

REICHERT:

Mr. Chairman, thank you for marking this bill up today. Assisting state and local governments and law enforcement officials with their work at fusion centers is essential to our nation's homeland security.

We need to make sure that state and local cops and other first responders are getting funding for what they need the most. As the 9/11 Act recognized, counterterrorism is "personnel intensive" and my bill will help them with some of these costs.

My bill, H.R. 6098, the PRICE of Homeland Security Act, is co-sponsored by a number of this Committee's Members and has also received the support of the Major Cities Chiefs Association, the National Sheriffs Association and the National Governors Association.

It simply clarifies Congressional intent for grant funding. As part of H.R. 1 last year, we tried to make it clear to the Department that states and localities should have the flexibility to use grant funding for

fusion center intelligence analysts, or, where needed, for overtime and backfill costs. However, DHS is choosing to ignore the clear intent of this law and the accompanying Joint Explanatory Statement.

While I understand that Chairman Price has dedicated some Report language in the Appropriations bill to this subject, I am concerned that this language does not go far enough.

The language in the Appropriations bill directs the Department to “fully comply” with the 9/11 Act. However, DHS has already asserted that they are in full compliance with the 9/11 Act.

Furthermore, DHS is already ignoring clear report language in the 9/11 Act having to do with grant funding, so it is not clear that appropriations report language will be fully effective in remedying these grant problems.

So it is essential that we move this bill quickly to the House floor, to ensure that this administration -- and the next-- is bound by clear law, not just annual report language.

This is essential. States and localities need assurances that this funding won't disappear,

especially for budgeting and planning purposes. In my home state of Washington, there is the potential of reductions in staffing in our fusion center, the Washington Joint Analytical Center (WAJAC), if changes are not made.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for your support of this bill and for your support in helping to move this quickly to the House floor.