



Minnesota's 4th District **E-Report!**

Congresswoman Betty McCollum

"Serving Minnesota's Families"



JANUARY 24, 2003

Hot News!

"First Responders Initiative" Lacks Funding

This week, local first responders and mayors joined Rep. Betty McCollum as she urged President Bush and Congressional leaders to act quickly in releasing critical funding to local governments for Homeland Security.

In February of 2002, Mr. Bush proposed \$3.5 billion for a "First Responder Initiative" to help state and local first responders prepare for possible terrorist attacks.

Rep. McCollum supports the program's goal to improve the ability of police, firefighters and emergency personnel to respond to terrorist attacks involving weapons of mass destruction or other unconventional means, but said we need to hold this administration accountable.

"The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 transformed hometown security into a matter of national security. Our local first responders represent the first-line of defense against future terrorist attacks: they must have the resources they need to keep our communities safely prepared," McCollum said.

Mayors and cities have been clear that this funding is necessary. However, because Congress has failed to pass appropriations legislation for 2003, Minnesota communities have not been adequately funded. The delay is having a significant impact on local governments that rely on block grant funding from the federal government to provide first responder programs, equipment and training.

Municipal budgets are already stretched thin at a time when there are few dollars to spare. St. Paul alone has spent nearly \$2 million in first responder overtime and increased staffing to secure critical facilities, and another \$1 million for planning, preparation, and training in other areas.

"Pic" of the Week



Rep. McCollum is pictured above with local mayors and first responders urging the President and Congressional Leaders to fully fund Homeland Security requirements for local governments.

Next Week in Washington

January 28 - State of the Union Address

January 29 - Meeting with Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

January 29 - Meeting with Minnesota Private College Council

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