

## Congressman Rothman: Federal Program Available to Keep Our Schoolchildren Safe

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As the 2008-2009 school year begins, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-Fair Lawn) is fighting to make sure that students are kept safe and that schools are focusing on increasing school security. As the parent of five public-school educated children, Rep. Rothman knows how important it is that kids are protected &ndash; beginning from the moment they are dropped off at school.

This is why Congressman Rothman created the Secure Our Schools program which provides matching federal grants administered by the Office of Community Oriented Policing (COPS), at the U.S. Department of Justice. This program authorizes the Attorney General to make grants available to public elementary and secondary schools for increased security measures, including metal detectors, locks, lighting, and other deterrent measures; security assessments; training for students, teachers, and administrators; coordination with local law enforcement; and other actions that could significantly improve school safety.

Since the grants became available in 2002, Secure Our Schools grants have been awarded to a total of 756 law enforcement agencies that have partnered with more than an estimated 2,400 schools nationwide to help ensure our children's safety. In New Jersey, those grants were worth over \$6.5 million and helped secure more than 160 schools, preventing countless acts of violence against schoolchildren.

This unique program allows law enforcement agencies to partner with local school districts to design individual school security plans, based on the school's particular needs. Such flexibility allows grant recipients (a law enforcement agency partnered with a school

district) to optimize their funding to meet local needs.

## How to Apply

Law enforcement agencies, partnered with local school districts, must submit a grant application and supporting materials to the COPS office within the Department of Justice by mid to late June of each year. Congressman Rothman encourages all New Jersey school districts interested in applying for SOS safety grants to partner with their local law enforcement agencies and contact his office for more information or assistance in applying at: 25 Main Street, Hackensack, NJ 07601; phone: (201) 646-0808; fax: (201) 646-1944.

For Immediate Release: September 10,  
2008

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