

**WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-5) submitted the following statement into the Congressional Record in support of an amendment to the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act that would restore investments in the FIRE and SAFER grant programs at the Fiscal Year 2012 level:**

“I rise today in support of the amendment offered by Mr. Runyan and Mr. Kissell and others, which seeks to ensure that our nation’s fire stations are adequately staffed and that firefighters have the tools they need to protect our communities safely and effectively. Specifically, this amendment will restore the successful FIRE and SAFER grant programs to last year’s funding level of \$337.5 million each.

“Independent observers have found that FIRE and SAFER work: an independent study from the U.S. Fire Administration found that grants like these are making our fire departments more prepared and better equipped to protect our communities. Cutting FIRE and SAFER makes it more difficult for our communities to recruit, train, and retain skilled firefighters. And, it makes it far more difficult for our departments to equip themselves with the up-to-date tools critical to protecting property and saving lives.

“I want to make clear that I am not pleased with the offset being used to restore this funding. However, I recognize that my colleagues were left with very few options, given the cuts made to the overall bill. I am hopeful that this will be addressed in conference with the Senate.

“I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, fund FIRE and SAFER at the Fiscal Year 2012 level, and protect these vital investments in public safety.”