

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-5) offered the following statement in support of an amendment to restore FIRE/SAFER funding, which was cut by House Republicans in their spending bill for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2011:

“Our country is in deep fiscal trouble, and cutting wasteful or low-priority spending is part of getting back to fiscal balance. But there is nothing low-priority about the firefighters who protect our communities, our families, and our homes. It is another example of Republicans’ short-sighted and reckless approach to cutting spending that they are willing to take 2,400 firefighters off of the streets by passing this spending bill. To prevent that blow to public safety, I support Rep. Pascrell’s amendment, which would protect funding for the vital FIRE and SAFER grant programs.

“FIRE and SAFER help fire departments across America recruit, train, and retain skilled firefighters, and help departments equip them with the up-to-date tools they need to protect property and save lives. These grant programs have helped our community firefighters afford protective equipment that helps them enter burning buildings, backup power generators that keep their stations running during emergencies, and full staffing, so that fire departments are not sitting empty or underprepared when disasters strike. In an independent study, the U.S. Fire Administration found that grants like these are making fire departments across the country more prepared for emergencies, and better equipped to do their job.

“The Republican spending bill would not only cost us the jobs of thousands of public servants who risk their lives for our safety—it would put communities across the country at greater risk. I urge my colleagues to pass this amendment and restore these vital investments in public safety.”