



**STATEMENT OF BOSTON MAYOR THOMAS MENINO,  
PRESIDENT, U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS,  
ON DECISION TO DELAY FIRST RESPONDER FUNDING**

December 4, 2002

“The U.S. Department of Justice released a letter earlier this week indicating that the Administration will delay the award of federal funds for some vital grant programs until all the appropriations bills are resolved. This announcement means that cities will not receive critically needed assistance for local law enforcement and first responders until Congress and the Administration agree on a budget, which is already more than two months overdue. It threatens potentially hundreds of millions of dollars in federal funding to cities and states, including Local Law Enforcement Block Grants.

“The Administration has already proposed for fiscal 2003 a cut of nearly \$600 million or 80 percent in the COPS program, a federal-local partnership that promotes community policing and funds additional police officers and new technology. The proposed cut would eliminate all funding for hiring community-based and school-based police officers. Similarly, the Local Law Enforcement Block Grant program, which helps local police departments pay for hiring, training, and overtime for officers, as well as equipment purchases, would be merged with another program and cut by \$200 million. And that is on top of the 25% cut the program suffered last year.

“Cities have borne the burden of additional security costs since September 11. A study by the U.S. Conference of Mayors estimated that cities will spend more than \$2.6 billion in additional security costs between September 11, 2001 and the end of 2002. And these additional costs come on top of a recession and continued weak economy that has already severely pinched city budgets. Nearly 15 months after the attack on America, cities have inexplicably still not received any significant direct first responder funding from Washington.

“The Justice Department decision is very shortsighted. It threatens public safety. And it leaves city budgets – already pinched by recession and homeland security spending – in even worse shape.”