

Castle: Homeland Security Appropriations Bill will help Secure Borders, Ports, Rail -- June 7, 2006

Washington, D.C. -- Delaware Congressman Mike Castle last night supported the FY 2007 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill, which would bring millions of dollars to Delaware for the Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC) program, other port security initiatives, and grants for firefighters. Castle, Rep. Rush Holt (D-NJ) and Rep. Steve Lynch (D-MA) were successful in attaching an amendment to the overall legislation that would increase funding for rail security from \$150 million to \$200 million to add more police officers, canine teams, security cameras, fences, and chemical detection systems at train stations and on subways and commuter systems across the country.

"I believe these funds are extremely important to homeland security priorities throughout our country and specifically here in Delaware. I am particularly pleased at the inclusion of funding for the expedited implementation of the TWIC program, to ensure the continued security protocols at the Port of Wilmington. From the beginning, I have been in strong support of this initiative and will continue to see that its implementation is thorough and complete.

"Additionally, I am extremely happy to know that my amendment, which will add \$50 million for rail security passed as part of this bill. In the wake of attacks on subway trains in London and on passenger rail lines in Madrid, it is clear that terrorist organizations are intent on disrupting surface transportation systems and mass transit around the world. We are very lucky that an attack has not taken place in the United States and we now have a great opportunity to be proactive and begin adequately funding rail and transit security in this country. I believe my amendment sets forth a course for achieving this goal and is a critical provision that works to protect American travelers," Castle said.

Delaware would receive a share of the following funding in the FY 2007 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill in the areas outlined below:

TWIC: Bill includes \$20 million to accelerate the TWIC program, the same as authorized in the House-passed port security bill. An additional \$20 million would also be available through fees collected by the program. This funding increase is a direct result of pressure from Congress to finally get this program up and running at Port of Wilmington and other critical sites.

Homeland Security Grants: The bill provides a total of \$945 million for grants that are distributed through formulas, as opposed to grants that are distributed at the discretion of the department.

Discretionary Grants: The bill provides \$1.2 billion for discretionary grant programs directed at urban areas and various types of infrastructure, including:

- \$750 million for grants to high-threat, high-density urban areas
- \$200 million for port security grants

- \$200 million for rail and transit security grants

Fire Grants: The bill appropriates over \$650 million for grants to fire departments for equipment, training, and safety programs.