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**Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)
*Securing Our Communities: Federal Support to High-Risk Urban
Areas***

Emergency Preparedness, Response & Communications Subcommittee

April 23, 2018

Like all Americans, I remember the shock and horror of September 11, 2001, as we watched the tragedy unfold.

As a Member of Congress, I knew that we had to do everything in our power to provide first responders and state and local governments with resources to respond to the threat of terrorism around the nation.

Congress established the Department of Homeland Security and charged it with administering new homeland security grant programs, also commonly referred to as preparedness grants, to provide critical resources to help protect communities from threats.

While New York City has long been a terrorist target, the threat of terrorism is not exclusive to any one type of town or city, unfortunately.

In June of last year, then-Secretary John Kelly testified before the Committee that the threat of terrorism “has metastasized around the country, whether it’s New York City, the largest municipality in the country, or some little town in the middle of Arkansas, the potential is about the same in my view for a lone wolf attack.”

Whether it is a truck bomb Times Square or ISIS threats on a college campus in Mississippi, state and local agencies need Federal assistance to detect and disrupt those who would seek to do us harm.

Therefore, we must continue to help these agencies build the capacity to respond to threats.

Given the variety and complexity of threats to our nation, one would think that the Trump Administration would understand that Federal spending on preparedness grants needs to be increased or at a very minimum maintained.

Unfortunately, President Trump's Fiscal Year 2018 and 2019 proposed budgets recommended cutting more than \$900 million in preparedness grant funding.

The proposed drastic cuts, if enacted, would have devastated the progress made to address capability gaps in our preparedness.

Further, cuts to preparedness grants would have created tremendous hardship for many towns and cities across the country who would struggle to find the resources to prevent and respond to threats.

Congress has flatly rejected the Trump proposals and, in the case of many preparedness grants, increased funding in the recent omnibus appropriations bill.

As Ranking Member of the Committee on Homeland Security, I have always done my part to make sure state and locals have the resources they need to prepare for and respond to threats.

Ensuring that investments made by the Federal government in developing response capabilities are not undermined by misguided budget priorities has never been more important, and you will continue to have my strong support in that effort.

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