



Senators Feinstein and Cornyn Introduce Bill to Ensure that Homeland Security Funding is Based on Risk

Risk-Based Homeland Security Grants Act of 2007 amends original 2002 law

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Washington, DC – U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and John Cornyn (R-TX) today introduced legislation that would require that federal homeland security grants to state and local governments be allocated based on the greatest risk of terrorist attack.

“The federal government has limited resources to fight the threat of terrorism,” Senator Feinstein said. **“It is essential that this money be allocated in the most effective manner possible.”**

“Homeland security dollars do the most good when they are spent to protect landmarks, ports, airports, rail systems, bridges and other critical infrastructure. These dollars should be distributed primarily based on risk and threat assessments – not on political factors.”

Sen. Cornyn said: **“We must ensure that homeland security funding goes where it’s needed most. It’s critical that we more effectively protect our nation’s citizens, vulnerable infrastructure and places where an attack could devastate the economy. So I hope our colleagues will support this bill to greatly improve the way homeland security resources are allocated.”**

The Feinstein-Cornyn legislation would amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002. It is an updated version of a bill introduced last year and is in line with Department of Homeland Security changes for 2007. It also simplifies the Urban Areas Security Initiative by ensuring that all previously eligible areas are certified.

The bill is co-sponsored by Senators Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), Robert Menendez (D-N.J.), Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.), Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX), Hilary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.) and Barack Obama (D-Ill.)

Summary

The Feinstein-Cornyn bill would:

- **Direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to allocate funding to homeland security grants based on risk analysis.** This direction covers the four major first-responder grant programs administered by Department of Homeland Security in addition to some grants for seaport and airport security - called “covered grants” in the bill, including:
 - 1) The State Homeland Security Grant Program;
 - 2) The Urban Area Security Initiative;
 - 3) The Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program; and
 - 4) The Citizens Corps Program.
- **Reduce the “small state minimum” to .25% per state.** Current practice requires each state to get .75% of much of the grant funding. That means roughly 38% of the funds are marked for distribution before any risk analysis.
- **Require grants be designed to meet “essential capabilities.”** Essential capabilities refer to the ability of jurisdictions to address risks by reducing vulnerability to attack and diminishing the consequences of such an attack by effective response. This bill ensures that grant funds are properly accounted for and utilized within an integrated framework to enhance security.
- **Ensure that States quickly and effectively pass on Federal funds** to where they are needed so that Federal funds are not held back and the process moves forward in a timely, efficient manner.

Risk-based funding will benefit many smaller States with high-threat profiles, not just large States:

- Risk-based allocations will not simply redirect funds from small States to large States.
- Several less populous States have high-threat profiles that rank higher than larger States, as indicated by the amount of distributions through current risk-based programs, including the Urban Area Security Initiative and the Buffer Zone Protection / Critical Infrastructure programs.
- In some cases the UASI program alone represents 15% - 30% of first responder grant funding to less populous States, indicating a strong likelihood for more funding under a more risk-based distribution approach.

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