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Rokita/Republican Study Committee Amendment #1

Yesterday, I offered, in conjunction with the Republican Study Committee, an amendment to the FY2012 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act that would reduce the Department of Homeland Security's overall funding levels by 10%, with the exception of funds for ensuring the security of our nation's borders. This amendment would save the American tax payers \$2.5 billion dollars.

Our country is on the brink of a fiscal crisis. As Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has stated our debt is the greatest threat to our national security. We need to ensure that our tax dollars are spent wisely and efficiently, especially when it comes to protecting our nation. Unfortunately, the Department of Homeland Security is not an exception when it comes to examples of government waste. DHS must focus its resources more effectively. In their short history, DHS has become inherently wasteful, creating programs that do not make our nation any more secure. And they are not unlike any bureaucracy that has come before them.

A recent audit by the Defense Contract Audit Agency found 32 contracts collectively worth \$34.3 billion that have been plagued by waste, abuse, or mismanagement from 2001 through 2006. If this amendment passes, and an across the board cut is forced, I believe DHS will analyze its programs more effectively and become a more efficient agency as a result. I do not speak out of mere opinion, I speak out of experience. I used to run a bureaucracy as Indiana's Secretary of State for eight years – it is true, government **can do more with less**.

DHS funding needs to be reconfigured, focusing on protecting targets that are subject to legitimate terrorist threats rather than dispersing funds on a per-capita basis. That's a wasteful, inefficient, and ineffective way to do things. Secondly, DHS must redefine its mission and focus on its original purpose, protecting the homeland from terrorist attack. As we approach its tenth anniversary, no longer does DHS focus solely on homeland security, they now focus on "mass casualty" events totally unrelated to terrorism like natural disasters. Firefighter and COPS funding, once funded locally on the state and local level, is funded through grants by the federal government. While no member of this body will contend they are not vital to our communities, these programs, paid for with federal tax dollars, are not federal responsibilities under the U.S. Constitution.

We need to start making tough decisions. This amendment builds upon the work of the Appropriations committee in reducing spending. I believe we can go further. I hope you will support my amendment. Should you have any questions regarding the amendment, please contact Lindley Kratovil, lindley.kratovil@mail.house.gov, or Carrie Haas, carrie.haas@mail.house.gov, in my office.