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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

February 20, 2007

The Honorable David M. Walker
Comptroller General
Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N. W.
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Walker:

With responsibility for protecting thousands of federal facilities, the Federal Protective Service (FPS), which transferred from the General Services Administration (GSA) to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2003, plays a critical role in the federal government's defense against the threat of terrorism and other criminal activity. FPS has 1,500 full time employees (including special agents, police officers, inspectors, and support personnel) and manages about 15,000 contract security guards.

In July 2004, GAO reported that FPS faced a number of significant challenges since its transfer to DHS. These issues related to its expanding homeland security mission, how security fees would be paid by agencies, and problems with mission-support functions that were formerly performed by GSA. To address these challenges, GAO made a number of recommendations, which DHS agreed to implement. The Committee however, continues to believe that FPS still faces significant challenges and, in some cases, the problems appear to have worsened since the 2004 GAO review. For example, we are concerned about FPS's continued funding shortfalls. Additionally, there is a concern about FPS's ability to accomplish its mission and whether FPS's placement within Immigration and Customs Enforcement is the appropriate location within DHS to house FPS.

In light of these concerns, the Committee requests a comprehensive GAO review of FPS. In addition to assessing FPS's progress in implementing GAO's past recommendations, this review should examine the following issues:

- 1) FPS funding and whether the current approach, which involves a mix of agency payments for basic security and reimbursements to FPS for other security services, should be increased or changed given FPS's funding shortfall;
- 2) FPS's mission, including how it may have changed since FPS joined ICE, and whether FPS is well-equipped to achieve any expanded mission;

- 3) The organizational placement of FPS within ICE, and whether the agency might be better suited elsewhere in DHS; and,
- 4) FPS mission-support issues and challenges, including FPS's ability to manage a large contract guard force and whether it has successfully taken on mission-support functions formerly handled by GSA.

The Committee looks forward to working with GAO on these important issues. Please have your staff contact Jason at Yanussi with Senator Lieberman's office at (202) 224-2627, Amanda Wood with Senator Collins' office at (202) 224-4751, Jennifer Tyree with Senator Akaka's office at (202) 224-3443 and Theresa Prych with Senator Voinovich's office at (202) 224-3682 to discuss this request.



Joseph I. Lieberman
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs



Daniel K. Akaka
Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight of Government
Management, the Federal Workforce and
the District of Columbia



George V. Voinovich
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Oversight of Government
Management, the Federal Workforce and
the District of Columbia