I will relate a portion of those to you today. You will hear more about them from your witnesses.

Mr. Chairman, you hit the nail on the head. You made the point that our international defenders get about $350 billion a year from the Federal taxpayer. As a senior member of the Armed Services Committee, I support every dollar that we give them. But their lives are no more important than the firefighters. Our law enforcement officers get $11 billion a year from the Federal Government, and I support that as a former mayor. But their lives are no more important than the firefighters.

We lose 100 firefighters every year. The bulk of the ones that die are volunteers. They have full-time jobs. They do this, not as their primary occupation; they do it as a commitment to service to their country. There are 32,000 departments in America and, as you said, 75 to 85 percent of them are volunteers. These are heroes, and we have not done well by them.

Eleven billion dollars for law enforcement, $350 billion for the military, and up until last year the total amount allocated for the fire service was less than $50 million a year, $50 million. Yet we have asked them to do more. We asked them to do weapons of mass destruction, terrorism training. Imagine asking our local police department to hold a chicken dinner to buy the police car. Imagine asking our highway department to hold a tag day to buy a new trash truck. It would never happen.

How then can we ask firefighters to go out and raise the money to buy the equipment, take time off from being trained, and to do all the other things necessary to protect our communities? It is out of control, Mr. Chairman, and it took September 11th to wake up the country.

This committee and you in particular and your colleagues did not need to be awakened, but America needed to be awakened. We now have the attention of the American people. It is up to us to respond.

We made a good start last year. The grant program which Senator Dodd and Congressman Pascrell were instrumental on, I helped get the appropriation from a very reluctant Congress to appropriate the $100 million and force the issue in the final budget reconciliation. I can happily tell you today that as a senior member of the House-Senate conference on armed services, where I will chair the procurement panel, I will successfully offer an amendment with Senate help to increase the Senator's program to a billion dollars a year for 3 years. That will be passed in the defense authorization conference this year. I have gotten the commitment from the other full committee chairs that have jurisdiction, Don Young and Sherry Boehlert, that they will waive jurisdiction to allow us to increase that program to a billion dollars a year over the next 3 years.

Resources are critically important, but they are not enough. Mr. Chairman, we know that DOJ and the military did some training for 125 larger cities in terms of responding to terrorist incidents. But what good is training and what good is giving them initial resources if there is no follow-on money to make sure those detection units and those turnout suits are certified every year?

Most of our big city departments are short dollars. They have cut back on the amount of personnel. They have cut back on equipment. In the D.C. Fire Department, because of the commitment to the Pentagon we only had six trucks operational for the entire city. How can we expect the D.C. Fire Department to be able to handle a terrorist incident when they do not have the funding to take care of the basic needs of the city without a terrorist incident occurring.

We have sold ourselves short and the fire service short. We have given lip service in the past of giving them training and equipment and then not giving them the follow-up money to make sure that equipment was properly maintained and properly supported.

On the training, there is a tremendous problem with the backfill. When the departments have to put people on to replace those who are going for training, there is no dollar allocation for that. It has created a tremendous hardship on local departments around the country.

But it does not just come down to resources, Mr. Chairman. It comes down to technology. I chaired the Research Committee for Defense for 6 years. I sat through hearing after hearing where we developed new GPS technology so that every soldier on the battlefield can be located by their command officer instantaneously. Why do we not have the same technology for our civilian fire service? Why when a firefighter goes into a building or a warehouse, as has happened up in Senator Kerry's district, does not the commanding officer know where he is or she is based on GPS technology?

It is available. The Pentagon has not been willing to move quick enough to transfer it. We now have both horizontal and vertical capability to locate firefighters in high rise buildings. It should be mandated that that technology be made available for our fire and EMS community. If that had been in place we would not have lost firefighters as we have over the past several years.

But it goes beyond that, Mr. Chairman. We have a research program right now in the Pentagon to put a garment on a soldier that monitors not just where they are, but the vital signs of that soldier 24 hours a day—their pulse, their heart rate, the way they are operating. Why should not that technology be available to every firefighter, so when they are in a hostile environment not only do we know where they are, but we know how well they are doing. If they have a problem, if they are having a heart attack or some other problem breathing, instantaneously that is transmitted out.

When we had the briefing this morning I asked the New York deputy chief, I said: Would it have helped us to locate some of those bodies if we had had GPS equipment on those dead firefighters? The answer was yes.

We need to apply technology that is available to the military, because the threat to our domestic preparedness is just as strong as the threat to our international defenders. A loss of life of a firefighter is equal to the loss of life of a police officer or military personnel. But we have not made that statement in the past in this country up until the last several years, and largely because of the efforts of this particular Subcommittee and the members of it.

It goes beyond that as well, Mr. Chairman, to include communications. I had Chief Morris from Oklahoma City before my committee 1 year after the date of that terrible tragedy at the Murrah Building. I said: Chief, are you any better off today than you were a year ago? He said: No, Congressman.

I said: What is your biggest problem? He said: Communication. He said: When I arrived on the scene of the Murrah Building and saw the building all torn apart, I knew I had casualties and loss of life. He said: I had to issue commands. He said: My radio system did not have the proper frequency spectrum to communicate with the rest of the agencies, so I couldn't talk to them. I could not integrate what I was doing with what they needed to do. He said: The cell became overtaxed immediately.

So in the end, the fire chief of one of our largest and most well-trained cities in America had to resort to writing his orders on pieces of paper and having firefighters deliver them to issue his commands. Mr. Chairman, that is not the way our military would operate. That is not the way our police operate. How in the world can we expect our firefighters to operate that way?

There is a big battle today to take the frequency spectrum allocation and sell off frequency spectrum to make money for the budget. Well, to me that is garbage. Senator McCain has led this fight in the Senate, with you all joining with him, to carve out a section of that frequency spectrum for the fire service, following the recommendations of the PSWC committee, the Public Safety Wireless group that is working on this issue.

We have to set aside frequency allocation for public safety that cannot be consumed by those private entrepreneurs who want to make money off it. Public safety has got to be our key priority.

That also will be important when we implement the kind of information technology systems that you have championed in the Senate, Mr. Chairman, because if we are going to have that kind of information technology linkage we have got to have the frequency spectrum allocation to make those connections, to link up with those fire and EMS personnel that are on the scene back with our command officers, to link into those other national networks like the National Guard network that you mentioned.

So communications is a critical part of this equation. We do not now today have an integrated communications system in the country. It is a hodge-podge: high frequency, low-band frequency, most of it not able to communicate one with the other.

My good friend here the former Governor of Virginia, I had some of his—and he has outstanding firefighters in his State, as he well knows—in here for a press conference 2 years ago. Neighboring Virginia fire departments cannot even communicate with the D.C. fire department because they do not have the interoperability between the States and between the local departments. That is outrageous.

It is time that we in America put our money where our mouths are and put our efforts behind this group of brave American heroes. You know, they are an unusual breed of people. They do not come up begging. They are kind of the unsung heroes of America, older than America itself. The first fire department is 250 years old in Philadelphia—Ben Franklin. It is about time we give them the recognition they deserve. It is about time we give them the support they need.

One of the other lessons learned in New York, Mr. Chairman, which you may want to get into, was the fact that we have urban search and rescue teams across the country. FEMA operates 26 of them and they are outstanding, in 26 separate States. None of them could respond to New York within 48 hours of the disaster.

The New York team was killed. My good friend Ray Downing, who took me through the 1993 World Trade Center bombing and was a good friend of mine and member of the Gilmore Commission, chaired by that great Governor of Virginia who is doing a fantastic job in integrating fire with military, Ray Downing was a member of that commission. He was killed, because the entire Rescue One and three other rescue units were wiped out when the buildings collapsed.

If New York State did not have their own State urban search and rescue operation, we would not have had an urban search and rescue team on the World Trade Center for 48 hours. Mr. Chairman, that is unacceptable. We need to do more to give leverage and resources to the governors to establish these teams in the States so they can respond locally, before our national urban search and rescue teams arrive on the scene.

The other thing you might hear is the fact that our building codes are not standard. In New York the World Trade Center did not have to comply with New York State building laws. That has got to be dealt with, Mr. Chairman. If we are going to ask these

people to risk their lives, they have to feel confident these buildings are properly designed, are properly protected, that they understand fully what will happen if a fire or disaster breaks out.

These are some of the recommendations that I make to you, Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the people that I most identify with, the brave people who I call America's heroes, the heart and soul of our country, the backbone of our communities.

I thank you for your tireless dedication. I look forward to working with you and I commit that we on the House side will be your partners in a bipartisan way in moving to support these men and women nationwide. Thank you.

Senator WYDEN. Well, thank you, Congressman Weldon. That was just a superb statement. I am going to have a couple of questions in a moment.

I think Senator Cleland is really under the gun at this point. If Congressman Pascrell is willing, could Senator Cleland go next for an opening statement?

Mr. PASCRELL. Sure.

Senator WYDEN. Thank you for your graciousness. Senator Cleland has done so much work in this area, I just do not want to let him pass.

STATEMENT OF HON. MAX CLELAND,
U.S. SENATOR FROM GEORGIA

Senator CLELAND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like, if no objection, my opening statement be included in full.

Senator WYDEN. Without objection.

Senator CLELAND. I just want to thank these distinguished gentlemen here and the firefighters around the country for a tremendous job they do. You know, you never really know what you have got until you are threatened to lose it or when you really need it most, and that has been the case with our firefighters. We have some wonderful firefighters in my State.

I will be introducing some legislation to improve grants, Federal grants to the local communities where they can train our firefighters better, particularly in terms of the use of hazardous materials and weapons of mass destruction. I will particularly be pushing better pay and better resources for our CDC and working with our firefighters and our first responders.

I just want to thank these wonderful people here today and our firefighters around the country, and I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding the hearing.

[The prepared statement of Senator Cleland follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. MAX CLELAND,
U.S. SENATOR FROM GEORGIA

Thank you for calling this hearing Mr. Chairman. I know we are all very proud of the job our firefighters have done throughout their careers and particularly in the wake of the attacks upon the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Each and every day, firefighters wake up knowing that they may have to run into burning buildings or respond to chemical or biological attacks. As thousands and thousands of people were running for their lives out of the Pentagon and the World Trade Center, firefighters were running in the opposite direction—into the danger and toward the people who could not save themselves. They are, by any definition, heroes.

We ask for a tremendous amount of responsibility from a small group of people. Firefighters are the first responders to almost every tragedy imaginable. From car

accidents, to plane crashes, from kitchen fires to towering infernos, from brush fires to hazardous material spills, we depend upon their service and training each and every day.

Concerned about the preparedness of the federal government and state and local emergency responders to cope with a large-scale terrorist attack involving the use of weapons of mass destruction, Congress mandated that the United States General Accounting Office report on the strategies, policies, and programs for combating domestic terrorism such as the use of chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear agents or weapons. The GAO report issued on September 20, but prepared prior to the terrorist attacks on September 11, illuminates the need for government officials to broaden traditional definitions of weapons of mass destruction to include terrorist attacks that result in mass casualties, destruction of critical infrastructures, economic losses, and disruption of daily life nationwide. GAO recommended [hold up report] that the President "... assign a single focal point within the Executive Office of the President, with the time, responsibility, authority, and resources for overall leadership and coordination of federal programs to combat terrorism." President Bush has created such a focal point with the establishment of the new Office of Homeland Security which must be able to coordinate local, state, and federal agencies so that they are can more effectively and more safely respond to all emergencies, including future terrorist attacks which are inevitable.

Mr. Chairman, although the firefighters stand ready to respond to the needs of America, including Members of Congress, the Congress has been slow to respond to the needs of the firefighters. Each year, Congress is responsible for appropriating funding for firefighting training and, each year, we have not done enough.

Local fire departments around the country and in my home state of Georgia are grappling with the increased demands required of them since the September 11 tragedies. Lawton C. Smith, Jr., who is Fire Chief of the Thunderbolt Volunteer Fire Department, is doing a great job in protecting the citizens and businesses in Thunderbolt, Georgia, despite the lack of adequatefederal funding and support. I commend him for serving his community and support his requests for additional funding for training and equipment. Chief Mark Turnbill of the Clayton County Fire Department has also expressed to me the need for additional support by the federal government so that his firefighters can better anticipate future targets and develop and update preparedness plans. I thank Chief Turnbill for his efforts and pledge my support for the work that he and his department are doing on behalf of their community. Other fire departments such as Marietta Fire and Emergency Services, led by Fire Chief Jackie Gibbs, and the Rockdale County Fire Department, led by Fire Chief Tommy Morgan, require specific funding to assist in their preparations for terrorist and biochemical attacks.

One example of a way that we can help our local firefighters and police officers is the Emergency Preparedness Grants Program, which helps train firefighters and police officers. Currently, this program is funded at just $14 million a year and can train only a small fraction of the firefighters in the United States. In addition, there is currently a congressional restriction on the amount of money that can be obligated, and as a consequence there is a $15 million surplus, which is not going to train America's firefighters to combat hazmat emergencies. In my opinion, this is not acceptable and it is why I will soon introduce the "HERO bill"—the Heroic Emergency Response Operations Act. The purpose of the bill is to allow DOT to access the $15 million surplus for grants to state and local governments for hazmat training (police and firefighters) and establish minimum national standards for hazmat security training, while allowing individual states to go beyond these minimums.

In this era of potential chemical and biological attacks, we need to do everything we can to ensure our local firefighters receive the proper training and the proper equipment to do the difficult job we ask them to do. Anything short of this goal and we are neglect in our duties.

Congress should ensure that we do everything we can to help the firefighters of this nation because, most assuredly, they do everything they can to help us—including giving their lives in the line of duty.

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I look forward to hearing from the witnesses that are appearing before us today.

Senator WYDEN. Without objection, we will make your prepared remarks part of the hearing record in their entirety. I look forward to supporting the Cleland legislation, and the fact that you are on both this committee and Armed Services is a huge boost to us, and we thank you for coming.

Congressman Pascrell, welcome.

STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM PASCRELL, JR.,
U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM NEW JERSEY

Mr. PASCRELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is really an honor to be here with old members, to join with Curt Weldon.

I want you to know, Mr. Chairman—I said this about an hour ago—I have a very clear mind right now. I left my anger at Fresh Kills when I took my mask off and got into the helicopter and went up over it. It was a sobering moment to me. So I want to be a mouthpiece for the firefighters of America, and I am sure Curt feels that way, too. We are doing our job. We are not doing them any favors. These are our responsibilities very clearly.

We need to have the facts and figures in front of us, Mr. Chairman. You heard Congressman Weldon just mention about who was able to quickly respond, which rescue teams were able to get there. In fact, our chaplain in New York, Chaplain Judd, Father Judd, a good friend of mine, was one of the first to go down. But you have heard who was able to respond to New York City, and their State rescue squad which assembled in Albany went to New York.

But I must salute the members of FEMA, who did such a spectacular job in helping. The reason why they were not able to get their personnel to New York is because of air restrictions. We have made—could you believe this, Mr. Chairman—no accommodations for our great FEMA teams to in an act of an emergency get to the emerging problem. I found that hard to believe, that our military—that we did not provide our military and enable them to fly the FEMA personnel to that great emergency. That is why, thank God, New York State had its own rescue squad there.

The FCC just licensed—I will get to personnel in a second, but I have got to get this off my chest. But I have a clear mind. I have followed the Bible; I have left my anger behind.

The FCC has licensed a cable television company in Long Island, which if they get up tomorrow morning will knock 70 police and fire stations off the air in New Jersey. Now, I think this could be replicated throughout the United States, because the errors of the FCC have no geographical boundaries. We ought to think about that, because we are not providing—we are not providing and facilitating their services that both police and fire have to provide throughout the United States of America.

These are difficult times. Two-thirds of our fire departments are understaffed of career firefighters. Our first bill, where we had such a difficult time getting more than three sponsors—right, Curt—and we wound up finally with 280. So we have started the process of taking serious the other half of the public safety equation, our firefighters. It is great that we will wave to them in parades and set our grandchildren on their engines, but it is not enough, Mr. Chairman, any more. It will not be accepted.

Three hundred fourty-four deaths in New York alone—chaplains, fire marshals, firefighters and a commissioner—and $48 million of destruction of the 92 vehicles destroyed. Three hundred Scott masks and 300 spare cylinders, all gone. Hazmat wiped out.

So we have our work cut out for us. But we know that we must do this for the entire country. We must prepare ourselves. We have no other choice.

When I learned that your Subcommittee was holding a hearing on the needs of firefighters in responding to remember, I knew I had to share with you personally the success of the first year of the FIRE Act—overwhelming. But I think of all the thousands of fire departments that responded and there was no money there, no money left. FEMA ran that entire operation for the first year with no staff, no budget. We had to ask for volunteers to come in and review the very applications.

I say this so that we learn and we move productively to the future. They need a staff to review the applications. It is critical. We must not accept what is going on right now.

The program is authorized. We hope we can get more money into that program. But we need to talk about the career firefighters of this country and their personnel needs. The City of Jersey City in my State, Mr. Chairman, has reduced its fire department by 132 personnel in the past 9 or 10 years and have built 6 superstructures in that city and are not prepared to deal, God forbid, if there is a fire in those superstructures.

Because what do we do? We ask these brave guys and gals to go into the buildings and up these stairs to bring the hose to put these fires out. And for that we say, let us replicate a 110-story building. Who in God's name is going to put the fire out if it happens in that building? Who is going to do this? The gentlemen and ladies in back of me are going to do this.

But we do not want to send them in harm's way. We want them to be protected as best as humanly possible, we feeble human beings, we finite beings. We can do better than we have been doing and we must do better, and we shall do better.

We need to respond to all the fire departments. There were fire departments that applied for the FIRE Act that had no fire apparatus. They have to depend on other towns. We cannot accept that any longer. These first responders are not fighting fires that existed 20 and 30 and 40 years ago. This is a new day. They are into our highways and our byways with chemical spills, hazardous spills. We are asking them to go into buildings that many times do not even meet code. We even question that they even know, when there is a chemical fire, which chemicals are going up in smoke, because every chemical fire is fought very, very differently.

February the 19th, 1991, Mr. Chairman, when I was Mayor of the City of Paterson, the third largest city in New Jersey, I had my baptism and my bar mitzvah, and call it whatever you want. I have always responded when I was the Mayor to those fires above second alarm. We burned a whole block down and it took us two and a half days to find a firefighter, Nicholas John Nicocea. We called him "Nick," and we could not find him. He was lost in the fire. Burned a whole block down.

I remember the day that his brothers carried him out and how they carried him out. It was clear the sensitivity that they had. I never forgot that.

So I come here with a very clear mind, with no hate in my heart or anger, because I know what has to be done and we will do it,

and we will work together, because the national needs are clear and our resolve is strong. I thank you for allowing us to be here.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Pascrell follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM PASCRELL, JR.,
U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM NEW JERSEY

Thank you Chairman Wyden, Ranking Member Allen, and all of the members of the Subcommittee, for allowing me to speak with you today.

When I learned that your Subcommittee was holding a hearing on the needs of firefighters in responding to terrorism. I knew I had to share with you personally the success of the first year of the Firefighter Assistance Grant Program and stress to you the need for full funding in the years to come.

The program is authorized for fiscal years 2001 and 2002 in the amounts of $100 million and $300 million respectively. Delightedly, we received funding for the first year of the program—$100 million—and are seeking $300 million for the second year in the fiscal year 2002 appropriations cycle. There is even an effort being made to increase the funding level this year to $600 million! I support this effort wholeheartedly.

This program provides grants for purchasing new and modernized equipment. fire prevention and education programs. wellness programs for our firefighters, modifying outdated fire stations, and hopefully, this year hiring personnel. These grants go directly to paid departments as well as part-paid and volunteer departments and emergency medical technicians as well.

In this first year of the grant program. over 19,000 fire departments from around the country applied for a total of $3 billion worth of grants! But FEMA only had $100 million in this first year to provide support. In the end, the $100 million was given to over 1,850 fire departments around the country. These included urban, suburban and rural departments. These included career, volunteer, and combination departments. Nobody was left out.

This grant program represents a new level of support by the federal government for our fire services. In fact, I strongly believe that the federal role in the fire fighting service can and should be increased as the role of fire fighters is expanding.

As the recent attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon illustrate:

Firefighters are our first responders to emergencies. And the need our support.

Everyone here knows that 300 firefighters ran into the burning World Trade Center to save lives and never returned. Their departments deserve our support.

Natural and man made disasters do not discriminate when and where they arise; proudly, the fire fighters of the United States do not discriminate when or where they provide help.

The role of our fire fighters is ever changing, and it is my belief that the role that the federal government plays during these changes must be commensurate. We are waging a war on terrorism here in America. We still don't know exactly what that will mean. But we know this—wherever the evildoers strike next, fire fighters will be the first on hand to save lives and protect victims.

The role of fire fighters in our war on terrorism must he recognized by Congress, and must be supported with our dollars. This Congress spends billions and billions on law enforcement in our communities. And we all support that critically needed investment. It has helped to foster crime reduction year after year. We don't ask communities to go it alone for their law enforcement needs, and we shouldn't do it for their fire safety needs either.

Even without the threat of terrorism there is a tremendous need for additional funding for fire departments around the country. A fire department in this country responds to a fire every 18 seconds. And there is a civilian fire death every two hours. A survey I did in my district found that 75 percent of departments are understaffed—some terribly understaffed by as many as 40 firefighters in the bigger cities.

Our state's second largest city—Jersey City—has seen its fire personnel be reduced by 200 in just the last decade. And many departments—in cities and suburbs alike simply cannot afford even the most basic equipment upgrade because of funding shortfalls.

With this in mind, I think it has become clear to many of us here in Washington that we are sending these brave men and women into hazardous situations with the support they deserve from their government. It is time that we stop paying lip service to our fire fighters at holiday parades without putting our money where our mouth is during the rest of the year.

So I am asking the Subcommittee to recognize the importance of this grant program and the need for full funding this year and every year on out. I thank the Subcommittee for putting this issue on your agenda and taking the time to hear what the Fire Service Organizations have to say today about their needs. Thank you.

Senator WYDEN. Bill, thank you for just an extraordinarily eloquent statement. The fact that you are out there fighting for the firefighters this way with Curt is just extraordinarily important. It is what is going to take to get this done.

I am going to have some questions for the two of you in a moment, but I want to recognize first my colleague.

STATEMENT OF HON. GEORGE ALLEN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM VIRGINIA

Senator ALLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for having this hearing.

I thank these two gentlemen as well as Senator Dodd for their comments. But the passion with which Congressman Weldon speaks, not just passion, but good advice, also the passion and compassion of Congressman Pascrell. The good ideas, and they are not just theory; they are not just statistics; they are not just organizational charts. We are talking about our fellow human beings here who are on the front lines. I thank you both for your very compelling testimony and the leadership we are going to need from you all as well as our Chairman here in the weeks and months to come to make sure that we do a better job.

This is not just a Federal responsibility. It is also a state and local responsibility. But we all need to work together. Indeed, I do very much like to welcome and thank our many witnesses today, especially Chief Plaugher from Arlington. It is good to have you here, Chief Plaugher. He will speak later, but the crew there in Arlington are just doing a great job, as are all the folks from other jurisdictions in Northern Virginia and the police.

Chief Ingram from New York City, you all are heroes. Many of you here continue to be engaged in operations. It is not as if things are over at the Pentagon or New York City after these tragic events. This Committee, I assure you, appreciates your efforts and your leadership and that of the men and women that are doing this. Obviously, we appreciate you coming here to take time to share your insights with us.

I do want to recognize, as we have been doing all day—I was at the Pentagon earlier—that the President gave an outstanding speech, as did others. The families were there; many families who lost loved ones, either working in the Pentagon or on the hijacked flight. It was a very moving but unifying ceremony.

There is a bipartisan effort on a Day of Remembrance to make sure that we will always remember September 11th. It is not just to remember those who have lost their lives, but to make sure that we have a resolve to learn, to learn from it and improve from it.

Behind us at this morning's ceremony were many law enforcement and Customs people, INS, rescue, firefighters, a variety of folks who are warriors here on the domestic home front now. We have seen from these terrorists that their targets are not military

facilities. Granted they hit the Pentagon. Their main targets are unarmed, unprotected men, women, and children.

I have always felt that our law enforcement and fire and rescue people were our domestic warriors. They are our warriors here on the home front to keep us safe and secure. We need to look at them this way more than ever before. I think that when you are serving in these combat zones you ought to be treated as far as tax policy the same way as our military forces as far as not having to pay taxes on your income. But that is another matter.

The point is that the selfless devotion to duty of people, whether in Arlington at the Pentagon or in New York City, is just an inspiration. I mentioned Chief Ingram earlier. The people who were in there breathing their last breaths of life, knowing that building was going to collapse, just to get as many people out as they could, it is just absolutely—it is not the call of duty; it is beyond what anybody would expect to be the call of duty. That devotion, when I heard—it was on CSPAN that morning—of a paramedic who volunteered in there and told that story, unbelievable courage, and we will always remember it.

We need to understand from all this what the first responders are. It is not the Federal Government. It is folks on the front lines at the localities and maybe eventually at the state. But clearly there are so many lives that were lost in the World Trade Center.

I do think that we have found heroes in this time of tragedy. There is a statement that the Nation finds its heroes during times of tragedy, and we sure have. We sure have found those heroes, and I find this country more unified than ever before. Instead of being broken apart, we are forged together.

We will never forget the brave firefighters, the EMS and police units and so forth all involved. We need to make a much greater emphasis on ensuring that there is adequate preparation for firefighters, police, and EMS units in future terrorist attacks.

I was a volunteer firefighter, when I had a more normal life before I was in the legislature, for the Earlysville Volunteer Fire Department. When Congressman Weldon was going through all the training, Mr. Chairman, I was thinking, "Gosh, I remember the training." You go in a smoke room, and you talk about being blind. You are blind, holding onto the hose, and the whole thing is communications and there is not much communication.

Not that I put out many fires. We mostly had brush fires and chimney fires and so forth in Earlysville. But it gave me an appreciation of the amount of time and training that's involved for someone to be a firefighter so they can protect our lives, but also keep their lives in the midst of obviously terrible situations, especially if there are buildings on fire.

I think we must, Mr. Chairman, ensure that all these individuals serving, whether they are volunteer or professional, have adequate preparation. We must make sure they have the best equipment, and make sure they have the training in order to respond in future crises, including not just fires and not just buildings coming down. We need to be prepared for biological and chemical attacks as well.

Part of the problem, for example, at the Pentagon, with so many people coming—and I will get into the coordination aspect of this—but it is not just the smoke or fuel. It is asbestos that may be in

buildings, and of course there could be a biological or chemical attack. So all of this is very important for them to try to save people's lives, but also make sure that they do not lose their lives unnecessarily because of inadequate training or inadequate communication or inadequate equipment.

Now, this is an effort that I think, as far as coordination, both the General Accounting Office and many fire officials have emphasized that there needs to be better coordination between Federal, state, and local officials. Many Federal programs seem to be duplicative or even contradictory. Congress, I think all of us, needs to work with the Federal, with the state, with the local officials to clarify what the role of responsibility is at ground zero of an attack.

We need to have clear lines of communication and coordination to get the job done safely and as promptly as possible. There needs to be a clear point of contact for cooperation between the Federal agencies and the state and local responders at the crisis.

I intend to work with former Governor Tom Ridge and his new Office of Homeland Security to resolve some of these problems of coordination. That would be a natural one. There is a lot of coordination that will be needed. That is one where you can make some good recommendations.

Now, communications. Communications is absolutely vital in responding to any disaster, but especially a terrorist attack. It does not matter if it is a flood or if it is a hurricane or if it is a terrorist attack. Communication and information so that people can make right decisions, position assets where they are most needed, remove people sometimes, and evacuate people at the right time. All of these are important and communications is the key to it.

This has all been referenced by Congressman Weldon. I am glad to know that you know about this because you will be a strong voice to repeat this time after time.

But the concern about the attacks on the Pentagon, which is in Arlington County, Virginia, and then also concerns that the State Department was hit and so forth. But it is just so disconcerting to read that the Virginia, Maryland, and D.C. fire companies could not communicate with each other. It is one thing that we could not communicate because some of the cell phones were all jammed up from the usage, but clearly they need to communicate.

Now, I may not go as far with you as far as some of the wireless spectrums and so forth. There may be government-held ones that can be used for it. I think the private sector and entrepreneurial folks are very important. But that is besides the point, but communications is key.

We ask our emergency services people to do amazing feats of bravery and skill, but really we should not force them to go in blind. They need to be able to communicate with each other. There are a lot of different assets as well that, say, Arlington has, that Alexandria has, that Fairfax County has, that say Prince George's County, Maryland, has, that the District has, and to some extent if everyone can work together you do not need to have the duplication of some of this very costly and expensive equipment.

So I think we do need to also look at ways of working regionally and not worrying about, ″Gosh, which county or city line is this?″ or, in some cases, state lines.

Now, we are going to be hearing, Mr. Chairman, and I really look forward to hearing the testimony, discussing the Capital Wireless Integrated Network, or Cap-WIN program, which is a promising program to prevent these types of communications breakdowns in the future. The Cap-WIN project is a partnership between the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Free State of Maryland, and the District of Columbia.

Now, after the 1999 incident involving the jumper who was on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, which generally is mostly in Maryland, but partially in Virginia, with a little nick of it in the District, and owned by the Federal Government, there was an understanding there needed to be a better system for law enforcement in the D.C. region and that was very obvious with that.

Now, from my days as Governor I became very familiar with the common problem faced by law enforcement and emergency services personnel regarding information sharing. Congressman Weldon, boy, are you correct. This information should not be going by paper. We are past the days of the Pony Express and we do not need to have these relay approaches.

This information needs to be easily accessed at a central location, with different people having access to it. I think Cap-WIN solves this problem, and we will hear more about Cap-WIN today.

I think it is also important to ensure that our firefighters and other first response units are properly equipped and trained in any future attack. I was appalled to read that last year only $311 million of the $8.7 billion that Congress spent on terrorism defense went to enhancing the capabilities of local emergency personnel.

Let us get our priorities straight, gentlemen, in the future. We need to help our firefighters, our police, and our EMS units have adequate training, equipment, and communications capabilities.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing. We are going to bolster public safety. We are going to help pursue this war on terrorism, obviously abroad, but also here. Our homeland has been hit. It may be hit again. Let us make sure we are not flat-footed, but we are ready; we are responding and, everyone is much safer.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator WYDEN. Thank you, Senator Allen. I think because we do very much want to hear from Mr. Burris, we are going to excuse you two. But understand that you have given us a lot of very good suggestions. Curt, know that if you can get a commitment for anything resembling that budget figure in terms of additional resources for fire, and we can all work together to get Mitch Daniels to free up some of the $20 billion that has already been allocated, that would make a huge difference, and your leadership there is very welcome.

On the GPS point, I have already heard from medical professionals that if we had done nothing else but put a GPS bracelet on some of those folks who had been injured and whose families were posting things all over the city of New York, that we could have saved an awful lot of grief and trauma for those families.

Your comments about the wireless issues, the need for communications reforms and funding are very much on point. We will be

working closely with you. Bill, the fact that you have got front-line experience is just tremendously helpful.

Under normal circumstances, I would have some questions, but we are going to hear from Mr. Burris, and godspeed to you both. Thank you.mr

Chief Burris, Chief Operating Officer, U.S. Fire Administration. Chief, welcome. We will make your prepared remarks a part of the hearing record in its entirety, and we thank you for all your leadership. Please proceed.

STATEMENT OF KENNETH O. BURRIS, JR., CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER AND ACTING ADMINISTRATOR, U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION

Mr. BURRIS. Thank you. I appreciate it. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee. Of course, my name is Ken Burris and I am the Chief Operating Officer of the United States Fire Administration and currently the Acting U.S. Fire Administrator. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before the Committee today on behalf of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Director, Joe Allbaugh.

Of course, we are gathered here today to discuss how to improve the preparedness and effectiveness as well as the safety of our first responders and to explore how we can work together for the good of the fire service and the public they serve. But before I begin, I would like to commend the efforts of those firefighters who responded to the September 11th tragedy. While it is right that we have paid tribute over the last several weeks to those that were lost, there is no doubt that the toll would have been much greater had it been not for the heroic efforts of the firefighters that responded to these tragedies. Thousands of lives were lost, but thousands of others, indeed tens of thousands of others, were saved through preparedness and quick response by these firefighters.

The events of September 11th have shown our Nation the importance of its fire service. A service that was once taken for granted is now viewed as an essential component of the fire safety or the public safety equation. The fire departments of the City of New York, Arlington, Virginia, and Shanksville, Pennsylvania, have proven that our first responders will be called to respond across urban, suburban, and rural communities of our country. Fire departments of every type, career, volunteer, and combination, across our Nation must be vigilant to heed the call to service at a moment's notice.

A call to service at a moment's notice, that is a pretty familiar state of readiness for our fire departments across our country, the same state of readiness that is required to respond to a community's normal threat risk, with the difference being the magnitude of the event and the subsequent operational requirements of that event when it happens.

My experience in New York paralleled my experiences in other operational conditions that overwhelm a jurisdiction's ability to respond. I have read the many after-action reports of previous large-scale emergency operations—hurricanes, earthquakes, fires—and the very challenges that were faced in the response to the September 11th events are the same challenges that the fire service

and emergency management community faces in the response to all hazards.

Communications continues to be a challenge during large-scale operations. Operations that depend on the response of many different jurisdictions and agencies create a communications problem requiring precious time to sort out. Different radio frequencies, incompatible equipment, overloaded infrastructure, all combine to complicate operations.

While the private has created a communications network that allows quick and easy access for the general public, the same conveniences do not exist for our first responding community. Hampered by the many radio frequencies that may exist on a large-scale emergency, incident commanders are oftentimes left as a last resort the rely on runners as a means of communication.

Since becoming the Chief Operating Officer of the Fire Administration, I am frequently asked what role should the Federal Government play in supporting our Nation's fire services and our first responders. I am convinced that a part of that role is supporting the public safety communications infrastructure. Setting aside the radio spectrum, providing a national communications infrastructure and supporting local government in assessing and acquiring communications equipment are essential components of an effective national public safety communications plan.

Command and control continues to be a challenge. This challenge is even more critical when operations are conducted with entities and agencies that have their own unique incident command or incident management systems. Every supporting or responding agency cannot create their own command post on a large-scale incident. The use of different command systems' terminology causes confusion and reduced effectiveness, both of which take its toll on incident managers.

We need to institutionalize a common incident command system throughout our country. It is a critical framework for the support needed to respond to terrorist events, natural events of large magnitude, as well as the normal operational responses required by our Nation's first responders. We may seriously want to look at mandating the use of a single incident management system within our country.

The coordination of responding assets continues to pose its own unique challenges. We have a Federal response plan and we must be disciplined enough to work and operate within its parameters. FEMA's success depends on our ability to organize, lead, a community of local, State and Federal agencies as well as volunteer organizations. We know who to bring to the table, what questions to ask when it comes to the business of managing emergencies, and FEMA provides an operational framework and a funding source to accomplish these tasks.

Self-deployment of agencies and assets outside the plan creates serious problems and requires an inordinate amount of attention by incident managers. Standardization of regional, State, and local mutual aid and automatic aid plans and their coordination within the Federal response plan are critical for successful coordination to a response that we saw on September 11th.

Coordination of assets requires the identification of responders and the responders' qualifications. The need for some type of certifying credential is apparent to cut down on self-deployment and freelancing that is oftentimes observed at large-scale incidents.

Responding to terrorist events requires a more robust personnel security system, scene security, and control and accountability of resources deployment, and those resources' sustainability.

As I stated earlier, these observations are not unique to the September 11th response. After-action reports of large-scale incidents and even preparedness exercises that we carry on annually have highlighted these same issues even before they were brought to national attention by the September 11th tragedies. Time and time again we have discussed these issues, such as radio spectrum and public safety allocation of radio spectrum. But there has been little in the way of commitment at times to fix this particular problem.

Last year I participated in a hearing with Noreen Lucey, the sister of one of our fallen firefighters from the tragic Worcester, Massachusetts, fire. She talked a bit about the selflessness of response of the six firefighters who gave their lives in that blaze and summed up the reason for their doing so quite simply when she said: "They just do what they do."

As September 11th has demonstrated, the fire services are at the first line of our homeland defense, because that is just simply what they do. During the last several weeks our Nation has witnessed live and on television an example of heroism that is practiced by the fire service of this Nation countless times every day. We owe it to the people that we serve, to the firefighters who protect, to be as prepared as possible.

I want to thank the Committee for your concerns, your support, your understanding of the needs, and to recognize the fire service and their contribution to our country, and to look further into helping support the future of our Nation's fire services.

On behalf of the staff of the Fire Administration and the leadership and staff of FEMA, I want to thank the Committee for the opportunity to testify, and I will be happy to address any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Burris follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KENNETH BURRIS, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER AND ACTING ADMINISTRATOR, U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. My name is Ken Burris, and I am the Chief Operating Officer, and currently Acting Administrator, of the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA). I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Joe Allbaugh. We are gathered here today to discuss how to improve the preparedness and effectiveness and safety of our first responders. And also to explore how we can work together for the good of the fire service and the public they serve.

But before I begin, I want to commend to the efforts of those firefighters who responded to this tragedy. While it is right that we pay tribute to those who were lost, there is no doubt that the toll would have been much higher were it not for the heroic efforts of our firefighters. Thousands of lives were lost but thousands of others, indeed tens of thousands, were saved through preparedness, and quick response by these firefighters.

The events of September 11th have shown our Nation the importance of its fire services. A service that was once taken for granted is now being viewed as an essential component of the public safety equation. The fire departments of the City of

New York, the City of Arlington, VA and Shanksville, PA has proven that our first responders will be called to respond across urban, suburban and rural communities of our country. Fire departments of every type: career, volunteer and combination across our nation must be vigilant to heed the call to service at a moments notice.

This is a familiar state of readiness for the fire service. The same state of readiness that is required to respond to a community's normal threat risk, with the difference being the magnitude of the event and the subsequent operational requirements. My experience in New York paralleled my experiences in other operational conditions that overwhelm a local jurisdictions ability to respond.

I have read the after action reports on previous larger scale emergency operations; hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, fires. The very challenges that were faced in the response to the events of September 11th are the same challenges the fire service and emergency management community face in response to all hazards.

The fire services suffered a terrible blow that day and we all mourn for those lost. We also saw the best of the fire services that day and in the weeks that have followed. Perhaps for the first time, the nation has witnessed live and on television an example of heroism that is practiced by the fire services of this nation in countless smaller incidents every day.

Last year I participated in a hearing with Noreen Lucey, the sister on one of our fallen heroes from the tragic Worcester, Massachusetts fire. She talked a bit about the selfless response of the six firefighter who gave their life to that blaze and summed up their reasons for doing so. She said quite simply: "That's just what they do."

I also want to thank the Committee for your concern, your support and your understanding of the need to recognize the fire services contribution to public safety and their future needs. At the United States Fire Administration, we have been working to develop and deliver training and educational programs to the fire services on terrorism awareness and response. Many fire departments across the nation are asking themselves, "are we prepared for this" or "how on earth are we ever going to handle something like this". Both of these are good questions, but many other departments are saying just the opposite; they think, "it will never happen here". Make no mistake that the message every fire department in America should have gotten is that we are all vulnerable to the effects of another terrorist attack.

TRAINING

The United States Fire Administration's National Fire Academy has terrorism programs that range from self-study courses you can take in your home as well as university programs for government leaders.

A very popular introductory course is available both in paper format and as a file downloadable from the USFA Web Site. *Emergency Response to Terrorism: Self-Study (ERT:SS) (Q534)* is a self-paced, paper-based document and is designed to provide the basic awareness training to prepare first responders to respond to incidents of terrorism safely and effectively. Students who successfully complete the exam will be eligible for a FEMA/BJA certificate of training. The course is designed for fire, emergency medical, HAZMAT, incident command and law enforcement responders. The *ERT:SS* course may be downloaded in portable document format (PDF). You may also request a copy of the ERT:SS through the USFA Publications Center at (800) 238–3358, ext. 1189 or order it online.

Thousands of emergency responders across the country have taken *Emergency Response to Terrorism: Basic Concepts,* a two-day course designed to prepare them to take the appropriate course of action at the scene of a potential terrorist incident. The course provides students with a general understanding and recognition of terrorism, defensive considerations (biological, nuclear, incendiary, chemical, and explosive), as well as command and control issues associated with criminal incidents. When an incident occurs, the student will be able to recognize and implement self-protective measures, secure the scene, complete appropriate notifications to local, State, and Federal authorities, and assist in completing a smooth transition from emergency to recovery and termination operations.

The primary target audience for this training includes hazardous materials, fire, and emergency medical services first responder personnel. The secondary audience includes law enforcement personnel, emergency communications personnel, jurisdiction emergency coordinators, public works managers, and public health providers. The USFA provides grants to State fire service training systems so this training can be available to you locally, at little or no cost. Often, in small communities, fire, EMS and law enforcement responders sit in the same class and can become familiar with each other's responsibilities and procedures.

Emergency Response to Terrorism: Tactical Considerations—Company Officer (ERT:TC–CO), is a two-day course designed to build upon the existing skills of the

initial first-responding supervisor from the *Emergency Response to Terrorism: Basic Concepts* course or *Emergency Response to Terrorism: Self-Study* guide. The students will be trained in security considerations, identifying signs of terrorism, anticipating unusual response circumstances, assessing information, and initiating self-protection actions.

Anyone who could serve as the first on-the-scene officer in a hazardous material or emergency medical services incident would benefit from this course. You must have a working knowledge of the Incident Command System (ICS). Students will not be taught ICS but will be expected to use ICS during class activities.

Emergency Response to Terrorism: Tactical Consideration—Emergency Medical Service (ERT:TC–EMS) is a two-day course is designed for the first on-the-scene responding EMS personnel with the responsibility to render patient care to victims of terrorist incidents. The students will be trained in security considerations, identifying signs of terrorism, anticipating unusual response circumstances, assessing information, and initiating self-protection actions. The students also will apply their knowledge about responding to a terrorist event, providing patient care, identifying and preserving evidence, managing site safety, documenting the event, and debriefing personnel.

The target audience for *ERT:TC–EMS* is first on-the-scene emergency medical services personnel, who could be career and/or volunteer firefighters, EMS, industrial contractors, allied health personnel, and members of the military or other Government agencies. Note: The medical protocols for rendering patient care are at the Advanced Life Support (ALS) level.

Another two-day course is designed for the first on-the-scene responding hazardous materials technician or persons who have the responsibility of developing initial hazardous materials tactical considerations. In *Emergency Response to Terrorism: Tactical Considerations—Hazardous Materials (ERT:TC–HM)* the students will be trained in security considerations, identifying signs of terrorism, anticipating unusual response circumstances, assessing information, and initiating self-protection actions. The students also will apply their knowledge about responding to a terrorist event, managing site safety, documenting the event, and debriefing personnel.

ERT:TC–HM is targeted at first on-the-scene hazardous materials technician-level personnel, who could be career and/or volunteer firefighters, EMS, industrial contractors, allied health personnel, and members of the military or other Government agencies with hazardous materials responsibility.

It is important to remember that all of the above courses are two days in length and are part of the National Fire Academy's Direct Delivery Program. That means that they can be delivered in or near any community. Moreover, they can be funded either through the Terrorism Training Grants or State Fire Training Grants, so the cost to departments should be minimal.

Another "plus" in this training is that the ERT series of courses have been evaluated by the American Council on Education and have been recommended for one semester hour credit each in AAS—Fire Science or EMS Technologies. If you are enrolled in a degree program, your institution may allow you credit for these courses. The entire National Fire Academy course catalog is available on line and can be found at www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa.

These courses address what we are doing now. Where we need to go in the future is the question. As we see it, all levels of government and the fire services community have several issues to address, both internally and externally. First let me address some of these needs and trends.

COORDINATION AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL

The FEMA mission is to reduce the loss of life and property and protect our nation's critical infrastructure from all types of hazards. As staffing goes, we are a small agency. Our success depends on our ability to organize and lead a community of local, State, and Federal agencies and volunteer organizations. We know who to bring to the table and what questions to ask when it comes to the business of managing emergencies. We provide an operation framework and a funding source.

The Federal Response Plan (FRP) is the heart of that framework. It reflects the labors of interagency groups that meet as required in Washington, D.C. and all 10 FEMA Regions to develop our capabilities to respond as a team. This team is made up of 2 Federal departments and Agencies and the American Red Cross, and organized into interagency functions based on the authorities and expertise of the members and the needs of our counterparts at the state and local level.

While USFA has seen the effectiveness among and within the Federal family, we must acknowledge that the fire services at the local level have had limited training to respond to terrorist incidents. The primary focus of the federal effort to date in delivering this training needs to be better coordinated. USFA, working with the

FEMA Office of National Preparedness, should include senior fire services leadership in the coordination of fire and emergency services response planning effort to these catastrophic events.

The fire departments across the nation need to be an integral part of the planning, training and policy development for terrorism preparedness. While there is a general acknowledgement that the law enforcement community has a significant deterrence and investigatory role, it is also true that the fire services are the first on the scene, and therefore the first at risk. Any future considerations on training and funding for equipment must take this into account.

ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTERS GRANT PROGRAM

Since the attacks, the Senate has passed the Defense Authorization bill with a three-year authorization of $600 million, $800 million and $1 billion over the three years and the bill is currently in the conference committee. It is important that if this program were taken to it full authorized amount and continue, USFA will need authorization for salaries and expenses to administer and staff the program effectively. It is also important that the agency be given the authority to develop the program with greater flexibility.

As FEMA Director Allbaugh has stated, "firefighters are the first in line for budget cuts and the last in line for recognition. This must stop." This program should not however replace the primary responsibility for funding and support, which lies with the local and state governments. Federal assistance should be supplemental and should be directed to the areas and programs in greatest need.

State and local support of the fire services must be increased and the federal role should be to foster that participation. Incentives to local governments need to be developed and enacted.

STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS WITH EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

It is increasingly clear that the cooperation between the emergency management community and the fire services needs to be strengthened and encouraged. While at the local level emergency managers are at many times the local fire chief, at higher levels there is a disconnect. Improved cooperation should include joint training development and delivery, cooperative agreements and the development of a statewide and perhaps nationwide mutual aid system. Resources directed for terrorism preparation should have a strong fire services component.

Quality, robust and consistent communications capabilities should be developed and implemented for the fire services. As a nation we need to strive to provide the communications infrastructure necessary for multiple agency communications. Currently there is no secure means to provide first responders with important, un-compromised information. Obviously, this void could severely hamper effective fire service operations in a terrorist environment.

Another communications need involves incident management and coordination. We have to communicate with all response and supporting agencies at every level of the Federal Response Plan, which is the framework for the federal support that they will need in terrorist events. It is important that all local fire and public safety agencies and their staffs are aware of the plan and how it meshes with their state, county and local planning. There should also be training and exercises to ensure understanding and ability to work within this structure.

We cannot manage incidents with entities that have unique or different incident command or incident management systems (ICS/IMS) or with those entities not operationally conversant with the standard incident management system. We need to work toward an institutionalized operating, common ICS/IMS throughout the country.

Incident management must address coordination issues with the Federal Response Plan.

Self-deployment of agencies and assets outside the plan *and* the IMS request creates difficulty in coordination and strains the time and attention of legitimate responders. Standardized state and regional mutual/automatic aid plans would be helpful. Also, attention and training must include focus on the problems with maintenance of long-term "campaign" emergency operations that will go on for extended periods of time.

We need to address the area of scene security and safety. The WTC incident clearly demonstrated the need to explore a national credentialing system for first responders.

Such a system could provide identification of the responder, the responder's qualifications, and any operations limitations and expiration dates. State and local agencies and educational/training institutions should serve as the certifying authorities for qualifications. The certification "card" could then serve as a passport for admis-

sion to secured work sites. This should cut down on the "free lancing" we saw on scene in New York and result in improved security.

We need to consider additional training in vehicle/logistics/staging security, personnel security, scene security, control and accountability of teams and resources as well as issues of deployment, sustainability, and recall.

USFA and the States provide appropriate and adequate first responder training but we need to train more students. Training efforts should do more to "push" materials and skills towards the end user. This will necessitate the use of additional and non-traditional methods including technology oriented deliveries and more partnering with state and other training authorities.

We also need to consider delivering more leadership and strategic skills classes *and* deliver more training in integrated/area IMS operations. The issue of holistic community participation and benefit requires broad-spectrum participation among the attendees' communities.

We also need to look toward research and development to provide community assistance to match threat level with resources available or obtainable in terms of protective gear. It is important to be able to quickly assess the threat environment that the fire services faces at an incident and be able to quickly provide the appropriate protection to them.

Building construction practices and code development must take a new look at the concept of "trade-offs" in buildings and evaluate the value of redundancies in building design and construction. It is important that we guard against "under designing" buildings with automatic fire suppression sprinkler systems by allowing "trade-offs" in other areas to include egress systems or fire rated construction.

We also need to provide a tool for the collection of asset/resource data to provide the region with accurate and timely data regarding resources available for deployment in the event of an emergency. USFA is undertaking just such an effort with the first ever Fire Department Census. This will enable us, for the first time, to be able to quantify the amount of emergency equipment, apparatus and personnel that exist in the nation.

Working closely with FEMA and the Forest Service, USFA should explore the development of an enhanced National Overhead IMS response team as part of the Emergency Support Function 4 for the urban environment.

It will also be important for USFA to develop and promulgate courses/training dealing with large incident response "etiquette." Included in that training should be the issues of jurisdiction, self-dispatch, scene control, and inter-agency and inter-discipline relations.

USFA should also develop and increase the promulgation of Incident Management Systems through on-site courses, literature, multiple media off-site, and other means. While much effort has been made, more work is necessary. We will also be looking closely at the Executive Fire Officer curriculum to include attention to the issues particular to the loss of major portions of a fire departments senior command structure as well as issues specific to terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

Another WTC example is the threat of "secondary devices" which relates to scene security and safety. The second aircraft was unimaginable, yet it was also a secondary device on a greater scale. Part of the ongoing development of IMS training should include "ascension or succession" planning to deal with the possibility of loss of senior staff /command structure immediately prior to or during a disaster event.

As we all learn lessons from the tragedies in New York, Virginia and Pennsylvania, lets not lose sight of the fact that as the community's first response organization, the fire service needs to work closely with police and other local officials. We need to determine what areas of our cities and towns could be targets, but we also need to plan for the unexpected event that goes beyond our ability to respond with just one community's resources. This type of planning and cooperation is critical to responding to and recovering from terrorist events.

As September 11 has demonstrated, the fire services are the first line of homeland defense and we owe it to the people we serve to be as prepared as possible.

On behalf of the entire staff of the United State Fire Administration and the fire services community and all of the leadership and staff at FEMA, I want to again thank the Committee for the opportunity to testify today. I will be happy to address any questions you might have.

Senator WYDEN. Mr. Burris, thank you. That is very helpful. I am just going to ask a couple of questions and then I will let my colleague ask some as well.

Tell us first how you envision the Fire Administration, your various training programs and other services interacting with the new Office of Homeland Security that Governor Ridge is going to direct?

Mr. BURRIS. Well, I envision that the Fire Administration through its National Fire Academy is basically the point of contact that the Federal Government has with the Nation's fire services in the training, the arena of training. We have a longstanding relationship with each State's training academy, offering them courses, providing grant funds to provide those courses at a regional level. I would expect that those type of training initiatives would take place through the current system that we have established.

Senator WYDEN. The Nation's leading technology companies, many of which are in my State or in Senator Allen's State as well, tell me they want to back you up. They want to send equipment and brains and talent in immediately when a tragedy hits so that there will be wireless systems, hardwired systems, satellites, what you need in terms of computers and equipment.

Based on everything I heard from Mr. Weldon and others who have been working on these issues, that would be something that would be extremely helpful. But I want to give you and folks who are specialists in the field a chance to give your message back to some patriotic people in the technology sector who are saying they want to send you resources.

Mr. BURRIS. I am sure that everyone in the fire service is appreciative of that and public safety is appreciative of that. But I spent 25 years in the business before I came into the Federal Government to do this and, not to be disparaging toward anybody, but most of the time that immediate response is 4 to 6 hours out, when you really need to bolster and make robust the public safety communications network of today so you can use it 3 minutes after the incident is happening.

That is when these mutual aid compacts and these mutual aid agreements are being activated and these other jurisdictions are coming in. While there is a place to set up that type of network for 6 hours out, we need to do the work it takes to provide the ability to communicate virtually instantaneously.

Senator WYDEN. Your point is a good one and I think that that is why the way we see it we need to do everything from making changes in wireless policy to being able to go from there in terms of utilizing existing resources so that you can have that information in a matter of minutes. I thank you for that, and I know that that is going to be well received by people who want to help with equipment and resources.

Well, the only other question I had involves the grant application review process. I gather that you all are just sort of swamped. You have got a modest amount of money. You have got vastly more in the way of requests than you can handle. What do you need at this point to effectively sort through this process and be able to make decisions and fund the priorities?

Mr. BURRIS. You are asking me if I had a magic wand what would I ask for?

Senator WYDEN. Yes.

Mr. BURRIS. I would ask for the staff to pull it off. We just did not get the staff to do it, and we relied on the fire service to help us out and they stepped forward and did that.

Second, I would ask that as we look at some of these amounts of funding, hundreds of millions and possibly billions of dollars, that we not be held to a single fiscal year to get the programs under way. We need some time to develop the programs. We are not asking for any extended time, but——

Senator WYDEN. A little flexibility?

Mr. BURRIS. A little flexibility, yes, sir.

Senator WYDEN. All right. Well, excellent presentation, Mr. Burris.

Senator Allen.

Senator ALLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Burris, thank you for your comments. I enjoyed listening to them. Two main areas I want to cover. The first has to do with just what fire organizations would like; we hear that they would like a single Federal point of contact during a crisis who is in charge. Back in May—and this follows on with the chairman's question earlier—back in May, as I recollect, the President announced that FEMA would set up an Office of National Preparedness. Does FEMA still intend to establish this new office?

Mr. BURRIS. I would defer that answer to the Director. I am not involved in setting up the Office of National Preparedness.

Senator ALLEN. Let me ask you, answered the question somewhat and, maybe because I am worn out, I did not get it exactly. How do you foresee your office working with Governor Ridge and the Office of Homeland Security?

Mr. BURRIS. I would foresee that the Fire Administration would be a point or the point of contact with the fire services in developing and providing those type of programs that would be made available, whether it is through the grant programs or it is through additional training programs or whether it is through the staffing programs, that we would administer those. They are a major stakeholder of our agency.

Senator ALLEN. Now, you have heard from the Congressmen as well as myself and others that there is this inability of firefighters, police, and EMS units from different jurisdictions to communicate with each other. We saw it right here on September 11th. That is a major impediment to responding to these emergencies.

What suggestions, if you could give me one or two key suggestions or ideas, does the U.S. Fire Administration have to resolve this problem? What would you say would be the top two things we need to do?

Mr. BURRIS. The top two things——

Senator ALLEN. Because I do see this as being more national. I am one who does not like to federalize every single issue.

Mr. BURRIS. I understand.

Senator ALLEN. I trust folks in the states and localities. But when you get into communications, that is intrastate or interstate in nature. So what would be, say, the number one and number two thing we can do to get the communications better?

Mr. BURRIS. It is not necessarily the Fire Administration that can do it, but the national government can provide an infrastructure in which to communicate. They do it for the military.

Senator ALLEN. What would your suggestions be?

Mr. BURRIS. To create that infrastructure and then to assist local government in purchasing and accessing the equipment that it takes to communicate on it.

Senator ALLEN. Good enough.

Thank you.

Senator WYDEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Burris.

You know, your point about the government taking the lead on communications is absolutely right. That is what I heard from fire people at a meeting that I held at home in my State in Portland, Oregon, on Monday. We had fire people, we had technology experts and the like, and they basically said: Look, you people at the Federal level with the Federal Communications Commission have to have a wireless policy so that in effect you can start getting help to people in a matter of minutes. That is what we are going to stay at.

I see this communications issue as something that is almost setting up a continuum of communications services. It has got to start within a matter of minutes and then it has got to go from there in terms of trying to meet the other communications needs.

So we thank you for an excellent presentation. We will be working closely with you.

Mr. BURRIS. Thank you. I appreciate it.

Senator WYDEN. All right. Our next panel will be: Chief John Buckman, President of the International Association of Fire Chiefs; Battalion Chief Robert Ingram of the City of New York; Chief Ed Plaugher, Arlington County Fire Department; Mr. Harold Schaitberger, General President of the International Association of Fire Fighters; and Mr. James Turner of the Delaware Volunteer Firemen's Association.

Gentlemen, welcome, and we thank you for coming today and for your leadership. We are going to make your prepared remarks a part of the hearing record in their entirety and if you could stay close to 5 minutes or so that would be great.

I understand by agreement of this distinguished group you would like to have Mr. Schaitberger go first, and that would be just fine. Mr. Schaitberger, welcome.

STATEMENT OF HAROLD A. SCHAITBERGER, GENERAL PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

Mr. SCHAITBERGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that.

I would like to say, particularly to the good Senator from the Commonwealth, that I started my career in 1966 as a young professional firefighter in Fairfax County, Virginia. I now have the honor of representing more than 245,000 men and women that make up the International Association of Fire Fighters.

I will just summarize some key points in my testimony that has been submitted for the record, but I would first like to at least state that I know for the Nation that September 11th was certainly one of the darkest days our Nation has ever experienced. It was one of the most catastrophic days our union has ever experienced

and one of the most tragic days of our profession, when we watched in horror along with the rest of the world the attack in New York, Arlington, Virginia, and in a rural field outside of Pittsburgh, the results of an assault on our country.

It was also a horrifying day for me, as I know every member of my union, to watch in disbelief when the two towers collapsed, because I knew at that moment that that would be the most disastrous day in our union's history, and I knew where my members were. I knew they were in those stairwells doing their job: initiating those attacks, performing their search and rescue, evacuating the building.

But I also watched with great honor and pride the work our members performed in New York, at the Pentagon, from Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax, the District of Columbia, Montgomery, Prince George's County. It is today's warriors, domestic warriors, that were really on the front lines in those days, not worrying about risking their own lives, just focused on their mission, doing their job, protecting not only the property, but working to save as many lives as they possibly could.

The Nation's fire services are united as they have never been before the attack, but certainly as the rest of the Nation galvanized together to take this moment in time to hopefully develop some responses from all levels of government that will act as a living memorial to those that sacrificed their lives in New York City at the south end of Manhattan, 344 courageous brothers of mine, who left behind over a thousand children and devastated families, and a fire department which is working at the point of exhaustion, which has deep scars on their souls, but continue to work day and night every day while the recovery goes on.

We need more than just the great recognition that has been afforded our profession over these last 4 weeks, and we need more than the wonderful prayers that have been offered by a Nation. This is time now for the government at all levels, and I believe it is time for this Congress, to act in meaningful ways by responding to some of the important resource needs that our Nation's fire service needs.

We have made 12 recommendations and I would just like to quickly focus on 2. I can appreciate, I would like to think, as much as anyone the great value of today's magnificent technology, the need for better communications, the need for coordinated command, the need for more information, but I have to tell you at the end of the day it takes one thing to really do our job. It takes people. It takes firefighters who are willing to go in and do their work. That is where the fire is, that is where the rescues are performed.

This is combat for us, and it is not unlike what our Nation is coming to grips with and has prepared itself for and that we all support as we watch a response to the terrorists and our enemies in Afghanistan. We watch the magnificent technology and the smart bombs and all of those items that the military has to do its job, but we also all know what it is going to take to really finish this job. It is going to take people on the ground to go in and get it.

That is what our business fundamentally is all about at the end of the day. It takes people to go in and do that job. Over two-thirds

of the communities in this country are running short. They are operating understaffed, including far too many communities in all of the States in this Nation, including two States that you two distinguished Senators represent.

We for the first time now have an actual measurement that has not been afforded to us in the past. We have an industry should standard finally. This summer, for the first time in over 100 years, the National Fire Protection Association, which is responsible for establishing our national fire codes, has come to the realization and developed after a 10-year effort a standard which establishes the staffing and deployment that it takes to provide adequate, efficient fire service operations and give our firefighters a better chance of their own survivability.

That Standard 1710, if implemented where it should be throughout this country, will take over 75,000 firefighters just to get us at a point of efficiency. It is firefighters we need and the proposals that I know the Senator from Connecticut and many others in this chamber and in the House are prepared the support. We need adequate personnel to do our job.

The second issue is training. I want to focus on the training for incidents where weapons of mass destruction are used. Our good battalion chief here is one of our distinguished hazardous materials instructors. We lost 14 of our 19 instructors in New York, the core of being able to provide training to firefighters throughout this country in order to be able to do their jobs where incidents where hazardous materials are involved.

We need that same training and that same commitment from this government as it relates to weapons of mass destruction, with an emphasis on chemical and biological agents. That has not been afforded to us yet. We have been in a struggle with the Department of Justice for too long, trying to get them the respond and to provide the resources we need for training for firefighters on the ground. Lots of money going to universities, lots of money going to think tanks, lots of money being spent. But I would call this distinguished Committee's attention to the training that I would like to point out, and that is the training that every firefighter needs in order to be adequately aware and operationally efficient to deal with the terror of incidents that I do not think is a matter of if, it is just going to be a matter of where and when.

So I will just conclude by thanking the Committee for this opportunity and appreciation of all of the wonderful accolades and recognition that come from throughout the Nation and certainly this distinguished body. But I hope that we can really now galvanize the Congress to respond in a real meaningful way and provide the necessary resources to let our people do their job more efficiently.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Schaitberger follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HAROLD A. SCHAITBERGER, GENERAL PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

Mr. Chairman. I thank you for the opportunity to appear before this Subcommittee today.

My name is Harold Schaitberger, and I am the General President of the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF). I started my career in 1966 as a professional fire fighter with the Fairfax County, VA., Fire and Rescue Department and

I now have the honor of representing more than 245,000 professional fire fighters and paramedics who protect 80 percent of our nation's population.

The 344 firefighters, who made the ultimate sacrifice one can make in our profession and rescued tens of thousands of civilians from the hellish carnage of the World Trade Center tragedy, are my brothers, as are the thousands of fire fighters who responded to the terrorist attacks in New York and at the Pentagon on September 11.

Mr. Chairman, I come before this Committee as a man on a mission to improve public safety, to better protect the safety of our nation's fire fighters, and to ensure our nation's fire service is prepared to respond to the inevitable terrorist attacks our nation will face in the future.

Like all Americans I watched the television with horror as the planes hit the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Within minutes of those attacks, I knew that hundreds of my firefighters were responding to the call, entering those buildings, and placing themselves at risk. When the first tower collapsed, I also knew we had lost hundreds of firefighters under millions of tons of jagged steel and debris—and it was time for the IAFF to pull its crisis team together and go to work.

Within hours, I was at the Pentagon meeting with our fire fighters there. By the next morning, we had reached out to Congress for help, and you responded by passing a resolution to streamline the process for putting Public Safety Officers Benefits into the hands of the families of our fallen heroes.

By Wednesday afternoon, we were in New York with our people there. We worked with our New York affiliates to create the New York Firefighters 9–11 Disaster Relief Fund to provide assistance to our devastated families. We established an office in Manhattan and put IAFF staff in the offices of our two affiliates to help them deal with the many issues faced by our New York fire fighters and fire officers. And we met with senior Fire Department of New York officials and FEMA officials to put a comprehensive counseling program in place, involving trained IAFF members from fire departments across the nation.

The world has seen the images of Ground Zero on television, but video and photographs cannot capture, nor words describe, the utter devastation of the scene we witnessed in New York that day on the site of what was once two tall proud symbols of the American spirit.

For a week following the attacks, I stayed in New York to oversee our operations there and I continue to return each week. Day after day, night after night, our New York fire fighters continue to dig through the mountains of rubble in search of their fallen brothers. They are working beyond exhaustion, but they are working with a determination that is the hallmark of our profession.

For our fire fighters in New York, it is still September 11.

All of us—our fire fighters, the widows and the 1,000 fatherless children of our IAFF family in New York, and citizens across this nation—must now live with the knowledge that we have suffered an unthinkable loss that will be etched in our hearts and our souls for the rest of our lives.

As profound as the loss and the devastation we face, is the enormous challenge that lies ahead—preparing the nation's fire service for its role in the coming war against terrorism.

Only a few weeks ago, the evils wrought upon our nation by these unrepentant terrorists were only a remote, nightmarish threat. Now the reality of such evil will always be with us as we wait and wonder what will come next. And come it will. As the U.S. intelligence agencies have told the members of this chamber and as Administration officials like Attorney General Ashcroft and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld have stated publicly, the likelihood of other terrorist acts is "100 percent."

In this first war of the 21st Century, the battle lines are drawn in our own communities and civilians and the places we frequent are explicit targets. In this war, the fire fighters are the nation's domestic defenders.

In many ways, this is not a new role for us. For nearly 100 years, IAFF members have been protecting the citizens of our nation from all hazards. We are the first on the scene when there is an incident involving hazardous materials, we are the nation's primary providers of emergency medical care, and we are the ones who search for and rescue people who are trapped and in danger.

But while the job we need to perform in this war is familiar, the magnitude of the challenge before us is unprecedented. In the past, we have had to respond to isolated incidents. In this new world, we need to be prepared for a coordinated, well-orchestrated series of attacks on American citizens. While we all tend to look toward the military in time of war, the reality is that in this war on terrorism, it is fire fighters who will be our first line of defense.

If we are to be successful in fulfilling our mission, we must have adequate resources. Sadly, as of today, we do not. The need for additional fire fighters, on-going

training, and equipment is tremendous and it can no longer be born solely by local jurisdictions. As evidenced by the response to the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, where fire departments from many different jurisdictions responded to the attacks, the federal government must recognize that terrorist acts are not local incidents, but national tragedies that need a federal response.

Just days after the September 11 attacks, FEMA Director Joe Allbaugh highlighted the need for additional resources. Fire fighters, he said, "put their lives on the line everyday and yet they are always the first in line for budget cuts and the last in line for recognition. That's got to stop."

To address this crisis, the nation's leading fire service groups came together to compile a list of 12 items Congress should address immediately to prepare the nation's fire service for our role in protecting America against terrorism. We have entitled this document, "Protecting Our Nation: the Immediate Needs of America's fire service." There are two areas to which I would like to draw your attention.

First is the need for training. As fire fighters are being called upon to protect the public from terrorism, I cannot stress enough the need for specialized training in terrorism and hazmat response and mitigation. I am proud to note that the IAFF, in partnership with DoJ, DoE, DoT, EPA and HHS, offers training programs to fire departments—free of charge—in terrorism and hazmat response. Our program utilizes the expertise of hazmat technicians who are also certified instructors to teach the course to fire fighters.

Unfortunately, the demand for our training program far outpaces our funding to deliver it. Our ability to deliver the training is only limited by the funding we get from our federal partners. If our grants from the various federal agencies are increased, the IAFF can dramatically increase the number of fire departments trained in terrorism and hazmat response and mitigation.

The second area of need, and the one stands above all others, is adequate staffing. Adequate staffing is important for public safety as well as for the safety of fire fighters performing that mission. The IAFF has long recognized that fire ground safety is inextricably linked to adequate staffing.

There are numerous studies that attest to the dangers of inadequate fire fighter staffing. Attached to my written statement is a bibliography of the studies to which I refer. But I don't need studies to tell me something that I've known for a long time. As a fire fighter on the hose line and now as the general president of the IAFF, I have witnessed firsthand the grave consequences of short staffing.

In Memphis, Tennessee; Worcester, Massachusetts; Keokuk, Iowa; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Chesapeake, Virginia; Stockton, California; Lexington, Kentucky; Buffalo, New York; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Washington, DC, fire fighters were killed because of a lack of staffing. In each of these cases, if there was a team in place that accounted for the fire fighters who were performing interior structural fire fighting, they would be alive today.

Yet, numerous jurisdictions are not taking to heart the lessons from these tragic events. Currently, 2/3 of all fire departments—large and small—operate with inadequate staffing. Across the nation, in cities like Buffalo, New York and Baltimore, Maryland, fire stations are being closed due to budget cuts. In fact, the lack of adequate staffing hampered the ability of the Baltimore Fire Department to respond to the hazmat incident caused by the train derailment in downtown Baltimore back in July.

In the face of the mounting evidence of a severe shortage of fire fighters, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)—the consensus, standard making body of the fire service—this summer issued its first standard on minimum staffing for fire departments. Ten years in the making, NFPA 1710 sets minimum acceptable standards for adequate personnel per fire fighting vehicle. With this new benchmark we now know that our nation needs an additional 75,000 fire fighters to safely and effectively protect the nation.

That is why the IAFF along with the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and several Members of Congress have strongly endorsed the SAFER Fire Fighters Act that was unveiled just today. The SAFER Fire Fighters Act uses the procedures established by the highly successful COPS program to place 75,000 additional fire fighters in our communities.

Using the model of the COPS program's Universal Hiring Program, the SAFER Fire Fighters Act provides federal grants to communities to hire additional fire fighters. The federal government would cover the cost of 75% of salary and benefits for a three-year period, not to exceed $90,000 over the three years. Local jurisdictions would then be required to retain the fire fighter position for at least one additional year. The experience of the Universal Hiring Program is that once a jurisdiction invests four years in an individual, it is highly likely that the individual will be retained.

The SAFER Fire Fighters Act is an innovative approach to solving the nation's need for more fire fighters. It is an example of the new type of federalism that our country needs to combat terrorism. Numerous federal studies and reports bemoan the lack of coordination between the different levels of government. The SAFER Fire Fighters Act would be a step towards better cooperation and coordination amongst local, state and federal governments to respond strongly and decisively to terrorism.

Despite the pain, the grief and the sorrow we feel and despite the unspeakable loss we have suffered, the nation must forge ahead and honor the memories of our fallen by taking steps to ensure that from this point forward we take all necessary steps to prevent such tragedies from ever occurring again.

As our nation prepares for war, we must not forget that the battles to come will be fought on our soil as well. The fire fighters of the IAFF will be ready when terrorists strike again. But our ranks are thin and reinforcements are needed quickly.

Thank you for this time to present the view of the IAFF. We appreciate the heartfelt expressions of condolences and the prayers that Congress and America have offered for our fallen comrades. I ask that you honor their memory and sacrifice by building a living memorial. Provide us with resources to ensure adequate staffing so that we can operate safely and effectively and to provide necessary training so that we will be able to play our role in fighting the war on terrorism. I will be available for questions by the Committee.

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Senator WYDEN. Well, Chief, thank you for a very helpful statement.

It is striking. You know, the title of this Subcommittee is "Science, Technology, and Space." But what I have tried to do, and I know Senator Allen has tried to do, is sort of add another word to the title—"Science, Technology, Space, and People"—because what you have said and what we have tried to say is, you can have every conceivable innovation in terms of technology and science and at the end of the day it is always about people, always about people. I thank you very much for hammering home that point.

We are going to have some questions for you in a moment, but you made the case very well. You did the people you represent proud, and we appreciate it.

Mr. SCHAITBERGER. Thank you.

Senator WYDEN. Mr. Buckman, welcome. Why do you not pull that microphone close to you so everybody can hear you, and please proceed.

STATEMENT OF CHIEF JOHN M. BUCKMAN III, PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS

Mr. BUCKMAN. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak with you this afternoon about the pressing needs of America's fire and emergency services.

I have done a lot of thinking over the last couple days of what I wanted to say and how I wanted to say it. I have to say that I think I decided I have to speak from the heart.

I have been in this business for 31 years. I am Fire Chief of the German Township Volunteer Fire Department in Evansville, Indiana, and currently President of the International Association of Fire Chiefs. I am from middle America—small towns, average people. Those people are just as frightened and worried as anyone in our Nation. I know I speak for them and for all of my colleagues today.

Congress has a constitutional responsibility to provide for the common defense of our people. Having said that, we in the fire service know that it is our mission to support you by serving as the front line defenders in our communities. We are America's first responders, the true homeland defenders, who will be there whenever and wherever we are needed, and we will be there ahead of everyone else. We are the ones to arrive in 4 minutes or less. We are the only ones to arrive in 4 minutes or less.

Today I am representing the leadership of more than 31,000 fire departments in the United States, which includes more than 1.1 million firefighters, of which 800,000 are volunteers and 245,000 are career personnel.

Before turning to the business of this hearing, I want to thank the Committee and the Senate, indeed the entire Congress, for the support, caring and concern being shown to the members of the Nation's fire and emergency services. Thanks especially for the consideration being given to the families of the heroes, the 344 who died or are missing and the 147 others who are missing in New York, and all who responded when summoned to the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and the airliner crash in Pennsylvania. We are grateful for your support.

Mr. Chairman, the Nation's fire chiefs appeared before you many times. We have discussed the role of fire and emergency service in protecting the Nation's 280 million citizens, protecting their homes and their workplaces. We have identified the needs of the Nation's fire and rescue services. Please remember that these are the only people, they are the only people, who are trained, equipped, and sworn to respond immediately when our citizens have a problem.

We respond to protect the critical infrastructure of our great country—airports, government facilities, pipelines, refineries, power plants, water supply, communications facilities, railroads, subways, dams, bridges. We protect it all. We protect the Nation's critical infrastructure.

We appreciate your response to our requests on previous occasions. You have supported the fire departments. You have enabled us to improve and increase our training, upgrade our apparatus and equipment, and to better plan our responses to disasters.

But today, Mr. Chairman, everything has changed. We have done much with the resources provided, but there is much to do. Again, I am here because we need your help. Without it, I am not sure the Nation's fire and emergency service can be as successful as our public expects us to be.

Earlier this year Chief Jack Fanning of the New York City Fire Department testified on the role of the fire service in responding to terrorism. He said: "The emphasis must be placed upon the most important aspect of the equation, the first responder and the first responder teams." Chief Fanning also said: "If lives are to be saved

and suffering reduced, it will be up to them, firefighters and other responders who will be there within minutes, some quite possibly becoming victims themselves."

How prophetic was Jack Fanning, and how sad it is that my good friend's 31 years of service ended on September 11th, one of 344 heroes, including the city's Fire Chief and much of the senior command staff, who responded that fateful day. Chief Fanning's testimony ended with these words: "They will do what they have always done, act to protect the public they serve."

Knowing this, let us provide them with the tools they need to perform their duties safely and effectively. That, Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, is our request today.

All of us in the fire and emergency services have worked to assess the vulnerabilities within our communities and develop plans to deal with situations like terrorist attacks. But I do not think one of us ever anticipated a concerted effort that would topple two of the world's tallest buildings, strike at the very nerve center of our national defense, and strike in a rural field, that would kill more than 600 people and injure another 8500.

Moreover, there is consensus that our troubles have only begun. On the front page of the September 28th edition of the Washington Post, this was written: "At a briefing Tuesday, one intelligence official said there is a 100 percent chance of attack should the United States strike Afghanistan. Government officials are fearful of attacks at any of hundreds or thousands of locations within our country, sites that one source described as exposed infrastructure."

In the new reality, America's fire and emergency services must reassess how we prepare, train, equip, respond, and what strategy we implement and what tactics we use when we respond to terrorist events. This calls for new ways of thinking. It requires more highly trained personnel. It means our forces have to have new and better equipment. As I said before, Mr. Chairman, it requires your help.

In the printed testimony I submitted for the record I list the specific areas of concern that the Nation's fire chiefs believe Congress can most effectively address. Let me simply summarize them for you here. Our first responders need better respiratory protection. We need 75,000 more firefighters. We need a more but robust assistance to firefighter program.

We need to extend high-level search and rescue capability and expertise to more local fire departments. We need to increase the number of metropolitan medical response systems. We need to resolve the radio communications crisis that is putting lives at risk and you have heard numerous speakers talk about today.

We need a common system providing rapid access to life-saving information in transportation emergencies, and we need to coordinate our terrorism preparedness programs. We need to return to a policy of providing training and equipment grants directly to large population centers and in addition funnel financial resources to smaller communities throughout the States.

The Nation's fire service must be integrated into the Nation's homeland security initiative. The final point is, the provisions of the Congressionally mandated Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor

Act need to be implemented immediately in order to appropriately recognize the heroes of September 11th.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, President Bush has nominated R. David Paulison, Chief of the Miami-Dade Fire and Rescue Department, to be the Administrator of the U.S. Fire Administration. We at the International Association of Fire Chiefs respectfully urge the Committee to move expeditiously in the confirmation process.

I would be pleased to respond to any questions you and members of the Subcommittee may have. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Chief Buckman follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CHIEF JOHN M. BUCKMAN III, PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for this opportunity to advise you about the pressing needs of America's fire and emergency service. These needs arise out of our mandate to be prepared to respond to and mitigate the effects of acts of terrorism. These needs must be addressed if our people are to function effectively as the front line responders in the nation's new army of Homeland Security.

I am Chief John Buckman, president of the International Association of Fire Chiefs and chief of the German Township Volunteer Fire Department in Evansville, Indiana.

I represent the fire chiefs and other senior managers of the more than 31,000 fire departments in the United States. Those 31,000 fire departments comprise more than 1.1 million fire fighters and emergency medical services personnel. Of those 1.1 million emergency service workers, more than 800,000 are volunteers and 245,000 are career personnel.

Before turning to the business of this hearing, I want to take a minute to say thank you. Thank you to this Committee, and through you to the Senate—indeed the entire Congress, for the support, caring and concern being shown members of the fire and emergency service and their families. Especially the families of the heroes—the 343 who died or are missing and the 147 others who were injured in New York, and all who responded when summoned to the World Trade Center, the Pentagon in Virginia, and the airliner crash in Pennsylvania. We are very grateful.

Mr. Chairman, the nation's fire chiefs have appeared before this Committee and others many times before today. We have discussed the role of the fire and emergency service in protecting the nation's 280 million citizens, their homes and workplaces.

We have talked about the needs of the nation's fire, rescue, and EMS responders who are mandated to protect and to mitigate the effects of incidents affecting the nation's critical infrastructure.

These men and women are the only people in the United States who are trained, equipped, and sworn to respond immediately and address crises involving airports, government facilities, pipelines, refineries, electric power plants, water supply and treatment plants, communications facilities, railroads and subways, and dams, bridges and waterways.

And we are grateful for your response to our testimony on previous occasions and to our requests for federal assistance. You have enabled the nation's fire and emergency service to improve and increase its training. You have helped us to upgrade our apparatus and equipment. You have assisted us to better plan for our response to acts of terrorism. On behalf of the nation's fire chiefs, I say again, thank you, thank you very much.

But today, Mr. Chairman, everything is changed. We have done much with the resources provided, but there is much more to do. And we need your help to get it done. Without help from Congress and the Executive Branch, I am not sure that the nation's fire and emergency service can be as successful as everyone will want it to be in the future.

Earlier this year, Chief Jack Fanning of the New York City Fire Department (FDNY) testified in the Senate on the role of the fire service in responding to terrorism. Fanning, the officer responsible for FDNY's Hazardous Materials Operations, said that in preparing for terrorism, "*the emphasis must be placed upon the most important aspect of the equation—the first responder and first responder teams*."

In the 60 minutes or so before the collapse of the World Trade Center towers, *tens of thousands* of people were safely evacuated by the New York City Fire Department, whose brave members, assisted by courageous police officers and others, worked to rescue thousands still trapped by fire and smoke.

Chief Fanning told the Senate—and I quote from his testimony—"*if lives are to be saved and suffering reduced it will be up to them to do it. At an incident, whatever the scale, fire fighters and other responders will be there within minutes, some quite possibly becoming victims themselves*."

How prophetic of Jack Fanning! And how sad it is that my good friend's 31 years of service to the people of New York City ended on September 11. For he is one of the 343 heroes—including the city's fire chief and most of his senior command staff—who responded to their last alarm—who died in the act of saving others.

Chief Fanning's Senate testimony last May ended with these words: "*They (the first responders) will do what they have always done—act to protect the public they serve. Knowing this, let us provide them with the tools they need to perform their duties safely and effectively*."

That, Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, is our request today. Please give them "*the tools they need to perform their duties safely and effectively*."

We owe it to the American public. We owe it to Chief Fanning and the thousands of other "first responders" who worked so hard in the minutes, hours, days and weeks following the attacks on "9–11."

As I said a few moments ago, today everything is changed. It wasn't long ago that all of us in the fire and emergency service worked to assess the vulnerabilities in our communities and develop plans to deal with situations like terrorist attacks. I don't think there is one of us who ever anticipated a concerted effort that would topple two of the world's tallest buildings, strike at the very nerve center of our national defense, kill more than 6,000 people, and injure another 8,500.

Moreover, there is consensus that our troubles have just begun.

On the front page of the September 28th edition of the *Washington Post*, the following was included in an article on the threat of more terrorist attacks against the United States:

> *U.S. intelligence officials have told members of Congress there is a high probability that terrorists associated with Osama bin Laden will try to launch another major attack on American targets here or abroad in the near future.*
>
> *Based on what officials described as credible new information, the FBI and the CIA have assessed the chances of a second attempt to attack the United States as very high, sources said yesterday.*
>
> *At a briefing Tuesday, in response to a senator's question about the gravity of the threat, one intelligence official said there is a "100 percent" chance of an attack should the United States strike Afghanistan, according to sources familiar with the briefing.*
>
> * * * * *
>
> *"We have to believe there will be another attempt by a terrorist group to hit us again," Sen. Richard C. Shelby (Ala.), ranking Republican on the Senate intelligence committee, said yesterday. "You can just about bet on it. That's just something you have to believe will happen."*
>
> *Attorney General John Ashcroft warned earlier this week that there is a "likelihood of additional terrorist activity," and that the "risks go up" once the United States responds with military action. "We think that there is a very serious threat of additional problems now," Ashcroft said. "And frankly, as the United States responds, that threat may escalate."*
>
> * * * * *
>
> *Government officials are fearful of attacks at any of hundreds or thousands of locations, including symbols of American power and culture, such as government buildings in Washington and centers of entertainment. They are concerned about truck bomb and car bomb explosions that could be detonated near natural gas lines, power plants and other sites that one source described as "exposed infrastructure."*

So a new book—the book on how emergency services respond to terrorism—has to be written. America's fire and emergency service must reassess how we prepare, how we train, how we are equipped, how we respond, what strategies we implement, and what tactics we use.

This calls for new ways of thinking. It requires more highly trained personnel. It means our forces have to have new and better equipment. And as I said before, Mr.

Chairman, it requires your help. The help that only Congress and the Executive Branch can provide.

I am here today to list the specific areas of concern that the nation's fire chiefs believe Congress can most effectively address.

1. *Respiratory Protection*

There is an urgent need for immediate action by NIOSH to establish standards and protocols for the design, testing and manufacture of devices to provide respiratory protection for fire, EMS, police and other emergency workers who may be exposed to chemical or biological agents.

One of the most basic and essential tools necessary for effective emergency response is respiratory protection. The fire service is seriously concerned about the lack of appropriate respiratory protection for civilian "first responders" who may be called upon to respond to incidents of terrorism involving chemical or biological agents.

All civilian employers in the United States, including fire departments, are required to select and issue NIOSH-approved respirators, as appropriate, based on respiratory hazards. OSHA regulations under 29 CFR 1910.120 and 1910.134(d)(1) require it.

And yet, Mr. Chairman, as we sit here this afternoon, there is no NIOSH-approved respiratory protection available to civilian public safety personnel who may respond to a terrorist incident involving chemical or biological agents. Consequently, fire fighters and other "first responders"—and these include police officers, emergency medical services personnel, and other emergency workers—are completely at risk from these types of attacks.

For more than three years the International Association of Fire Chiefs has been urging the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) at the Department of Health and Human Services to make certification of cartridge-type respirators a high priority. The need is more urgent than ever before. Action is absolutely necessary.

Mr. Chairman, here is what we ask: that Congress use its influence over NIOSH to promote standards and certification of respiratory protection for fire and emergency service personnel to the No. 1 position on their list of priorities. Considering the possible threats that we face, we simply cannot afford further delays.

2. *75,000 Additional Fire Fighters*

The understaffing of fire departments is an issue that must be addressed. Whether a department is a career, combination, or volunteer, the level of staffing is an immediate issue, especially in the light of today's reality. Existing federal programs provide tools for equipment and training. No program provides for additional human resources for adequate response to terrorism.

The primary objective of adding 75,000 U.S. fire fighters is raising the staffing level of fire departments throughout the country to four fire fighters per unit. A four-person response unit will yield a 100 percent increase in operational capacity compared with three-person companies. By federal OSHA law and proper safety practices, fire fighters must operate in teams of at least two people. Therefore, fire apparatus staffing of four will yield two working teams, doubling the capacity of apparatus staffed with three personnel which can only form one operational team. Raising staffing levels to four personnel is a large undertaking, but it is necessary.

Limited apparatus staffing reduces a fire department's ability to respond to a terrorist event where large amounts of resources are needed quickly and in quantity. Early intervention in the consequence of a terrorist event will increase the number of lives saved. Fire departments respond within three to five minutes and remain in place until an incident is resolved. No other consequence management resource can respond this quickly.

Nearly 20,000 fire departments submitted applications this year to the Assistance to Firefighters grant program. This gives some indication of the pressing need for equipment, training, tools and apparatus. There is no comparable program to address the deficit in human resources.

3. *Assistance To Firefighters Grant Program*

Congress should authorize $5 billion over five years and appropriate $600 million for dispersal this year.

The Assistance to Firefighters program was enacted last year and $100 million was appropriated for Fiscal Year 2001. This was the first such program of its kind for federal assistance to the fire service. Its purpose is to provide for the fundamental tools of fire fighting. In its first year, nearly 20,000 fire departments sought support from the federal government to upgrade training, personal protective gear, apparatus and equipment, and fitness/wellness programs to better enable personnel

to respond to the all-hazards incidents to which we respond. Requests totaling nearly $3 billion were received by FEMA, which gives a clear indication of fire service needs.

The Assistance to Firefighters grant program is vital in our effort to support local fire departments. Departments throughout the nation face numerous challenges ranging from wildland fire protection, natural disaster response, emergency medical response, structural fire suppression, hazardous materials response, and response to incidents of terrorism. Often, local governments cannot afford the extensive training and specialized equipment that these activities require. In rural jurisdictions, the need is especially critical. Many rural fire departments make emergency runs using trucks that are 30 to 40 years old, they use outdated equipment, and struggle to receive adequate training.

The Assistance to Firefighters grant program assists local fire departments in many jurisdictions by providing the needed funds to pay for such critically needed equipment, apparatus and training.

Just last week the Senate acted to reauthorize the program. The amounts authorized were significantly increased. We urge that Congress consider authorizing this program for five years for $5 billion. We further urge Congress to appropriate $600 million to fund the program for Fiscal Year 2002.

Mr. Chairman, here is what we ask: that Congress continue its support of the fire service through increased appropriations for the Assistance to Firefighters program which began one year ago.

4. *Urban Search And Rescue/Command Overhead*

There exists a pressing and urgent need to extend high-level search and rescue capabilities and expertise to local fire departments across the country. At times of significant incidents involving major structural collapses and extensive rescue and recovery operations these resources will be required.

In the days immediately following the attacks on September 11, 2001, many Americans heard for the first time about the Federal Emergency Management Agency's "Urban Search and Rescue" (USAR) teams. There are 28 teams, largely composed of local fire fighters with specialized training and equipment and extensive experience that can be deployed to major incidents throughout the country.

In the metropolitan Washington area, for example, there are USAR teams in Fairfax County, Virginia, and Montgomery County, Maryland. In the event of a major structural collapse—such as occurred in New York City, or a few years ago in the San Francisco earthquake—these teams or any of the other 26 can be "activated" by FEMA. They travel to the scene of disasters to perform crucial rescue operations. The current USAR structure requires teams to travel long distances, usually on military aircraft.

When several USAR teams deploy, as was the case in New York City and at the Pentagon in Arlington County, Virginia, significant areas of the country are left vulnerable. Short response times are a critical consideration when the lives of people buried beneath rubble are at stake.

The IAFC believes the USAR program should be expanded and upgraded by the formation of smaller, more mobile "USAR Lite" teams of specialists that can be quickly deployed over shorter distances to supplement local resources and to enhance the current USAR capability and improve USAR response times.

We believe there also is a need for what we call "Command Overhead Teams." It is often the case in prolonged, major incidents that a fire department's commanders are fully engaged in addressing the instant issues and are hard-pressed to anticipate what might develop and to then plan for the future. They would welcome outside assistance. The "Command Overhead Teams" concept involves the creation of small groups of three-to-five experienced command officers who can be called upon on short notice to provide assistance to local efforts in an emergency at the request of a local incident commander.

Mr. Chairman, we ask this: that Congress authorize and appropriate additional funds for FEMA for the creation and integration of Urban Search and Rescue "Lite" teams, and to develop and implement the "Command Overhead Teams" concept. Both of these programs, if Congress turns them into realities, will make a significant contribution to the safety and well-being of our citizens.

5. *Metropolitan Medical Response System*

Because the nation is critically vulnerable from coast-to-coast and border-to-border, the number of Metropolitan Medical Response System teams established through the Department of Health and Human Services should be significantly increased from the current 97 to 150.

Several years ago, through its Office of Emergency Preparedness, the Department of Health and Human Services established a program for enhancing local preparedness through the creation of "systems" to respond to incidents of terrorism. The program focuses on the health and emergency medical aspects of incidents and provides funding for pharmaceuticals and personnel protective equipment.

"System" teams are composed of fire fighters, emergency medical service personnel and public health officials, who train together and are integrated into the overall response plan in the 97 metropolitan areas now covered. We believe the citizens of the United States who live in smaller metropolitan areas are entitled to enjoy same the type of protection as those who live in large cities.

Mr. Chairman, here is what we ask: We ask Congress to provide additional funding to the Department of Health and Human Services, along with a request to Secretary Tommy Thompson to increase the number of cities and surrounding areas that are now included in the program.

6. *Communications*

There is a critical need to integrate advanced communications technologies into local emergency responder communications systems, and to expand the amount of radio spectrum that is allocated to emergency services, to enable better on-scene communications and to facilitate seamlessly interoperable radio communications among and between emergency response agencies.

In major incidents where the responding emergency personnel involved come from different jurisdictions or agencies, each using its own radio frequencies, the issue of radio communications among and between responding agencies remains a challenge.

In fact, it is one of the most serious weaknesses in our emergency response system. Yet, it is essential for responding agencies to communicate with one another for there to be a well-organized, effective response. Command, control and communications are the essentials of incident management, and communications is the linchpin.

There are on the market today a variety of devices that facilitate interoperability, but widespread application of these technologies is financially prohibitive for many agencies across the country.

However, the long-term solution lies in radio spectrum allocation. Congress should direct the Federal Communications Commission and the Department of Defense to provide appropriate spectrum to public safety agencies.

This Committee played a pivotal role in reallocating four digital television channels for exclusive use by state and local public safety agencies, as provided in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. Work is currently in progress with the Federal Communications Commission to establish the operating standards and interoperable criteria for eventual use of the frequencies by public safety agencies. Even though acceptable progress is being made with standards development, a small number of television stations will need to abandon use of these frequencies in order for public safety to use this important radio spectrum.

Last year, Congress addressed the issue of allocating a small portion of the radio spectrum in the 138—144 MHz range for interoperability purposes. That spectrum, which is adjacent to existing public safety bands, currently is assigned to the Department of Defense. This Committee was largely responsible for this most important provision in Section 1705 of Title XVII—"Assistance to Firefighters," contained in Public Law 106–398.

The law requires the Secretary of Defense to submit an interim progress report by October 30 of this year to the Senate Armed Services Committee and the House Armed Services Committee. Then, not later than January 1, 2002, the Secretary of Commerce and the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission are to submit a report to Congress on alternative frequencies available for use by public safety systems.

Mr. Chairman, we ask this: that Congress, appropriate funds sufficient to provide for the acquisition of communications interoperability technology and equipment by fire departments wherever it is needed. We have been moving in that direction because Congress previously has allocated some monies for that purpose. But more is needed.

We also ask this: that Congress, exercising its oversight authority, ensure that these departments and agencies meet their respective reporting deadlines so that reallocation of frequencies for public safety use can be expedited.

7. *Hazardous Materials*

Fire departments nationwide need rapid access to life-saving information about hazardous materials cargoes being transported by rail and truck when responding

to transportation incidents involving hazardous materials and rail passenger accidents.

Response to incidents involving hazardous materials is largely a fire department responsibility. The Operation Respond Institute (ORI), a non-profit organization, in cooperation with the freight industry, has developed computer software that provides rapid access to life-saving information to fire departments responding to transportation incidents involving hazardous materials and rail passenger accidents.

Mr. Chairman, we ask this: that Congress authorize and fund a program that will supplement industry's commitment to safety by making possible the distribution of ORI's software to all public safety emergency operations centers. Further, a $10 million authorization over five years would significantly contribute to both fire fighter and the public's safety by assuring continued research and development in this important public/private partnership.

8. *Coordination of Terrorism Preparedness Programs*

Certifying the Office of National Preparedness within FEMA would significantly improve federal, state and local agencies' efforts to coordinate in planning and preparedness.

Federal efforts to help prepare local "first responders" for incidents of terrorism that may involve chemical or biological agents began with the Nunn-Lugar-Domenici amendment to the 1997 Defense Authorization Act. It directed the Department of Defense to begin training and equipping local fire fighters and police to deal with incidents of terrorism involving chemical/biological agents. Similar programs have since been authorized by Congress, bringing the Departments of Justice, Health and Human Services, FEMA and other federal agencies into the effort.

Without doubt we have made progress, but preparedness efforts need to be more clearly focused. We have testified in the past about the need for a single, national strategy to guide us moving forward. We also have pointed to the lack of that universally accepted planning tool: goal setting. Without clearly defined, measurable preparedness goals, it is difficult to measure progress.

Legislation introduced by Sen. Bob Smith, S. 1453, the Preparedness Against Terrorism Act, 2001, speaks to these issues. This legislation would codify the Office of National Preparedness (ONP) at the Federal Emergency Management Agency, created at President Bush's direction in May of this year. The ONP would serve as a single point-of-contact for state and local public safety agencies. The legislation also creates a "President's Council" to guide the ONP in developing a national strategy that includes measurable preparedness goals. Attached to this testimony is the Strategy developed by the IAFC to advance this preparedness concept.

The executive director of the ONP, as envisioned in the bill, would be charged with reviewing all federal training and response programs, to ensure that each of the many programs, spread across myriad federal agencies, adheres to criteria developed by the "President's Council" to ensure consistency with our national strategy.

The IAFC applauds this legislation. It has the support of America's first responders and represents a crucial step in the right direction.

It is a logical extension of FEMA's responsibilities for disaster response. We believe it is consistent with President Bush's public announcement in May concerning the organization and management of federal terrorism response programs and his creation of the Office of Homeland Security. Mr. Chairman, we ask that the Senate make whatever modifications may be necessary to S. 1453 with respect to Governor Ridge's new Homeland Security office and act quickly to approve this legislation.

9. *Additional Grant and Training Programs*

Congress should increase funding for initiatives designed to assist fire departments with training and equipment acquisition, and return to the FY 1999 approach that directly provided assistance for our most populous communities while simultaneously requiring state-plans addressing the needs of communities beyond the 157 largest.

Originally authorized by the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, the Office of Justice Programs at the Department of Justice administers a training consortium and an equipment acquisition program designed to assist "state and local" first responders' preparedness efforts. Many of the training opportunities have proved beneficial and we encourage that Congress continue to provide for them.

In fiscal year 1998, the Department of Justice began a grant program that provided direct assistance to local governments in the form of cash grants designated for the purchase of communications, personal protective and detection equipment that would be employed in a non-traditional terrorist incident, one involving chem-

ical or biological agents. The largest 120 jurisdictions were encouraged to submit competitive applications.

In fiscal year 1999, Congress chose an approach that, in addition to providing direct grants to an additional 37 jurisdictions, directed funding to each of the 50 states to provide for communities beyond the 157 most populated. That approach made sense to the fire service and we support it.

However, in FY 2000 and beyond, Congress directed the Department of Justice to cease direct aid to our country's most densely populated communities and instead chose to funnel all available equipment purchase funds through the states. The intent of Congress, as we understood it, was for each state to develop a plan that provided for the distribution of funds, subject to an 80 percent "pass-through" requirement to local communities, based on need.

Mr. Chairman, Congress provided funding and direction to the states for this purpose in federal fiscal year 1999. We are today nearly a month into federal fiscal year 2002. We are aware of fewer than ten states that have completed and submitted to the Justice Department the plans that Congress specified. There are currently tens, if not hundreds, of millions of dollars bottled up at the Justice Department because the states have not acted.

In speaking with several of my colleagues, I am aware that several states began their assessment and planning process only after the events of September 11.

Mr. Chairman, we call upon Congress to do whatever it takes to free sums that have already been appropriated by law for the purpose of enhancing the capabilities of local responders. We believe that the bottleneck can be addressed by an immediate release of funds to the states, provided, that this is done under the strict supervision of the Office of Justice Programs to ensure that the intent of Congress is met.

Mr. Chairman, we also ask that Congress return to the fiscal year 1999 approach that directly provided for our most populous communities while simultaneously requiring state-plans addressing the needs of communities beyond the 157 largest. Regardless of anyone's philosophical view of the relationship between local, state and federal government, it is simply the right thing to do if we are to enhance our ability to protect as many citizens as possible.

10. *Homeland Security*

The nation's fire and emergency service must be integrated as a major partner into the nation's Homeland Security initiative.

President Bush has established the Office of Homeland Security and appointed former Governor Tom Ridge to head the new organization. The Secretary of Defense has designated the Secretary of the Army to lead the Department of Defense's homeland security effort. These appointments underscore the need to manage and closely coordinate the federal government's counter-terrorism activities.

But Homeland Security is so much more than the federal government. America's fire and emergency service, which will respond immediately and locally to any terrorist incident, is a key element in homeland security. The fire and emergency service looks forward to a close working partnership with the leadership of these initiatives.

Mr. Chairman, we ask this: that Congress, through oversight and enabling legislation, act to ensure that the nation's fire and emergency service is accorded a strong role in the development of federal policies and plans relative to the fire service and other local first responders.

11. *Medal of Valor*

Immediate action is required to implement the provisions of the congressionally mandated Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor Act in order the recognize the 9–11 heroes.

Mr. Chairman, at the outset I stated that we are here today to ask for critical actions by Congress. This one is the one that gives rise simultaneously to sadness and the great satisfaction. Because it deals expressly with the men and women who serve so valiantly, so selflessly, in the nation's public safety services.

In May, President Bush signed into law the Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor Act. The law establishes a medal that the president may award and present in the name of Congress to deserving recipients.

The law provides for a Medal of Valor Review Board, the majority of which are to be appointed by the leadership of the Senate and House of Representatives. Members of that review board have not yet been named.

And so, Mr. Chairman, today we ask this: that steps be taken immediately to expedite these appointments so that appropriate recognition can be bestowed upon

those whose lives were abruptly ended in the many acts of extraordinary valor, above and beyond the call of duty.

Conclusion

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I want to note that President Bush has nominated R. David Paulison, Chief of the Miami-Dade Fire and Rescue Department in Florida, to be Administrator of the United States Fire Administration.

Chief Paulison is a past president of the International Association of Fire Chiefs and he has served the citizens of the Miami-Dade County area of Florida for 30 years. He has the strong support and confidence of the nation's fire service. When the nomination is submitted, we respectfully urge the Committee to move swiftly in the process for Senate confirmation of Chief Paulison.

The International Association of Fire Chiefs very much appreciates the opportunity to appear before you today and to share our views with you on the urgent needs to better prepare America's fire and emergency service to deal with act of terrorism in this country.

We are the front-line troops in the new army of homeland security.

Thank you.

Strategy Outline For Domestic Preparedness

A Preparedness Strategy for Terrorism First Responders

This Preparedness Strategy for first responders to incidents of terrorism by necessity addresses federal, state and local involvement and interaction in preparing for and in responding to terrorist incidents. The Strategy envisions utilization of in-place teams like Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces, National Guard Civil Support Teams (formerly RAID), Metropolitan Medical Response Systems, National Medical Response Teams, and military units as providing important, secondary strength and expertise to local first responders. Furthermore, the establishment of a single point of contact for coordination of domestic preparedness programs is given a pivotal role at the federal level in this Strategy.

This Preparedness Strategy for first responders will focus on the needs of fire service and emergency medical first responders who together must intervene swiftly and safely if lives are to be saved following a terrorist act involving Weapons of Mass Destruction. Local law enforcement agencies also play a key first responder role to terrorist incidents so the local law enforcement component of a comprehensive strategy should be prepared by them to assure their specific preparedness needs are addressed.

So far, the federal government has taken a lead role in domestic preparedness for terrorism. Yet, given the expanse of the United States, with population centers scattered across the nation, the specifics of this Strategy, if followed, will ensure a more methodical achievement of local terrorism response preparedness benefiting larger areas of the country.

This Strategy addresses training, command, control, communication, equipment, procedures and performance capabilities while specifying the role of the Federal Terrorism Coordinator, yet to be established, and state governments in implementing the Strategy. This Strategy also builds upon what federal, state and local capabilities are already in place so that every additional dollar invested in domestic preparedness for terrorism *expands current readiness*.

Building Upon Current Readiness

This Strategy for terrorism first responders builds upon what is currently in place and would put the greater share of federal assistance into those geographical areas most ready to meet certain terrorism response capabilities. As a point of reference, the current 28 Urban Search and Rescue Teams form a ready force of regional response capability to terrorism incidents where the primary need is heavy rescue. Likewise, the Metropolitan Medical Response Systems and National Guard Civil Support Teams add to an existing network of response systems available around the country.

The Strategy envisions the national Urban Search and Rescue Task Forces, the Metropolitan Medical Response Systems and the National Guard Civil Support teams all serving as strong secondary backup to local first responders. However, this Strategy draws attention to the need for a more methodical approach to future federal assistance that uses criteria and sets priorities based on local performance capability objectives, and enhancing current readiness levels. If adopted, the Strategy will build upon what national, regional and local response readiness is in place by awarding future grant funds to those local jurisdictions which are most near completion in preparedness for terrorism response. If followed, the Strategy will quickly result in a growing number of local jurisdictions becoming fully prepared rather

than an increasing number of local first responders getting only enough funds to begin the readiness process. This Strategy constitutes the next logical step in a methodical approach to expanding local first responder preparedness for domestic terrorism.

The current national preparedness effort, though useful, has overlooked the universally accepted planning concept of goal setting. The lack of clearly defined preparedness goals should be addressed through the development of performance capability objectives that, once met through the rational employment of local, state and federal assets, define the end-game, or goal: adequate preparedness.

As presented below, this Strategy capitalizes on advancements made and fills existing gaps in readiness at the local level. Population criteria and risk assessment, used previously, still play a prominent role as they should. As proposed by Congress, distribution of grant funds through the states is appropriate, provided there is a clearly established "pass through" provision which will be followed and monitored. This Strategy provides such pass through requirements and is recommended for use by both the federal government and the states in qualifying and evaluating grant requests. The Strategy is a reasonable, methodical tool for federal officials to ensure federal assistance reaches local entities that will further the national network of readiness preparation for terrorism. It is a necessary requirement for federal officials to ensure assistance reaches the intended local government entities and adherence to this Strategy will accomplish this requirement.

The Strategy Outlined

Current Regional Strengths (nationwide)

- 28 Urban Search & Rescue Teams (USAR)
- 72 Metropolitan Response Systems (MMRS)
- 10 National Guard Civil Support Teams (additional 23 Teams authorized by Congress)

Federal Initiatives

- Training—With expert advice from appropriate federal, state and local agencies, provide adequate funding for the development, publication and distribution of a comprehensive guide to fire and emergency medical first responders that addresses proper equipment, procedures, and personnel protection necessary to handle WMD incidents and decontamination of victims. The guide should be distributed to all fire departments and will be a prerequisite training requirement for federal assistance in Fiscal Year 2002 and beyond.

  Would cover:

  —Basic awareness
  —Basic steps in achieving preparedness for WMD
  —First responder performance objectives for preparedness
  —Proper protective measures
  —NBC agents and substances
  —Signs, symptoms and prescribed treatment
  —Decontamination procedures
  —Detection equipment
  —Incident Command System—unified command (providing for the inclusion of federal assets)

  - Federal and/or state agencies allocate funding to local jurisdictions which adhere to this Strategy.
  - Grant funding to be competitive, based on local capabilities and characteristics.
  - Funding to enhance *existing* readiness levels so local jurisdictional fire and EMS first responders are trained and able to fulfill these performance capabilities:

  —Implement command and control using the standard Incident Command System
  —Communicate with other responding agencies via interoperable radios and/or mobile interconnect systems
  —Detect and identify CBRN agents using equipment off Standardized Equipment List
  —Protect first responders operating in or near such environment
  —Decontaminate a suitable number of non-ambulatory and ambulatory victims using proper procedures, equipment and personnel
  —Protect local hospital emergency rooms from contaminated convergent victims (external decontamination at hospitals)

Local Jurisdiction Criteria for State/Federal Assistance

- Must apply for funding from appropriate federal or state agency
- Must demonstrate outreach efforts to local, state and federal fire, EMS, law and health representatives, through interagency preparedness and response planning and mutual aid agreements
- Must demonstrate adoption of standard ICS
- Must use Standardized Equipment List
- Must have ready access to a certified hazardous materials response team capable of level A entry with back up team available
- Must submit grant request that:
  —States current training, equipment and response capability
  —Describes regional service readiness
  —Specifies needs and funding required to achieve domestic preparedness "performance capability" specified above
  —Spells out how local jurisdiction will carry out response, detection, identification of personnel protection, decontamination, pre-hospital care and transportation of victims to medical facilities
  —Details how regional MMRS, Civil Support Teams, US&R teams and federal assets would be accessed and under what circumstances
- Must certify that above-cited Comprehensive Guide for First Responders, developed in concert with appropriate federal agencies, is being used locally

Conclusion

Efforts undertaken by federal, state and local government have resulted in progress. However, until a national strategy, such as that outlined above, is put in place, it will be exceedingly difficult to quantify the level of preparedness reached by our collective national response mechanism. Clearly defined goals that incorporate the differing capabilities and assets currently maintained by various levels of government must be developed and pursued.

This Strategy flows from a local fire service perspective and is based upon the concept of building upon existing response mechanisms. Such a Strategy has value because it builds upon what is in place, permits establishment of goals and provides an achievable pathway towards domestic preparedness. Further, it allows innovation at all levels of government that will lead to a more comprehensive approach to domestic preparedness.

Senator WYDEN. Chief, thank you. We will have some questions in a moment.

Chief Ingram, welcome.

STATEMENT OF ROBERT INGRAM, BATTALION CHIEF, CITY OF NEW YORK FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mr. INGRAM. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator. I am a Battalion Chief in the New York City Fire Department and Executive Officer of the Hazardous Materials Operations Unit. I am also a member of the NFPA Committee on Hazardous Materials, also a member of the Department of Defense and Department of Justice Inter-Agency Board for Standardization of Equipment in Response to Terrorism.

I mention those two agencies as an example where the needs of first responders are brought out and addressed by representatives of the Federal, State and local agencies as well as private concerns, and it may be an area where you can look to further advice for technology needs.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today on the needs of the fire service in the efforts to respond to terrorism. I also have to take a moment just to comment on your responses before on the issues of funding for the fire service. I appreciate them, I look forward to you following through on those, and I thank you for them.

Sadly, the discussion on this topic has moved from the theoretical to the practical. Before September 11th we never conceived of the possibility of such a horrific act or such a tragic consequence.

The New York City Fire Department is now faced with not only a tragic personal toll, the devastating loss of 344 members, the trauma for our families, leaving more than 1,000 children fatherless, but also the loss of a knowledgeable, experienced group of leaders. We lost some of our most experienced chiefs as well as some of our most seasoned firefighters in this event. More than 90 members of our Special Operations Command, which includes our elite rescue and hazmat units, were lost. Chief Ray Downing, the premier collapse expert in the country, was taken. My dear friend and colleague Chief Jack Fanning, a noted expert who has testified on the very issue we are discussing today, is among the missing.

We will have to rebuild the department and will have to make adjustments, both in the short and long term, to replicate their expertise. We have pledged to do so with our fallen comrades in mind. We owe it to them to do it in a way that preserves the legacy of professionalism and dedication they established. It is a debt we will gladly pay.

The attack that occurred on September 11th is almost impossible to understand. The response is not. Hundreds of firefighters, police officers, and emergency medical professionals rushed to the World Trade Center with one thing in mind—to save lives. These were men and women who dedicated themselves to the service of others and wound up paying the ultimate price. They were the best trained, best equipped, and most competent response force ever dispatched, and before the day was over they effected the most successful rescue in history, safely evacuating more than 25,000 people from the World Trade Complex prior to the collapse of the towers.

In the wake of the World Trade Center attack, the FDNY will continue to expand training efforts and the use of new strategies and technologies to not only help us recover from the tragic events of that day, but to further protect firefighters, EMS personnel, and citizens.

I am thankful for the opportunity to appear before you today to ask for any assistance you can give us in reaching these goals. The FDNY has both short-term and long-term needs we are working to address. One immediate need is to train a new group of firefighters to operate engines, ladder trucks, and other emergency vehicles. Nearly 150 of our trained drivers were lost on September 11th. While we are more than adequately fulfilling our day to day responsibilities, we must expedite the training of replacement drivers to bolster our ranks. To do so, the department is seeking to purchase specially designed training simulators that recreate the experience of operating these powerful and complicated vehicles.

A second short-term priority is to enhance our response to terrorism with additional training for firefighters in the handling of hazardous materials and other emergency procedures. Municipal fire departments can find the instructors to teach these skills, but often struggle to find the funds to enroll firefighters and officers in such programs or to replace them so their daily duties can be covered while they are away from the job.

A related and equally important initiative is to provide protective clothing, respirators and equipment used to detect hazardous materials, not only to our specially trained hazmat teams as we do now, but also to other emergency units who are likely to arrive at the scene first.

A somewhat longer term, yet no less important, project for the FDNY and other emergency services is employing technology to improve the safety of their members and the public. We must continue to explore technological solutions that maximize our ability to protect our members regardless of the situations they face. Much like our successful experience broadening the use of thermal imaging cameras, we should explore communications solutions that are applicable in a variety of settings. Building in additional redundancy, diverse routing, and flexibility within our communications and IT solutions is just one example. We need to look at every phase of our operation and be ready to take advantage of new technology, whether it is in the training, fire suppression, rescue, or recovery phase of our operations. Examples run the gamut from the use of satellite phones for communications to vehicle or personal tracking systems to monitor the movements of equipment and personnel.

Finally, we would urge stepped-up efforts to monitor and analyze the nature of emergency medical calls on a regional basis. The FDNY and New York City Department of Health work closely to track the types of calls our EMT's and paramedics respond to, in hopes of spotting health trends. With better coordination of these efforts between towns and cities in the same region, we might strengthen our national early warning system to spot potential health emergencies.

In addition to the issues I have brought to you today, I implore you to revisit the testimony that Chief Fanning gave in May on behalf of the FDNY and the International Association of Fire Chiefs that also addresses first responder needs. I would be happy to make this testimony available to you.

In closing, I am reminded of the words of our Chief of Department Peter Ganci, who lost his life commanding the incident at the Trade Center. At a memorial service 2 years ago, Chief Ganci said: "In our department, at all ranks we contribute and at all ranks we are vulnerable." Both our contributions and our vulnerabilities were on display September 11th. We lost members from every rank, but at the same time witnessed heroism and courage that knew no bounds. As the nature of our world changes, we must ensure that the latest training, equipment, and other resources are available for any eventuality.

Thank you for your time.

[The prepared statement of Chief Ingram follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBERT INGRAM, BATTALION CHIEF, CITY OF NEW YORK FIRE DEPARTMENT

Good Afternoon,

My name is Robert Ingram. I am a Battalion Chief in the New York City Fire Department and Executive Officer of Hazardous Material Operations. I was recently asked to chair a National Fire Protection Association Sub-Committee on Terrorism. I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today on the needs of the fire service in its efforts to respond to terrorism.

Sadly, the discussion on this topic has moved from the theoretical to the practical. Before September 11th, we never conceived of the possibility of such a horrific act or such a tragic consequence. The New York City Fire Department is now faced with not only a tragic personal toll (the devastating loss of 343 members) and the trauma for our families (more than 1000 children left fatherless) but also the loss of a knowledgeable, experienced group of leaders.

We lost some of our most experienced Chiefs as well as some of our most seasoned firefighters in this event. More than 90 members of our Special Operations Command, including our elite rescue and hazmat units were lost. Chief Ray Downey, the premiere collapse expert in the country was taken. My dear friend and colleague, Chief Jack Fanning, a noted expert who has testified on the very issue we are discussing today is among the missing.

We will have to rebuild the department and will have to make adjustments both in the short and long term to replicate their expertise. We have pledged to do so with our fallen comrades in mind. We owe it to them to do it in a way that preserves the legacy of professionalism and dedication they established. It is a debt we gladly pay.

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In the wake the World Trade Center attack, the FDNY will continue to expand training efforts and the use of new strategies and technologies to not only help us recover from the tragic events of that day but to further protect firefighters, EMS personnel and citizens.

I am thankful for the opportunity to appear before you today to ask for any assistance you can give us in reaching these goals. The FDNY has both short-term and long-term needs we are working to address.

One immediate need is to train a new group of firefighters to operate engines, ladder trucks and other emergency vehicles. Nearly 150 of these trained drivers were lost on September 11th.

While we are more than adequately fulfilling our day-to-day responsibilities, we must expedite the training of replacement drivers to bolster our ranks. To do so, the Department is seeking to purchase specially designed driving simulators that recreate the experience of operating these powerful and complicated vehicles.

A second short-term priority is to enhance our response to terrorism with additional training for firefighters in the handling of hazardous materials and other emergency procedures. Municipal fire departments can find the instructors to teach these skills but often struggle to find the funds to enroll fire fighters and officers in such programs or to replace them so their daily duties can be covered while they are away from the job.

A related and equally important initiative is to provide protective clothing, respirators and equipment used to detect hazardous materials not only to our specially trained HAZMAT teams—as we do now—but also to other emergency units who are likely to arrive at the scene first.

A somewhat longer-term yet no less important project for the FDNY and other emergency services is employing technology to improve the safety of their members and the public.

We must continue to explore technological solutions that maximize our ability to protect our members regardless of the situations they face. Much like our successful experience broadening the use of thermal imaging cameras, we should explore communications solutions that are applicable in a variety of settings. Building in additional redundancy, diverse routing and flexibility within our communications and IT solutions is just one example.

We need to look at every phase of our operation and be ready to take advantage of new technology whether it's in the training, fire suppression, rescue or recovery phase of our operations. Examples run the gamut from the use of satellite phones for communications to vehicle or personal tracking systems to monitor the movements of equipment and personnel.

Finally, we'd urge stepped up efforts to monitor and analyze the nature of emergency medical calls on a regional basis. The FDNY and New York City Department of Health work closely to track the types of calls our EMTs and Paramedics respond to in hopes of spotting health trends. With better coordination of these efforts be-

tween towns and cities in the same region, we might strengthen our national early warning system to spot potential health emergencies.

In addition to the issues I have brought to you today, implore you to revisit the testimony that Chief Fanning gave in May on behalf of the FDNY and the International Association of Fire Chiefs that also addresses first responder needs. I would be happy to make this testimony available to you

In closing, I am reminded of the words of our Chief of Department Peter Ganci who lost his life commanding the incident at the Trade Center. At a memorial service two years ago Chief Ganci said, "In our Department, at all ranks we contribute and at all ranks we're vulnerable."

Both our contributions and vulnerabilities were on display on September 11th.

We lost members from every rank, but at the same time witnessed heroism and courage that knew no bounds. As the nature of our world changes, we must insure that the latest training, equipment and other resources are available for any eventuality.

Thank you for your time.

Senator WYDEN. Well, thank you, Chief. It is hard to find words that would do justice to what you and the members of your department must be going through right now, the families and the loved ones. Just know that on this side of the dais we are going to do everything we can to try to give you the tools as you go about this exercise of rebuilding and dealing with the consequences of what happened. We are just real glad you are here today.

Mr. INGRAM. Thank you very much.

Senator WYDEN. Chief Plaugher, welcome.

STATEMENT OF EDWARD P. PLAUGHER, CHIEF, ARLINGTON COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

Mr. PLAUGHER. Mr. Chairman, Senator Allen: Thank you for holding this hearing and thank you for an opportunity to appear before you. I have also submitted prepared remarks for the record and thank you very much for agreeing to enter them into the record.

Before I begin my remarks, I would like to just take a moment and express my deepest sympathies to the members of the New York City Fire Department in their loss. I can only—I cannot begin to imagine what is going through that department, with the loss of life and their leadership, suffering the way they have. So, Chief, my deepest regrets.

I will move away from my prepared remarks and just try to hit some of the highlights here. I will start with this: I very emphatically tell this Committee and members of Congress that the needs of the fire service are great. First, we need to continue our all-hazards planning process. We need to understand that we must pursue as diligently as we possibly can this all-hazards approach to planning that will allow us to provide the very best possible preparation for any event, whether it involves an explosive, a chemical or biological agent, a radiological material, or any combination thereof.

Second, the fire service, we are aware that there is a national threat warning system that allows for rapid dissemination of information to law enforcement agencies across this Nation. Our fire service must also be made part of this system. Information that is relevant to the likelihood of an event must be disseminated to local fire departments as well as to local law enforcement agencies. There should be no surprise attacks to our fire service.

We have also heard earlier today the issue of communications and about interoperability. It has been a longstanding challenge the our public safety community. This challenge must end. It must be fixed. The ability to communicate effectively in any incident is paramount and is paramount to the effective mitigation of that incident.

There is a national solution available. That is the allocation of radio spectrum. Do it. Congress must address this issue through provisions of this effective spectrums and do it now.

We also have heard earlier, Senator Allen mentioned Cap-WIN. Cap-WIN is a demonstration project that is a collaborative effort between public safety and the transportation departments of Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. We are working with our universities—the University of Virginia, the University of Maryland. If fully implemented, Cap-WIN would provide data sharing capability that would allow for all public safety agencies in the Washington metropolitan area to communicate without clogging the available radio frequencies.

Cap-WIN will also enhance our personnel availability system by tracking operational duty assignments that can be transmitted prior to the arrival of the responders electronically. It is technologically capable.

My next issue that I would like to address to this Committee is that of training. The management training provided by the National Fire Academy is excellent. However, we have learned over the last several decades that when the fire service is given a responsibility, such as emergency medical services or hazardous materials, that local training was needed to be successful. We need to make sure that we have the necessary resources to take that model and continue to work forward on this issue of transportation.

Staffing. It goes without a doubt that staffing should be of the highest priority and that the Committee, you as a Committee, need to understand that in most jurisdictions most fire departments are staffed by three or fewer fire persons. We need the individuals on the units responding in the first few minutes of the incident in order to be successful. Several of my engines in Arlington County are three-person staffed. That means that when they arrive at an incident scene, because of our requirement to work as pairs, that they can only be effective as one team.

However, with the addition of an additional firefighter, I would have two separate search and rescue teams. It can make a difference in an incident such as at the Pentagon.

I would like to conclude my testimony with what we in the fire service have told Congress for years: When incidents of terrorism occur, we will respond to protect our communities. How well we are prepared will correlate directly with the number of lives that we are able to save and the amount of property damage that we will mitigate.

Again, thank you for allowing me to be here this afternoon. I would also be happy to answer any questions you might have.

[The prepared statement of Chief Plaugher follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF EDWARD P. PLAUGHER, CHIEF,
ARLINGTON COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

I am Chief Edward Plaugher of the Arlington County, Virginia, Fire Department. I would like to begin by thanking the Committee for convening this hearing and for including Arlington County.

The stunning and tragic events of September the eleventh have starkly illustrated the role of the fire and emergency service in responding to and mitigating incidents of terrorism. For the past five years, fire chiefs have testified before the Congress on what we knew would be inevitable, that if lives were to be saved in a terrorist incident, local public safety agencies, particularly fire departments, would be responsible.

The needs of the fire service in responding to terrorist incidents are significant. I will focus my testimony on several issues.

First is the need for all-hazard planning and preparation. This concept is simple. It is based upon the principle that we will almost never know the exact circumstances that will lead to a crisis. In the years I have been involved at the local, state and federal levels with respect to the terrorism preparedness issue, I had never heard of a scenario like the one that played out September 11th. With specific risk hazards in mind, we must pursue an all hazards approach to planning that will allow us the best possible preparation for any event, whether it involves explosives, chemical or biological agents, radiological materials or any combination thereof.

Second, we are aware of a National Threat and Warning System that allows for the rapid dissemination of information to law enforcement agencies across the country. The fire service must be made part of this system. Our role in responding to these incidents has been demonstrated. Information relevant to the likelihood of an event must be disseminated to local fire departments as well as law enforcement agencies. We need to eliminate, to the extent possible, the element of surprise.

The issue of communications interoperability has been a long-standing challenge to the public safety community. The ability to communicate effectively in a terrorist incident is paramount to an effective mitigation effort. On September 11th, with so many agencies responding to the Pentagon, we had to provide fire fighters from surrounding jurisdictions hand-held radio's that allowed them to communicate with us and with each other. The frequencies under which their own equipment operated were all different.

Thus, fire fighters were forced to use communications equipment that they had never operated before or even seen. We simply did not have sufficient hardware to provide to all responders and focused on those who were at most risk in forward operations. The rest relied upon the communications technology perfected by the ancient Greeks: runners carrying messages.

The national solution to this problem lies in the allocation of radio spectrum. Congress should address this issue through the provision of appropriate radio spectrum to public safety agencies.

An initiative underway locally, in the Washington Metropolitan area, called the Capitol Wireless Integrated Network (Cap-WIN) program, would go a long way towards providing interoperability within our nation's capitol region.

The Cap-WIN program is the result of a collaborative effort involving the state transportation departments of both Virginia and Maryland, in consultation with the University of Virginia, Virginia Tech and the University of Maryland. If fully implemented, the Cap-WIN program would provide an interoperable data sharing capability that would allow all public safety agencies in the Washington Metro area to communicate without clogging available radio frequencies.

I believe that Cap-WIN can also enhance our personnel accountability system by tracking operational duty assignments that can be transmitted to arriving responders electronically. This will facilitate our long-term goal of tracking all responders, from all agencies, to ensure their safety.

The issues of training and equipping the fire service to cope with incidents of terrorism are paramount. Management training provided by the National Fire Academy is excellent. However, in decades past the fire service was given responsibility first for emergency medical services and then hazardous materials response. We found that training that was locally available was the most effective. Programs that provide operational and technical training in terrorism response ought to be provided locally to the extent possible. This means enhancing the locally-based training system to provide the sorts of training that fire fighters will need in future incidents.

Staffing should also be a priority. The International Association of Fire Chiefs has called for federal assistance in hiring an additional 75,000 fire fighters.

It is important for the Committee to understand that in most jurisdictions, fire department apparatus is manned by three-person teams. Under federal administrative law, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) mandates "two-in/two-out" with respect to emergency operations. In most communities, personnel are dispersed to provide geographic coverage. In other words, a fourth fire fighter on an arriving piece of apparatus provides two teams immediately.

This issue was clearly demonstrated in our response to the Pentagon on September the eleventh. Apparatus staffed at three fire fighters had to wait and team with other arriving groups. A swift, safe response to any emergency requires four person staffing on every piece of fire apparatus.

I also believe that if we are to have a properly trained and prepared fire service, we ought to have some assistance at the company officer level with respect to terrorism training. I have struggled with the need to send my officers away, often for weeks at a time, so that they make take part in terrorism response training sessions. It is burdensome and expensive for most local communities. Any staffing initiative undertaken by the federal government should provide for the absence of officers in training and the need for "back filling" in their absence.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to conclude my testimony with what we in the fire service have told the Congress for years. When incidents of terrorism occur, we will respond to protect our communities. How well we are prepared will correlate directly with the number of lives we are able to save and the amount of property damage we will mitigate.

Thank you for having me. I am happy to answer any questions.

Senator WYDEN. Chief, thank you very much.

We have a vote on the floor, a recorded vote. It is my intention to have Mr. Turner testify and to take his 5 minutes or thereabouts. Then we will take a break in order to go cast our vote, and we will come back and we have got some questions.

Mr. Turner, welcome. Let us get you that microphone.

STATEMENT OF JAMES E. TURNER III, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, DELAWARE VOLUNTEER FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION, ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL VOLUNTEER FIRE COUNCIL

Mr. TURNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Allen. My name is James Turner. I am the Executive Secretary of the Delaware Volunteer Firemen's Association. I am here testifying on behalf of the National Volunteer Fire Council.

I took this job about a year ago. My previous vocation was an emergency service training administrator at the Delaware State Fire School for 26 years, where I did firefighter, command officer, and hazmat and WMD training. When I retired I was the hazmat coordinator and the WMD training coordinator in Delaware.

You have heard the numbers of fire service people and, like the balance of our personnel, we extend our sympathies to our friends in New York.

We now transmit, Mr. Chairman, our personal 911 call to you for your help, aid, and assistance in making our jobs in both the career and volunteer system safer for us and the protection of our citizens. One of the largest problems facing our business is funding and personnel. Many volunteer departments, such as Senator Allen alluded to, struggle to provide their members with adequate personal protective equipment, safety devices and training to protect their communities as mandated by regulations and standards. These fire companies in towns across America are being asked to respond to the normal emergency requests as we do today, as well as the terrorism or the terror-related calls.

Many of these emergencies occur at, on, or adjacent to Federal properties. These incidents may also impact or damage America's critical infrastructure, including our interstate highways, railroads, bridges, tunnels, financial centers, power plants, refineries, and chemical manufacturing and storage facilities. We as a fire service, both career and volunteer, are sworn to protect those critical facilities and infrastructures.

Fire service operations in protecting these facilities and infrastructures often have to risk the safety of our people, the firefighters, to restore order from chaos following a risk-benefit analysis on the specific incident. In these difficult times while volunteer fire departments are struggling to handle their own needs and finances, we are now forced to provide more services.

The funding problems in America's volunteer fire community are not just limited to rural areas. As suburbs continue to grow, so does the burden on the local fire and EMS departments. Even though many of these departments have the essentials, they are unable to gain access to new technologies due to its expensive costs, and many volunteer fire departments are forced to forego, therefore, the purchase of new equipment or use their current or outdated equipment.

Long before the terrorist attack on September 11th, the national fire service organizations have been jointly working together in trying to improve our readiness and increase funding levels for programs related to America's fire service. I would like to go over just a couple things.

Number one, first and foremost, I think you as members of Congress need to continue to upgrade and continue to support the FEMA assistance for firefighter grant programs. We have heard today that there was a recommendation for $600 million. It has gone up to a billion. We will take what we can get. However, those programs should go to the fire departments, to the fire departments wherever they protect, whether it be New York City, Indianland, or Earlyville Volunteer Fire Department in Virginia.

Senator ALLEN. Earlysville.

Mr. TURNER. Okay.

We also ask that the personnel shortfall as outlined by President Schaitberger and Chief Buckman also be considered. In addition to that, as the volunteer system continues in Delaware our attrition rate for volunteers in our busy departments is 3 to 5 years. They keep turning over. Maybe one of the options you can look at to support the volunteer system is some kind of incentive program, such as tax relief, maybe waiving some social security money, and that type of thing. That should be explored.

Terrorism and hazardous materials training, a subject dear to Chief Ingram and myself. We need to make it readily available, set up so Chief Ingram can go out and train all of his personnel, which are about 12,000 uniformed personnel in FDNY, in a timely and efficient manner. Likewise for our volunteers. They are doing it on nights and weekends. We have to be able to do the same.

Thermal imaging cameras and AED's, automatic external defibrillators. These can immensely help all the fire services across the country and we would ask your support for those.

Last weekend, several of us at the table were at Emmitsburg, Maryland, with a couple of your peers, Senators Mikulski and Sarbanes, in addition to several other members of the Senate and the House. We were recognizing the 101 firefighters that have been killed in the line of duty last calendar year. Unfortunately, in Delaware we had one of our own that was being commemorated. I helped support that family in my job.

I think that as a trainer and as a firefighter and as an officer we have to make our system safer and reliable. I know that we all say to each other: Come home safe at the end of your tour. We have to do that with our power, our training, our experience, and your support.

I alluded to the fact that I was the hazmat coordinator in my training school. Just before I left, we sent some instructors up to FDNY with a group from DuPont to teach the hazmat squads and company people, their special ops people, to use chemical protective clothing they bought specifically for WMD. It was about 18 months ago. The guys were from Delaware that went up with the DuPont instructors and they really came back and said they had a good time, Chief Ingram's people took them under their wing, showed them a good time just like any firefighter would be. They also implored them to come back up and visit.

Some of us did after September 11th. A couple of us from Delaware went up and helped the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation in support of the unions and the group from Emmitsburg to take care of those people. That is not the way we intended to go back up and visit. You and I and all of us collectively have to make sure that these people and our fire service people are taken care of and this tremendous problem never happens again.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for your time and I will be available for questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Turner follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF JAMES E. TURNER III, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, DELAWARE VOLUNTEER FIREMAN'S ASSOCIATION, ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL VOLUNTEER FIRE COUNCIL

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is James E. Turner, III. I am testifying today on behalf of the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC). I serve as the Executive Secretary of the Delaware Volunteer Firemen's Association. The organization is composed of 60 community based volunteer fire, rescue, Emergency Medical Service (EMS), and specialty teams providing special rescue and Hazardous materials response capabilities to the citizens of Delaware. The Association also has four associate members. Wilmington Fire Department, a career fire department protecting Wilmington, Dover Air Force Base and Delaware Air National Guard Fire Departments, the fire protection services providing initial fire & rescue protection to the airman, and resources at those two facilities and a volunteer rescue squad which provides volunteer EMS service to their local community. I am also an active firefighter in the Clayton Fire Company in Clayton, Delaware. I have served as a volunteer firefighter for 35 years and served as a Chief Officer in that Department. My previous vocation was the Emergency Service Training Administrator at the Delaware State Fire School for 25 years. The Director of the Fire School was an appointee of the original commission the report "America Burning." This report was submitted to Congress, which resulted in many fire and life safety changes and improvements in America, including fire safety education, the smoke detectors we use in our homes, and the establishment of the National Fire Academy. I have had experiences in all phases of the first responder community, including chemical and hazardous materials incidents, information management, EMS, rescue and fire.

On behalf of the volunteer fire service, I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the needs of America's volunteer fire service in the wake of the September 11th tragedies in New York, Arlington, Virginia and Southwestern Pennsylvania. America's fire and emergency services are in need of your assistance and you, as Members of Congress, can make a difference by partnering with the fire service to give America's domestic defenders the tools they need to help fight this new war.

The NVFC represents the interests of the nation's more than 800,000 volunteer firefighters, who staff America's 28,000 volunteer fire departments located in every state of the Union. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), nearly 75% of all firefighters are volunteers. More than half of the approximately one hundred firefighters that are killed each year in the line of duty are volunteers. In addition to the obvious contribution that volunteer firefighters lend to their communities as the first arriving domestic defenders, these brave men and women represent a significant cost saving to taxpayers. According to the September 2001 study by the State Auditor of my home state of Delaware, the volunteer fire service in Delaware saves taxpayers more than $121,044,900 this fiscal year alone. A copy of this report is have been submitted to be included in the record.

September 11, 2001 is a date that will be long remembered for the horrible losses our nation suffered, including the loss of so many of our brothers and sisters in the emergency services. September 11th will also be remembered for the heroics of those brave men and women who ran into the World Trade Center to render aid to their fellow New Yorkers, those who valiantly fought the raging fire at the Pentagon in Arlington, VA, and the fire companies who responded to the Somerset County, PA plane crash. Volunteer fire, rescue, EMS, and technical specialty teams answered and responded to our Fire Service mottoes of "We go where duty calls" and "Service to Others" on that fateful day at Somerset and the Pentagon incidents. Finally, September 11th will be remembered for ushering in America's new all out war against terrorism at home and abroad.

As you know, this past weekend, America and our Allies have started to respond militarily against the terrorists. Administration officials and Members of Congress have warned our citizens of a "clear and present danger" of follow-up terrorist attacks. The question now is "when and where will the next terrorist attack occur," not "if a terrorist attack will occur." As America's domestic first responders, the fire service will be on the front lines of any incident and must be prepared to respond to and defend our citizens from the ravages of terrorist attacks using conventional weapons or weapons of mass destruction (WMD). This expands our normal services beyond providing the quick, safe, and competent delivery of fire, EMS, rescue, and technical specialty services to our citizens. Services that already have necessary time and training commitments that are escalating annually.

As I stated earlier, America's fire service is in need of your assistance and your partnership. Congress and the administration must provide the funding needed to train and equip our firefighters so they can more effectively and more safely respond to all emergencies, including the inevitability of future terrorist attacks. We now transmit our personal 911 call to you for your help and support in making our jobs and the protection of our citizens safer.

One of the largest problems faced by America's volunteer fire service is funding. Many volunteer fire departments struggle to provide their members with adequate protective clothing, safety devices and training to protect their communities, as mandated by regulations and standards. These fire companies, in towns across America, are being asked to respond to emergency calls involving hazardous materials, structural fire suppression, search and rescue, natural disasters, wild land fires, emergency medical services, and terrorism.

Many of these emergencies occur at federal facilities and buildings and on federal lands. In addition, these incidents can damage America's critical infrastructure, including our interstate highways, railroads, bridges, tunnels, financial centers, power plants, refineries, and chemical manufacturing and storage facilities. We as a fire service are sworn to protect these critical facilities and infrastructure.

In these difficult times, while volunteer fire departments are already struggling to handle their own needs and finances, they are now forced to provide more services. Often, local governments are unable to afford the extensive training and specialized equipment that these activities require.

The funding problems in America's volunteer fire service are not just limited to rural areas. As suburbs continue to grow, so does the burden on the local fire and EMS department. Even though many of these departments have the essentials, they are unable to gain access to new technologies. At no other time have advances been greater in equipment to protect them and make their jobs safer. Yet because the newer technology is so expensive, many volunteer fire departments are forced to forgo the purchase of the new technology or use outdated equipment.

Long before the terrorist attacks of September 11th, the national fire service organizations jointly began working together to improve readiness and increase funding levels for programs related to America's fire departments. Unfortunately, it takes a horrible tragedy for America to fully appreciate the risks our firefighters and EMS personnel take on a daily basis and the level to which they need to be prepared. In the past, the federal government has not made America's fire service a priority. We hope that the tragic and unforgettable events of September 11th will change this attitude and position forever.

The following items are some of the immediate needs of America's fire service to enable it to be prepared for future disasters.

First and foremost, Congress must substantially increase funding for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program. Last year, Congress took a giant step in addressing the needs of America's fire service by creating this grant program and funding it at the $100 million level. Every fire department across the country is eligible for funding for safety and firefighting equipment, apparatus, training, prevention, wellness and fitness programs, and staffing. Although the $100 million was a starting point, it is felt that this initiative, although greatly appreciated, fell short of the needs of the fire service. Over 30,000 grant applications were submitted to FEMA, totaling approximately $3 billion.

Last week the Senate passed an amendment to the Defense Authorization Bill increasing the program's authorization to $600 million in FY 2002, $800 million in FY 2003, and $1 billion in FY 2004. We respectfully request that Congress should immediately fund this program at $600 million for FY 2002 and commit to fully funding this program in future years.

Another major problem in the fire service is the personnel shortfall plaguing both the volunteer and career ranks. In the volunteer fire service, major factors contributing to the problem of recruiting and retaining volunteers include constant fundraising demands, increase in emergency calls, more rigorous training standards, and people working further away from the communities in which they live. Therefore any staffing initiative undertaken by Congress must include a recruitment and retention component to account for the over 90% of America's communities protected by volunteers.

In addition, as suburbs have continued to grow, so has the burden on the local fire and EMS departments protecting these communities. Many of these departments have gone to combination systems, with career staff complementing the volunteers, often to help with daytime coverage. If Congress creates a program to provide for the hiring of firefighters, these struggling volunteer and combination departments must be a large part of the equation.

Terrorism and hazardous materials training for firefighters is of vital importance. Although we understand the concerns of America's large metropolitan areas, Congress cannot forget smaller communities, whose fire, rescue and EMS personnel also need the basic training to recognize and respond to these incidents. In addition, specialized equipment is needed to protect first responders from hazardous materials and chemical and biological weapons. Congress should also properly fund the Operation Respond Institute, whose software provides vital life saving information to emergency responders at hazardous materials transportation incidents and rail passenger accidents.

Finally, America's fire service needs universal access to essential tools for fire, rescue and EMS equipment such as Thermal Imaging Cameras and Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs). Thermal imaging cameras are used to find unconscious victims and trapped or disoriented firefighters, and to pinpoint hot spots. AEDs are crucial to emergency medical response we provide to our residents and protecting our firefighters. 220,000 Americans die each year from sudden cardiac arrest and for every minute without defibrillation the survival rate decreases 10%.

When I began my testimony today, I stated that the volunteer fire service is in need of your assistance and that you, as Members of Congress, could make a difference with the necessary funding. I hope that I have painted a picture that illustrates that the need is real, that the moneys do go a long way, and that the support of the fire service by Congress is indeed a national concern. This is why we have given you our personal 911 call.

I alluded earlier to military actions taken this past Sunday. Just prior to the initiation of this action, President Bush, Senators Mikulski and Sarbanes, along with other Member of Congress and approximately 5,000 fire service peers attended the annual National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service sponsored by the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, MD. At this service we collectively honored the memory of the 101 members of the career and volunteer fire service who lost their lives in the line of duty in 2000. Delaware, unfortunately, offered one of it's own to this touching Memorial Service. I personally

participated in supporting this Delaware fire department, and the spouse of our firefighter who was lost to this tragedy. I vowed to myself that if I could do anything to avoid repeating this heart breaking, gut wrenching tragedy, I would do everything in my power, training, and experience to avoid a future event of this magnitude.

The death of a firefighter, EMS provider, rescue technician, or a police officer is a tragedy. Investigations begin immediately following the incident, local and federal investigations are convened and finding offered. Lessons learned are shared throughout the public safety organizations and departments on a nationwide basis.

Collectively, every heart is with the firefighters, EMS providers, rescue technicians and police officers, along with their families, who made the ultimate sacrifice of saving others lives while giving up his or her own. I was personally acquainted with approximately forty of the members of the "Bravest," at FDNY. I sent instructors to New York City who provided specialized training to the Haz Mat units and squad companies for chemical protective clothing specifically obtained in the event of a WMD event. The instructors, whom were firefighters from Delaware, indicated that the FDNY members were extremely interested, courteous, and above all, Firefighters. They wanted to protect themselves while providing service for others. They enjoyed the training, and kidded among themselves and the instructors. When the class finished, the FDNY personnel invited the instructors to come back to visit.

Unfortunately, some of us went back. Not to visit, but to support the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation Family support Sector located in New York. The sector supported FDNY, the Unions for the firefighters and officers of FDNY in taking care of their own and their survivors. When I left New York, I likewise promised myself that I would do anything humanely possible to prevent this senseless tragedy from occurring again. This is my personal 911 call to you and your Committee members, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you and the Committee for your time and the privilege of allowing the views of America's volunteer fire service to be documented and publicized. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Senator WYDEN. Mr. Turner, thank you.

We are going to recess for 10 minutes and we will be back for questions then.

[Recess from 4:34 p.m. to 4:51 p.m.]

Senator WYDEN. All right, let us come back to order. My apologies to all of our witnesses. We have a little bit of a juggle today with a hectic floor schedule.

Let me, if I might, begin with Chief Plaugher and Chief Ingram. The Federal Emergency Management Agency uses the Federal response plan to task and manage other Federal agencies' assistance to State and local governments. As the September 11th attacks demonstrate, response capabilities can quickly become overwhelmed. My question to you two, Chief Ingram and Chief Plaugher, is how would you assess the Federal Government's immediate response to the September 11th attacks as it relates to the needs of your department? Why do we not start with you, Chief Ingram.

Mr. INGRAM. I could say that right from the beginning the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management was fully involved with not only the State emergency management organization, but FEMA. It was very clearly seen with their ability to get the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management moved with the loss of their building and completely operational and functioning within 24 to 30 hours, which was a tremendous help for us from many points of view—coordinating resources that were coming in, whether asked for or donated or just being sent. All of the people who came up, asked for, requested, or just showing up, they were immeasurably helpful in that particular area. They were able to bring in resources to help set up a command post once we were able to get it off site and

get it away, where our chief officers could see the big picture and not have many resources showing up, just coming to them and grabbing them because they had a white hat.

FEMA was able to come in and provide the equipment that we needed to set up offices. Even more important than the actual hardware and software, they brought people, people that were knowledgeable in planning, knowledgeable in documentation, tracking, clearly evident and professional in the USAR teams as well as in the support staffs that came in to run the command post for them at the Mayor's Office of Emergency Management and for our Chief Carruthers, incident commander at our command post. Very helpful.

Senator WYDEN. Chief Plaugher.

Mr. PLAUGHER. Yes. First let me begin by saying that FEMA was extraordinarily helpful in the incident and we want to thank the response from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

We had several FEMA representatives immediately within the first few minutes of the incident at our emergency operations center, offering FEMA's assistance. I think part of that is because of the uniqueness of our location to the Nation's capital.

We did have, however, some problems with the USAR teams and the way that they were deployed to our community, and I think it was because of the events that were going on throughout the United States that day, in other words the New York City incident as well as the Pentagon and the Pennsylvania incidents as well. So there are some USAR team problems that are going to have to be worked out for multiple incidents that we learned from this incident.

However, I would like to wrap up by saying on the FEMA issue is that the recovery work of the FEMA team has been extraordinary. They have come into our community. They were not a burden on our community. They were self-sufficient, and then they went to work. They rolled up their sleeves and started to go to work on how do we recover from this incident.

As you might imagine, this does not fit into their typical hurricane, tornado, natural disaster emergency incident. So they had to work hard to try to find methods to do recovery, particularly reimbursements and those types of things. I have to commend the FEMA staff for doing that hard work. They took it as a very serious challenge and a very serious concern.

As you know, we are still struggling to recover because of the airport and the closure of the airport for its extended time, as well as the impacts on our business community. I again also want to commend FEMA for being there as a partner, as well as the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Senator WYDEN. One question for you and a question for you, Chief Plaugher. Chief Ingram, what were the major communications problems that your department faced on September 11th? As you know, the chiefs are recommending a variety of studies. They are recommending that the Congress and the administration look at the issue of spectrum interoperability, a variety of issues like that. But, I think it would be helpful to have you describe what kind of communications problems your department faced.

Mr. INGRAM. That is a good question. We had a tremendous amount of communications systems there. Right off the bat we lost a lot of hard-line phones from the damage, not only to the towers themselves, but when they came down they did damage to the Verizon building right next door. We had probably satellite cells on the towers that, when they came down, we lost some cell service. What was left, although we could get through, after a short period of time in the initial stages, people coming out of the towers themselves, the number of cell phones overcrowded, overtaxed the cell lines that were there. So we had some concerns there.

Our fire ground radios worked well, but we had several different agencies there with other types of fire ground or emergency scene radio frequencies. So we did need to make sure that we set up command posts in all the sectors. We needed to coordinate representatives from all of the agencies so that we could utilize their frequencies to communicate with their people.

So something along the interoperable communications solution that has been discussed several times here earlier, that area needs to be further researched and developed. That would be extremely helpful for us.

Senator WYDEN. Would you be largely in agreement with what Mr. Burris was talking about on communications? I really see this as a continuum of communications needs. You obviously have needs within a matter of minutes. I think Mr. Burris said something along the lines of: "We have needs within 3 minutes." At the same time, I think you have heard me within the course of the afternoon talk about how the country's technology companies are really willing to sweep in very quickly and help with cell systems and computers and the kinds of things that obviously were knocked out in New York.

Are you largely in agreement with Mr. Burris on these communications issues?

Mr. INGRAM. Very much so.

Senator WYDEN. Okay, good.

Mr. Plaugher, a question for you with respect to some of the training issues and again the lessons that we are trying to glean from these tragedies. Your department participated in what is called the TOPOFF exercise, the Top Officials exercise. This was a no-notice field exercise to assess the Nation's crisis and consequence management capacity. The exercise included concurrent response to incidents in several different cities throughout the country.

My question to you is were there things you learned in that particular exercise that you were able to apply to the September 11th attack on the Pentagon, and what did you learn as a result of participating in that program that we should build into our preparedness efforts in the future?

Mr. PLAUGHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the question. Exercises are our bread and butter for preparedness to today's world, today's threats. You mentioned Exercise TOPOFF, which was a no-notice exercise in various venues around the United States. Throughout the exercises, throughout the TOPOFF exercises and other exercises, we learn about our shortfalls and our capabilities, but we also learn what went right.

So we brought those lessons to bear on September 11th. In other words, the use of the incident command system, making sure that we organize our search and rescue teams in a certain fashion, precautions for secondary devices. As you know, on the day of September 11th we were warned not once but twice that additional aircraft were coming into the D.C. area, and we took appropriate actions. How far to move back, those types of things we learned from those exercises.

So the exercises serve twofold: not only to show you your shortfalls, but also to show you what you do right.

So I would implore Congress when they are working on these programs to continue to mandate exercises and continue to use that two-pronged approach, not only what you can do better but also what you did well.

I also would like to mention that during TOPOFF that I was fortunate to be able to have some of the members of my department go to Denver and participate with that part of TOPOFF, which was a biological release in that community. One of the things that was definitely learned or observed by my captains, my medical captains who were there, is again some very, very serious difficulties with our medical community and the preparedness of our medical community to deal with large numbers of casualties.

They literally fought over who was going to get what medicines and where in this exercise. It kind of sent some bad vibrations or reverberations back to us in the first responder community. So again, I think some of those lessons need to be looked at very, very carefully.

Senator WYDEN. Well, that is a good point. Why do we not even hold the record open on this point, if you and your colleagues have some ideas and some suggestions for improving these exercises. I happen to think that makes a lot of sense. I again heard on Monday at home in Portland, Oregon, where people in the technology sector said: "You know, you ought to just simulate some drills. You really need to do more to test these kinds of systems."

So, we will hold the record open if you have any suggestions, or your colleagues do, on that point.

Mr. Turner, a question for you. In your testimony you urge Congress not to forget smaller communities, who also need the basic training to recognize and respond to terrorist incidents. I was really pleased to hear you say that. There are many, many towns in my own State of Oregon who have well under 5,000 people and that is true across the country.

In your view, does the current course structure within the Federal Government adequately meet the needs of smaller communities that rely on volunteer firefighters? If not, what can we do as it relates to training and some of these other areas to strengthen your ability on the front lines to do the good work you do?

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Chairman, I want to speak on my past experience when I was employed as a fire school instructor. We would send people to the National Fire Academy for train the trainer just like any municipal fire department or State training organization would. We would go through their process, and I think that when we go home the training academy or the training division would

take the information necessary to get it out to the people in the field.

I alluded to the fact where Chief Ingram has 12,000 people to train in FDNY on all his shifts plus his new recruits. The volunteers in the small communities need to get that instructor out in the field to that local fire department on a weekend or at night time a couple times during the week to get the training out.

A lot of us condense the training programs that we saw. I have seen the DOD program. The program initially I was speaking on was the FEMA or the NFA programs. They DOD programs are much shorter in length. I believe they are 4 and 8 hours, 4 for the initial and 8 for operations. I cannot speak to the DOE program, sir. So 4 and 8 hours is a realistic time for training.

Senator WYDEN. All right. Well, please convey to your volunteer organizations that we would like to have ideas and suggestions as it relates to smaller communities. I know that my colleague has a lot of towns in Virginia with small communities and, as I say, we have a handful of relatively large cities at home in Oregon, and we have got an awful lot of those towns with under 5,000 people, and we want to be responsive.

This is going to be a national effort and we have to respond to our largest metropolitan cities, where the concern has been enormous, but we also have responsibilities to small communities as well, and we want to be sensitive to those.

Mr. TURNER. Yes, sir.

Senator WYDEN. A couple of questions for you if I might, Mr. Schaitberger. As I looked at your prepared testimony, your testimony links firefighter deaths to a lack of staffing. Could you go and amplify a little bit on this as it relates to, in your view, how inadequate staffing actually caused the deaths of firefighters in numerous separate incidents?

Mr. SCHAITBERGER. Well, I mentioned in my written statement a partial list: Memphis, Tennessee; Worcester, Massachusetts; Keokuk, Iowa; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Chesapeake, Virginia; Stockton, California; Lexington, Kentucky; Buffalo, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and the list goes on, where we have had firefighter line of duty deaths and in each of those cases, one of the common factors that was determined by the investigations performed by NIOSH as well as internal investigations was inadequate staffing.

For the Committee's information, at any time we can certainly make each and all of those investigative reports available. It is clear that, through the numerous studies that have been conducted over the years in Columbus and Seattle, Dallas, Phoenix, Austin, John Hopkins University, Ohio State University, as well as studies by the United States Fire Administration, that they have all demonstrated that staffing levels, clearly adequate staffing levels increase the level of safety and decrease the potential for line of duty deaths, as well as providing a more efficient operation.

Senator WYDEN. For you, Chief Buckman and Mr. Schaitberger. You all have been calling for 75,000 additional firefighters for our communities. I think it would be helpful if you could tell us how you reached that particular number. In other words, how did you arrive at that being your assessment of what is needed?

Mr. SCHAITBERGER. Well, I believe I mentioned, mentioned briefly, that we now have for the first time in our industry an international industrial standard that lays out clearly what the staffing and deployment requirements are for adequate fire service delivery. That standard now requires a minimum of four firefighters per piece of apparatus and a minimum response time of 4 minutes.

If you do the simple calculations and you look at the departments throughout the United States that are riding with less than four, it would take 75,000 firefighters to bring those departments up to that new industrial standard requirement.

Senator WYDEN. That is helpful. In these kinds of things, those of us who think that you do need additional resources are going to get asked that question, and we are going to need to have that kind of information.

Chief, do you want to answer that?

Mr. BUCKMAN. One other part in our deliberations was a report from the International City Managers Association related to the standard that Harold reports on is that it would take 34,000 more firefighters to staff at four, and that is the International City Managers Association. That is only for those people who are members of that association. That does not include the many cities that do not have city managers, that have a different form of government.

Senator WYDEN. Let me ask a question I would be interested in any of you five essentially tackling if you are inclined. The Washington Post recently, last week, discussed the experience of one local jurisdiction in purchasing equipment for biological or chemical terrorist attacks. They stated, and I quote here: "Officials have had several years to get ready. Much of the equipment purchased has yet to be deployed. Some equipment is unworkable and officials are considering sending it back."

Now, obviously, we want to try to avoid these kinds of problems wherever possible. I think my question for this panel would essentially be, given the fact that this Congress is going to make available increased funding to deal with the issues that you and your colleagues on the front lines are dealing with, what is it going to take to prevent those kinds of stories like in the Washington Post occurring when this new money is sent out across our country? [see Appendix for entire article]

Chief Ingram?

Mr. INGRAM. Thank you. Although I cannot address that specific article because I am sure that is involving one department, one agency, and certain specific equipment, one area that we see a need in the fire service through those organizations I mentioned earlier is that there is no or there are very few standards across the country that organizations like fire departments and other emergency responders can take equipment to from vendors and have them test it against those standards to make sure that the equipment will deliver the final result.

You can get any vendor, any salesman, to come in and tell you that their chemical monitoring detector will detect this particular agent or this chemical material. But then you have to start asking questions: Well, at what level will it detect that material? Well, it will detect it at a level that is already above the IDLH. Those types of instruments are not effective for us.

So we need to have funding to develop standards that all the equipment manufactured can meet, so that when a vendor brings it to an agency they have something to say, yes, this works, this does not work, I will buy this one and not that one.

Senator WYDEN. Chief, how do you know now as to the quality of what you are getting?

Mr. INGRAM. We try through organizations like the Inter-Agency Board to come up with research from some of the military organizations like TSWG that do research on it, COMPIO. But a lot of times at the first responder level that information is not accessible to us. Those of us that do get in on some of these agency board meetings, we try to glean the information and we try to make the best decisions that we can. But there is definitely a need for standards to be developed for equipment to be tested against, testing facilities identified that can test these materials against real agents, not simulants, and only then will we have the ability to know which equipment works and which does not.

Senator WYDEN. Now, NIST, a part of the Federal Government, has an office to do this for law enforcement. Do you think it would be helpful, Chief Ingram, to expand that to look at firefighters' equipment as well?

Mr. INGRAM. Absolutely, and NIST representatives are part of the Inter-Agency Board for Standardization of Equipment. We are working with them. We are working with NIOSH, with NFPA, Department of Justice, Department of Defense, and we are trying to make first responder needs known.

Funding is necessary. Recognition by all of the Federal partners, a coordinated recognition by all of the Federal partners to see these needs, must be addressed.

Mr. PLAUGHER. Mr. Chairman.

Senator WYDEN. Please.

Mr. PLAUGHER. I find that question interesting. Arlington County, Virginia, which sits right across the river from Washington, D.C., was one of the original 120 cities to receive moneys earmarked in 1996 by the Senate for Nunn-Lugar-Domenici Weapons of Mass Destruction Act of 1996. As of last week, I have yet to receive a dollar from the 1996 Act, and I am again one of the 120 cities.

It is interesting. Companion legislation also occurred that did send money to 157, not cities, but jurisdictions of the United States, but I was not one of those. But they got their money.

So it has been a real difficult task to just keep track of who you are in what programs you are in. But let me talk to you a little bit about the 120-city program, which required a great deal of training on the community, which was necessary, exercises, which were necessary. All of those were good things and we have been diligently working through the various programs and requirements of that program.

But also let me tell you that it just recently switched from the Defense Department to the Department of Justice. So now we are learning a whole new team of players on top of that whole process. But about a week before September the 11th, I was notified by now the Department of Justice and all the new players that they could not honor my request for the equipment, some of which we are

forced to take even if we do not want it, but they could not honor our request because it was short $796 in the request.

So the question I had was: Well, that means they get off without having to spend the $796? They said: No, the accounting has to be to the dollar before you can get a dollar. So we are now resubmitting the entire set of paperwork back to the Department of Justice so that we make sure that it totals exactly the $300,000 to the penny to jump through the hoops.

These are just part of the frustrations that have occurred. Remember now, this was 1996 that the act was passed by the Senate, with I think good intention to address some of our needs to respond to terrorism in this country.

Senator WYDEN. What I would like to do, Chief, is frankly just sort of walk that through the system. I mean, literally sort of walk through the system beyond the $796 and see what happened between 1996 and now that has kept this money from getting out. If you could give us your sense on how to do it and some of the major events that contributed to all of this, all of this delay, that would be helpful, because with the additional money coming out now the question is are we going to make sure it gets where it needs to go or is it just going to be sent out about the country and a couple of years from now you will be telling the same stories to other Congressional committees. We want to prevent that.

Mr. PLAUGHER. Believe it or not, it has actually gotten worse since that time.

Senator WYDEN. It is hard to think how it got worse. The program did not work since 1996 and here you are going through bureaucratic water torture for $796. That is pretty bad.

Mr. PLAUGHER. But you then also sent $100 million to the States in 1999, year 2000 and year 2001, and none of that money has reached first responders. It is still all tied up within the Defense Department. As a matter of fact, a great deal of that money will never ever see first responders' hands because I know in the Commonwealth of Virginia a great majority of it was absorbed by the Commonwealth and never did come to the locality that needed it.

So it is just frustration after frustration after frustration, and hundreds upon hundreds of millions of dollars are not getting where it is supposed to be going to, and the is into the first responders' hands for the equipment that we need.

Senator WYDEN. Let us see if we can liberate these badly needed funds from the bureaucratic rigidity that you describe. If you can help us by sort of walking us through what happened, we are going to go back and take a look at it and specifically try to make sure that with this new money that is going out that we avoid it.

Mr. Turner, I gather you—now we have triggered a passionate round of comments. Mr. Turner, we will hear from you and Chief Buckman, I think, on this.

Mr. TURNER. Yes, sir. I would like to ask that you and your Committee, Mr. Chairman, specify who first responders are. I believe the panel sitting here would agree that the first responders community is fire departments, EMS providers, and police departments, and their associated organizations. Not taking away from any other discipline out there, but, as Chief Plaugher has stated, the Commonwealth of Virginia has used some of that money else-

where, and probably realistically they could justify it. Likewise, the same thing is happening in our State and other States around us.

I would make that request, that you identify who specifically that emergency responder is and that money go to that emergency response community.

Senator WYDEN. You are being too logical now for the Federal Government. You cannot expect all this logic to break out all over the place.

Mr. TURNER. Sorry, Mr. Chairman.

Senator WYDEN. The idea, heaven forbid, that we would actually define who is a first responder is just common sense, and we will certainly pick up on that as well.

Chief Buckman, we will have your comments and then I want to let my colleague ask some questions. Chief.

Mr. BUCKMAN. Mr. Chairman, back to your original question about the challenges faced by that fire department about buying equipment that did not work.

Senator WYDEN. Right.

Mr. BUCKMAN. I would echo Chief Ingram's comments about we need some standards. When we looked at the FIRE grant program—and I happened to sit on the Committee that helped determine the value system—we were concerned about the quality of equipment and the quality in specifically one area was in the fire prevention material and the message that this material would produce.

Now when we start looking at the grant program going from $100 million to $600 million, there is going to be a lot more companies out there that are going to be selling things to the little fire departments. The FDNY and many large metropolitan fire departments have their own research programs. Most of the little, small municipal departments as well as the volunteer fire departments have to rely on advertisements, word of mouth, and what the salesmen tell them.

So there does need to be some system. I think the GSA has developed a schedule at one time on certain things that could be bought through the Federal Government system. Whether it is NIST setting the standards, but there is going to need to be some protection for that little fire department, because as we start getting into buying technology, they can promise you, as the Chief explained about detectors and sensors, they can promise you they will do a lot of things and maybe in the end they do not, and it is the little fire department that ends up getting hurt in that question.

Senator WYDEN. Senator Allen.

Senator ALLEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Let me follow up with both Chief Buckman and Chief Ingram on this point. You alluded to it and you are getting to answering this matter as far as technology. This is addressed primarily to you two because you brought it up. First, Chief Ingram, you mentioned the importance of technology: the driving simulators; satellite phones; personal tracking systems; and modern fire fighting.

Does the Federal Government or do any of the states as an association or any other association—and Chief Plaugher, you can pitch in on this, too—do they have any way of evaluating these new technologies, applying those procedures? You can have the most won-

derful technology, but if people cannot operate it it is useless. To the extent some of this has to do with communications, it has to work that way, too.

This is not a unique problem that I have heard just from you in the fire services. The same applies in law enforcement, where you have the state police will have one, the City of Newport News police chief will have something for his system, and then Virginia Beach will have something else, and Chesapeake has another, and then you have the sheriffs and they have a variety of different ones in all the various counties.

The point of law enforcement, just like you all, is to be able to communicate. You have wonderful people who can really sell a product, but then it has to be operable and your folks need to know how to work it and really, if there are any examples of its operability elsewhere.

So I would ask any of the three Chiefs here, so to speak: Do you know of any way, say, that the Federal, state or associations can give you a decent evaluation of new technology and how it would apply, so you would have comfort in purchasing it? Because you can waste money so quickly on new technology, probably quicker than anything else. But new technology is going to help you locate your firefighters, like Captain Fuentes. I listened to that. They found him, but that was an example. I remember telling Chief Plaugher about that: If you had a GPS, you would not have to be wondering which east or west wing he was in.

So what do you all have as a good evaluator?

Mr. BUCKMAN. I do not know of any. I do not know of any State that provides that kind of service to their fire departments. The State of California does some testing as it relates to building materials and fire code materials, but I do not know of any State that does any testing as it relates to fire department apparatus.

One of the challenges that you are talking about that the fire service is going to have is standardization. That is not necessarily a nice word in the fire service because, you see, when we buy a fire truck we hardly ever buy, two departments hardly ever buy the same kind of fire truck. That creates a challenge for the vendors as well, because everybody wants to have it their own way.

But again, by going back to Chief Ingram's comment, we could have some standards and minimum standards that say equipment has to be able to do these things, then anything you want to do extra than that is up to the individual.

Senator ALLEN. Well, when you get into technology, though, while a fire truck—in some areas you are going to need a brush truck more than they are going to be needing hook and ladder trucks. They are just not going to need ladders because there is really nothing more than a couple or three stories high, and they are going to need brush trucks and tanker trucks and those that can suck water out of a pond because there are not fire hydrants and all the rest.

But in technology there probably is the greatest need for standardization because the technology is going to need to be interoperable with other technologies. Chief Ingram, do you know of any Federal Government program that helps you analyze or evaluate these new technologies for their efficiencies or efficacy?

Mr. INGRAM. Some of these programs now that are being researched through the military have a chance of success for us if the information can be passed down. The military is a larger buyer, so they will get contractors to work with them much more easily than individual departments will or even a small consortium of two or three or four departments. So they can get the vendors to work with their needs and come up with the final product that suits them.

Unfortunately, the military needs are not always exactly what we need in the first response community. So we have to try and work with what is already there and then try and bend it to what works for us.

As far as the New York City Fire Department goes, because we are a little bit larger we have a little bit of the benefit of having our own research and development. Because we are also a big buyer in the fire service, we tend to get vendors to give us products to field test, so we can do some of that on our own.

But for the vast majority of the fire services, they are not that big and they do not get that service from the vendors. So it is very difficult. There needs the be a standard developed for all of these items, and many do, many of your typical fire service items. Breathing apparatus has a standard. Fire apparatus, there are standards. But your newer technology items, they are not developed yet and that is a critical area that we need to address.

Senator ALLEN. Let me ask Chief Buckman a question. Thank you, Chief Ingram.

Another question, Chief. You listened to Chief Plaugher's explanation of what we are trying to do in this area amongst three jurisdictions and local jurisdictions on top of the three, the two States and the District. Would you see a program like Cap-WIN being useful in communication and coordination issues that you raised in your testimony? Because I was taking down notes—better equipment, 75,000 firefighters, and so forth—and you mentioned the communications problems.

Mr. BUCKMAN. Absolutely. I think the process that you guys are using in Virginia could become a model for use in other parts of the country. In every small emergency or even large emergency, when you analyze the challenges that occur—and I think Ken Burris said this—command, control and communications. Communications is always there and it has to do with operating that radio system, when it was designed in many cases not for the fire service. It was designed for the police service, and the fire department uses communications differently than the police department do. We use more radios on emergency incidents than any of the other agencies, and that is part of the challenge.

Senator ALLEN. More even than police, is that what you are saying?

Mr. BUCKMAN. Most of the time you have three or four police officers respond to an incident. We have, and our standards say we have, 16. Four trucks is at least four people. So we use radios more than the police agencies.

But the facts are most of the radio systems are designed by police agencies. The fire department understands that. We have tried to be involved in that process.

Senator ALLEN. Thank you, Chief.

I want to switch to Chief Plaugher. I have some questions I want to ask you. First I am going to find out, though: supposedly there was a million—how much was supposedly allocated to the Commonwealth of Virginia and you saw none of it in 1999?

Mr. PLAUGHER. It was a little over a million dollars.

Senator ALLEN. A million dollars was allocated?

Mr. PLAUGHER. $1.2 million in 1999 Federal dollars.

Senator ALLEN. Let the record show my term ended in January of 1998, but regardless. Do you know where that money went to?

Mr. PLAUGHER. Oh, yes, I certainly do. I was part of the panel that deliberated on where the moneys would go throughout the State, and they continued to buy state police portable radios, they continued to buy some state-operated hazardous materials response team equipment. They used it for a myriad of other programs within the Department of Emergency Management.

I think that the last I heard was that there is now a grand total of $296,000 of the $1.2 million, that they are going to eventually develop a grant program the localities can apply for and that you will then be in competition with other jurisdictions around the State.

Senator ALLEN. All right. Well, there is a reasonable explanation. I know it is not exactly—you were on the panel, though, making those decisions, you say?

Mr. PLAUGHER. Yes. They told us how they had divided it up and then said: Would you please agree with this? So even though we did not agree with it, they said, that is okay, the paperwork had already gone to the Department of Justice, and that that is the way it was.

Senator ALLEN. All right. We will talk later. We do not need all our dirty laundry here.

Mr. PLAUGHER. That is correct, we will. At the time I happen to have been the President of the State Fire Chiefs Association, so that is the role I was playing at that particular time.

Senator ALLEN. Well, we will talk about it.

Mr. PLAUGHER. Yes, sir.

Senator ALLEN. Many here have talked about the concern for biological or chemical weapons and threats. We know that New York City was a target area. We know that the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area was an attack area as well. People are so paranoid any more about everything and they ask, "Gosh, are we ready? How would we react to biological or chemical terrorist attack?"

Do you feel in Arlington—which I have seen your men and women in operation—you are as sophisticated—we have some good professional firefighters in Virginia, you and Alexandria, Fairfax, Prince William, Virginia Beach, and all across Virginia. The Chesterfield County folks are great, as well as Henrico. I probably ought to say every county and city now.

Regardless—and some of those came up and were here, and some were sent out to Oklahoma City as well. That was the last time I saw some of our folks from Virginia, when they came back from Oklahoma City.

At any rate, do you feel your department or any of the others in the Commonwealth of Virginia, whether in the Hampton Roads

area or the D.C. area in particular, because with our naval facilities and our ports there are worries of attacks in certain areas, do you feel that—what level of preparedness would you indicate for you and for your knowledge of others in the State?

Mr. PLAUGHER. The question is a difficult one, Senator. First off, thank you very much for your compliments to the firefighters in the Commonwealth, because they are in fact an outstanding group of firefighters, professionals, emergency medical technicians, and firefighters.

The whole issue about chemical and biological terrorism is a very, very difficult one because they are two separate and distinct types of needs. You have an entirely different venue that you need to unfold for your community. The chemical preparedness in the metropolitan areas, particularly in Northern Virginia and in the Washington, D.C. area, we feel very good about our capability to respond. We created the Nation's very first metropolitan medical strike team, which is now a program called MMRS's, Metropolitan Medical Response Systems, and our team was fortunate enough to also be then converted to one of the Nation's four national medical response teams, which are primarily designed to respond for medical needs related to a chemical incident.

We are just now starting to work on the biological. When I say "just starting to work on," this is about a 3-year project in the Washington metropolitan area that is a very, very arduous task. It is difficult to get folks who are going to even talk about the subject because the consequences are so dire. It is also difficult because the public health community has been decimated over the last 40 years in this country and they are not prepared. They are not able to deal with the consequences of a biological attack, and we need to bolster them as well, because they are definitely part of the need for our response capability in our Nation.

Senator ALLEN. Thank you, Chief. It may be that for those that want to become more conversant or capable, let us say, in the chemical attacks, maybe they should again look at what is being done in this area.

I find that what also is needed—and this was in speaking, having a relatively private conversation with the Secretary of Health, Tommy Thompson—in the area of biological matters, what Chief Ingram said was he called it a national early warning system. Really, where that national early warning system is going to come on a biological or, for that matter, chemical attack, but particularly in biological, is from the local emergency rooms.

The question here is really bio-informatics: to make sure that information of whatever is going on is getting to the state and obviously quickly to CDC, because one hospital may have a few attacks or symptoms, and then there are two and they say, "Well, two people have come in with these symptoms." They think nothing more or less, but it is reported. Meanwhile, on the other side of the mountain, say in the Shenandoah Valley or across the river in Maryland, there is another hospital that has three, another one has four, another one has seven, and all of a sudden you say: "Wait a second, there is something here." That is the bio-informatics that I think needs to be part of that early warning system.

But again, the front line in this is most likely going to be our local emergency rooms and our fire and rescue squads and they would be called into it.

So I appreciate all the testimony you have had here. I want to finish with both—can I say your name right—Mr. Schaitberger and Mr. Turner. Both of you talked about the difficulty in getting firefighters. Everyone is talking about how there is a need for, across the Nation, about 75,000 more such firefighters. First, Mr. Schaitberger, are there incentives in States or local governments that they could use to hire on more firefighters, which you are advocating, other than obviously more pay, which is important?

Mr. SCHAITBERGER. Actually, I think the program that we are advocating and the legislation that will be introduced shortly in both the Senate and the House calling for the 75,000 firefighters, there is a program to actually help and assist localities to hire firefighters. The problem right now is always the same problem, and it is a matter of resources, priorities, and who comes up with the short straw.

I would just say to you, Senator, that if any of your communities had 80 children in a classroom the community would be in outrage, there would be a recognition of a problem, and somehow resources would be applied to ensure that an adequate number of teachers were available for our public education system.

We have watched the Federal Government this last year pump $4.6 billion, rightfully so, into supporting our law enforcement community in order to fight the war against crime. The problem at the local level is simply dollars, and I do not know that there is a lack of recognition. I believe everybody here on the command side—and I am on the labor side—I believe we all recognize we have a problem.

I just think the decision makers are forced to make choices and we are the easy choice to let drop off the edge of the table right now.

Senator ALLEN. Well, do you envision this as being an incentive grant approach, the 75,000 new firefighters? Would there be a required State and-or local match?

Mr. SCHAITBERGER. We are envisioning that this program will provide the first 3 years for hiring a new firefighter, with a commitment from the locality that they would be required to provide the fourth year. The reality of the program we are confident, working together, is that we will help those communities then be prepared, find the resources, go to the citizens at large if necessary, to ensure that the program after the fourth year will have the economic support to continue.

Senator ALLEN. Chiefs—let me ask the three Chiefs: Are you all in favor of this?

Mr. BUCKMAN. Yes.

Mr. INGRAM. More staffing? Yes.

Mr. PLAUGHER. I think it goes without saying that effectiveness for our business is having well-trained, well-equipped individuals capable to respond in that short 3- to 4-minute window that is necessary. The 75,000 I think is a good starting point.

Senator ALLEN. The one concern that I have on that is that—and I have seen it to some extent with the law enforcement, the COPS

program—is it was federally funded for a few years and then the localities were to pick it up, and then they are all saying: "My goodness, unless you keep funding it we are going to lose a sheriff's deputy or two or a patrolman or two."

Mr. SCHAITBERGER. I will just say, Senator, that I can only speak for my organization, but we are pretty good at that dynamic called politics. So we will be working real hard with the community——

Senator ALLEN. Good.

Mr. SCHAITBERGER.—to make sure—maybe we can do the little better job on that than law enforcement has.

Senator ALLEN. Well, good, although I think the Fraternal Order of Police and all those crews are pretty good, too. I am not being derogatory, but just from past experience or observation.

Now let me finish off with Mr. Turner here, because you have the volunteer firefighters. There are even volunteer firefighters in urban areas, in cities and in pretty crowded counties as well. Volunteer firefighters and volunteer rescue squad people really save the taxpayers a lot of money and in each and every county the taxes would be a whole lot higher if it were not for people volunteering.

Now, from experience, I understand why you are having a hard time recruiting. I am going to ask you first for some suggestions, but one of the reasons, some of the reasons are they are becoming more urbanized. As you have people working away from home and not on the farm or right in their community, but driving long distances, it is pretty hard to leave work to respond to a fire, and so that is why it is harder to get volunteers or employers who are willing to let somebody leave work, leave a shift to get to a site.

Then on top of it all, just listening to you all and the threats that you all face, the amount of training that it takes, whether to be in a rescue squad or whether to be a volunteer firefighter. As you said, "It is on nights, it is on weekends." It is whatever amount of time somebody who is working for a living has left over.

It is tough, it is really tough, to meet all these requirements and still have a bit of relaxation in your life and do your job.

We have tried to look at this in Virginia of what can we do to try to help out volunteer firefighters. There are things such as these stickers you have to get in Virginia in various counties and cities. They cost $15 or $20. It is just to show you have paid personal property taxes. They would allow the firefighters, if you are in a volunteer fire department you do not have to pay that $15 or $20.

That is something. It is of some value. But I think that I have found, at least in Virginia—and that is my only real experience, in Virginia, and I am sure it is in other states—the counties and cities wonder, "What can we do to show our appreciation for those who volunteer?" Could you share with us any ideas that you would have to help, to help more people want to be able to become volunteer firefighters?

Mr. TURNER. I will speak from my experience in Delaware.

Senator ALLEN. Okay.

Mr. TURNER. Right now we have a length of service awards program. It is a pension program for our people. The fire departments or their members who they classify as active—and you have to un-

derstand, we have about 12,000 members of the Delaware Volunteer Fire Service on the rolls in the companies, but I would suggest that, the way the program was set up, the people that can take advantage of that program must be active. That means getting on the rigs, going to calls, doing the training, and so on and so forth.

The fire departments contribute X amount of money over a period of years. When they turn age 60, they get X amount of dollars per month per year of service. That is one way.

A second way, the State of Delaware has given the volunteers that are, again, "active" a tax break. Right now it is about $500. There was a bill in our last legislature to increase that to $1500. So that helps.

There are local communities that give their active firefighters a break, such as free or they waive their local taxes, such as property taxes, not school taxes but property taxes, and that type of thing. So there are many different programs that are out there that are available to maybe what I would call retain the fire service.

Most of us are getting older in years and you will find that—my wife questions whether I am home at nights now or not. There is some discussion about that. Especially for the younger folks that do not have—have never experienced the discipline that we are going to see in the next couple years—I think it is going to prove very interesting in a couple years to see after this is all said and done whether our younger generation will come out and join the volunteer fire departments in the rural communities.

I think from the career aspect, if I can use that, they are still going to get that. Career departments have a lot of father, sons, brothers, so on. So does the volunteer system, and it will be very interesting in years to come to see if that continues after what we have experienced here in the last couple months and the year.

Senator ALLEN. Chief Buckman, you wanted to comment?

Mr. BUCKMAN. Yes, Senator. Thank you.

Senator ALLEN. Thank you, Mr. Turner.

Mr. BUCKMAN. As one who has done a lot of studying on the volunteer fire services—and I am a volunteer fire chief. I do have a full-time job other than the fire department. I am the first President of the International Association of Fire Chiefs to serve as a volunteer fire chief in 22 years.

I have written—I am one of the authors of the third edition of "Recruiting, Training, and Maintaining Volunteer Firefighters." Jamie is exactly right. There are a lot of incentives, but most of those incentives are at a local level—college tuition.

What the other thing is is that it is a natural transition for a volunteer fire department to change, and in most cases it is going to change from an all-volunteer fire department to a combination fire department and eventually it is going to change to a full career fire department.,

Now, the fire service has a lot of tradition and we sometimes fight that change. I would hope that in part of this 75,000 firefighters that there are many volunteer fire departments that will have an opportunity to apply for and obtain a grant to hire some paid firefighters to be on those departments, to help provide responses during the day when most volunteer firefighters have a regular job.

Senator ALLEN. Thank you, Chief Buckman, Mr. Turner, Chief Plaugher, Chief Ingram, Mr. Schaitberger. Thank you all so much.

We have a vote. This was—Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you—a very timely, very important hearing. It is good to get all your viewpoints and your great leadership. I know it wears you out to be here listening to all of this, but let me tell you, you all are the heroes of America. So thank you for very great service. Keep it up, stay strong. You know that we are going to do what we can, not just to talk, but to act to improve your opportunities to give us safety in our homes and communities.

Thank you, gentlemen.

Senator WYDEN. I thank my colleague, and I think that really sums it up, is we have spent I guess upwards now of 3 hours talking about budgets and coordination and volunteers. Clearly, there are going to have to be Federal dollars, and there are going to have to be Federal resources.

But, budgets are not just about figures and numbers and dollars thrown on a piece of paper. I think they are really about your hopes and aspirations and the values that are important to you as a country. I think Senator Allen said it very well. This is now a question of political will and a question of are we willing to follow up so that the people that you represent who are on the front lines have the tools to do your job.

We are going to work very, very closely with you. That is why we asked Chief Plaugher for some of these examples, where literally for years the process dragged on, because we want to go back and really assess what went wrong. At the end of the day, this Subcommittee, working on a bipartisan basis with the Bush Administration, can give you all new tools to be able to use state of the art approaches in fighting fire. That is what the two of us are committed to doing.

Because we have a vote on the floor, we are going to have to adjourn. Is there anything that any of you would like to add at this point?

[No response.]

Senator WYDEN. All right. The Subcommittee is adjourned and we thank you.

[Whereupon, at 5:48 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER IV,
U.S. SENATOR FROM WEST VIRGINIA

Thank you for holding this hearing, Mr. Chairman. September 11th was a terrible day for all Americans—perhaps the worst day in memory. But, along with great evil, we saw profound good. Firefighters, in particular, exhibited a heroism and a sense of duty that was truly breathtaking. All Americans owe them a debt of gratitude. It is entirely appropriate that we in Congress examine what we have done, and what we still need to do, to help firefighters do their job.

Today, we will hear about some concerns arising from federal aid to local fire departments—inadequate funding and lack of coordination among them. In the pre-September 11th environment, these issues might have been seen as the types of relatively minor procedural wrinkles that Congress is frequently asked to iron out. However, as we now are coming to understand, issues like funding for safety and security, and how federal, state, and local agencies interact, are vitally important for our nation, and I would hope, equally compelling for those of us in Congress charged with oversight of these programs.

At the same time, I do want to emphasize that hugely beneficial federal assistance is reaching often-underfunded local fire departments in my state and throughout the country. In West Virginia, for example, just last week four fire departments received grants for programs and equipment totaling more than $300,000. In all, nineteen West Virginia departments have received nearly $1.07 million in FIRE Grant funding since Congress passed the FIRE Act. I cannot overstate what this sorely needed assistance means to fire departments in my state. With FIRE Grant funding, firefighters are able to use state-of-the-art firefighting and protective equipment that their departments would probably never have been able to afford otherwise. Likewise, I do not overstate matters when I say that FIRE Act grants save lives.

I look forward to hearing the witnesses' perspective on what happened on September 11, and how we in Congress can help with what needs to be done to best respond to future attacks. I thank all the witnesses for their appearances today, and most especially the firefighters involved in the rescue efforts at the Pentagon and the World Trade Center. You are an inspiration to all of us.

ARTICLE FROM THE WASHINGTON POST—OCT. 9, 2001, SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD
BY HON. RON WYDEN, U.S. SENATOR FROM OREGON

SOME MD. FIREFIGHTERS QUESTION READINESS; HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS' WORTH OF PROTECTIVE GEAR COULD BE USELESS IN ATTACK, THEY SAY

The Washington Post

by Jo Becker, Washington Post Staff Writer

In the basement of a Chevy Chase fire station, boxes full of bright yellow protective suits are crammed onto shelves, where they have gathered dust for months. Stored without the necessary accessories and hard to get to in an emergency, the suits would be practically useless in a biological or chemical terrorist attack, some firefighters complain.

The Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service received at least $596,000 to purchase such protective gear for its "first responders," who would rush to the scene of an attack. Much of the money came from the federal government in grants awarded in 1998 and 1999.

But with Congress poised to dole out hundreds of millions of dollars more to prepare jurisdictions across the country, Montgomery County's experience shows that money alone won't buy preparedness and that properly equipping the nation's front-line defenders could take a while.

Domestic preparedness has been of paramount concern since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks—and especially since U.S.-led military strikes in Afghanistan began Sun-

day. U.S. intelligence officials told members of Congress last week there is a high probability that terrorists associated with Osama bin Laden will try to launch another major attack in the near future, particularly if the United States unleashed its military might.

Although Montgomery County emergency officials have had several years to get ready, much of the equipment purchased has yet to be deployed, the result of internal debate and delays. Some equipment is unworkable, and officials are considering sending it back. Other items, such as hundreds of gas masks, were ordered only this month and have yet to arrive.

"In our job, there's so much else to be worried about," said District Chief Bob Stephan, commander of the department's 70-member hazardous materials team, who has taught fire personnel across the country. "A great many people never took this seriously, and as time went on, it was viewed locally and probably nationally as 'Yeah, we need to be ready for this, but it's probably not going to happen.' "

Unlike many smaller departments that could soon find themselves awash in money and lost in a world of gadgetry, Montgomery County's Fire and Rescue Service has long been training for a biological or chemical attack. So have personnel in the District, one of 120 cities to receive special training and funding under a 1996 domestic preparedness program passed by Congress.

But at a D.C. Council hearing last week, the chiefs of the D.C. police and fire departments acknowledged that they lack crucial emergency equipment. They have sought federal money to purchase, among other things, masks and suits to protect against an unconventional terrorist attack.

"We're going to be sent into a situation we can't handle because we don't have the proper equipment," said Ray Sneed, who heads the union that represents District firefighters.

Part of the problem, according to experts like Amy E. Smithson, director of the Chemical and Biological Weapons Nonproliferation Project at the Henry L. Stimson Center, is that of the $8.7 billion Congress spent last year on terrorism defense, only $311 million went to enhancing the capacities of local emergency personnel.

But local jurisdictions must also learn how to spend the money wisely and, given the warnings of intelligence officials, with dispatch.

After the deadly release of the chemical nerve agent sarin in a Tokyo subway and the Oklahoma City bombing, both in 1995, Montgomery County officials set aside $126,000 in 1998 to prepare first responders for a biological or chemical attack. In 1998 and 1999, the county also received two federal grants totaling $470,000 for the same purpose.

The county's hazardous materials team is the best prepared, and its members are the only Montgomery firefighters with "Class A" vapor-tight suits that allow wearers to enter a hot zone—the epicenter of an attack—to determine the nature of the attack and try to contain it.

But the 70-member team has only 12 such suits, with eight more on the way, Stephan said. By contrast, Fairfax County's team has 29 suits and at least 20 more ready to go, according to Capt. Craig Buckley.

The hazardous material team's primary mission is not to rescue or treat people; that would be left to regular firefighters and medical workers who would operate mostly in the "warm zone" on the periphery of ground zero.

Montgomery County has done many things right. For instance, it has purchased and distributed condensable "escape" masks. If emergency workers enter a building without knowledge that a chemical release has occurred, they can quickly slip the masks over their heads and get out of harm's way.

The county also used federal money to buy chemical accessory kits, which include, among other things, duct tape to close gaps in firefighters' clothing. But officials announced the availability of those kits on Sept. 28—17 days after the Sept. 11 attacks.

For longer-lasting protection, the county spent $40,000 for 1,200 "Level B" suits. The suits, designed to be worn in the warm zone, are less effective than those worn by the Class A hazardous materials unit but offer better mobility and more protection than firefighters' regular gear. To complete the ensemble, the county planned to purchase gas masks that would allow firefighters to work for hours, rather than the scuba-like breathing apparatus that is standard issue but must be changed as air tanks are depleted.

The initial idea was to package the gear and put it on fire trucks. After an internal discussion, however, the county decided instead to distribute only a limited number of suits. The rest would be stored in "go-bags" that could be picked up at four fire stations strategically located across the county. It's a debatable tactic. Montgomery officials say it will prevent wear and tear; Fairfax put its protective gear on the trucks of 12 engine companies.

"The goal is to cut your reaction time down," Buckley said.

Regardless, the vast majority of Montgomery's suits are still nestled in shipping boxes like the ones in Chevy Chase, according to District Chief Ted Jarboe, who is in charge of the purchasing. He finished ordering the gas masks just days ago. To date, only 300 go-bags are actually ready to go, Jarboe said.

"The bottom line is, the equipment they have has not been put in place to protect firefighters," said volunteer firefighter Lewis German.

Meanwhile, some are complaining that the equipment is faulty. Peter Morris, assistant chief of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rescue Squad, said that the gas mask filters tend to fall out and that the Class B suits are unworkable because the version the county bought has an attached bootie.

"You can't slip them over your [fire] boots and the suited foot won't fit into your fire boots," he said.

Jarboe defended the masks as the best available at the time and said he is talking to the manufacturer about a possible exchange.

A firefighter's best weapon is education, and the county has excelled in that area, Jarboe said. Besides, based on tests conducted by the Army, Jarboe said he is convinced that firefighters could perform in a warm zone—and even attempt a quick rescue in a hot zone—wearing their regular clothing and self-contained breathing apparatus.

"Even if we didn't have this equipment, we could still function," he said. "It just has taken time."

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