

Secure Our Schools Program

July 8, 2004

Rothman Announces \$20 Million for Improved School Safety Nationwide
House Passes Bill that Includes Continued Funding for Rothman's Secure Our Schools Program

Washington, DC- Congressman Steve Rothman (D-Fair Lawn) announced today that the House of Representatives passed the Commerce Justice State Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2005 which includes \$20 million for Rothman's national Secure Our Schools program. To date, Rothman has secured a total of \$40 million for this important school safety matching grant program that he created in 2000.

As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I am proud to have worked to ensure that our children can attend school without the fear of violence. In 2002 and 2003, this critical program allowed 106 law enforcement agencies in 26 states to partner with 337 schools to purchase and implement school security measures," Rothman stated. "However, there are over 92,273 elementary and secondary public schools in the United States with unique security concerns, and the need for federal assistance continues to be great."

The Secure Our Schools Act, authored by Rothman, is a voluntary, matching grant program that affords municipalities the opportunity to apply for federal funding for school safety grants. The grants can be used for metal detectors, locks, improved lighting, other deterrent measures, school security assessments, and security training for students and personnel. The federal government pays for 50 percent of the cost of the security measures, with the state or local government covering the remainder of the cost. If a school is sufficiently poor, it can be considered for a 100% grant. The program enjoys broad bi-partisan support and has grown steadily from \$5 million in 2002 to \$10 million in 2004, and has now doubled again for 2005, even as Congress has been forced to keep domestic, non-defense discretionary spending to low or no growth.

"The Secure Our Schools program will continue to have a significant impact on the reduction of school violence in this country, and I am pleased that the House of Representatives has made a commitment to improving the access of local municipalities to these grants by approving \$20 million for this important program next year," said Rothman.

"Unfortunately, we live in a society in which a program like Secure Our Schools is necessary and where too many of our school children have to attend school worrying that they may be subject to some sort of violence. I will continue my commitment to this program so that our children can go to school and concentrate on learning and preparing for the future instead of constantly looking over their shoulders in fear."

As a result of Rothman's efforts, New Jersey received a total of \$1,131,000 in Secure Our Schools grants in 2002 and 2003. Secure Our Schools Grants were awarded to: Asbury Park -- \$50,000; Burlington City -- \$100,000; East Orange -- \$50,000; Elizabeth -- \$25,000; Harrison -- \$21,000; Irvington -- \$50,000; Little Ferry -- \$40,000; Neptune -- \$20,000; North Bergen -- \$325,000; Orange Township -- \$35,000; Passaic City -- \$165,000; Prospect Park -- \$45,000; Roselle -- \$15,000; Secaucus -- \$50,000; Union City -- \$125,000; and Wildwood -- \$15,000. The grant application process is underway for the Fiscal Year 2004 funds, which totaled almost \$10 million.

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