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U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM AND HOMELAND SECURITY

October 10, 2001

The Honorable Wilson Livingood
Sergeant-at-Arms
US House of Representatives
H-124 US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Bill:

Thank you for your fine work and that of the Capitol Police in dealing with the present crisis. We have both been greatly impressed with the professionalism of your officers, and we are confident that we are in good hands. That said, we continue to be concerned that the potential terrorist threat from biological or chemical agents to Members of Congress is significant and increasing. We believe that additional precautions may be warranted to protect Congressional employees and our colleagues. Installation of detection devices in the Capitol and office buildings and improvements in the screening of incoming mail for biological and chemical toxins would be particularly welcome.

We understand that existing House security procedures include passing mail and packages through x-rays and separating items that are suspicious in outward appearance. In contrast, we understand that there are no procedures or equipment for detecting the presence of chemical or biological substances that may have been released or mailed, notwithstanding the availability of technologies and procedures for doing so.

As the chairman and ranking member of the House Subcommittee on Terrorism and Homeland Security, we encourage you and the Senate Sergeant-at-Arms to quickly implement such steps and procedures necessary to detect releases of dangerous substances and agents and any mail or packages that may contain them.

We are ready to assist you in any way we are able in making this important security improvement.

Sincerely,


SAXBY CHAMBLISS
Chairman
Subcommittee on Terrorism
And Homeland Security


JANE HARMAN
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Terrorism
And Homeland Security