

## **Study of Homeland Security Efforts and Funding in Virginia**

(Approved December 13, 2004)

Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the federal government has initiated a concerted effort to help states and localities improve the safety and security of citizens. Federal homeland security grants are the primary method of assistance to states and localities. Virginia has received more than \$400 million in federal funding since 9/11. In order to direct homeland security efforts and funding in the Commonwealth, the Governor issued the Secure Virginia Initiative (Executive Order #7, 2002) and created the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness. The Office serves as the point of contact with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and is charged with coordinating policy development and information exchange between federal, State, and local branches of government. The Office is also charged with reviewing and developing all disaster, emergency management, and terrorism management plans for the State.

Given the amount of money received by Virginia and localities in the State for homeland security efforts, and the recent creation of the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness, a review should determine the extent and sufficiency of homeland security funding, as well as the adequacy of the coordination and direction of federal grants going to State and local agencies. The proposed study would address the following questions:

- How much money has the State received in homeland security grants? How much money have localities in Virginia received?
- Which State and local agencies are receiving homeland security grants?
- Are homeland security grants awarded to State and local agencies in accordance with their critical needs?
- What obstacles do State and local agencies confront when attempting to obtain homeland security grants?
- Does the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness have adequate resources to effectively direct the coordination of homeland security efforts?
- Does the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness have sufficient authority to direct the coordination of homeland security efforts?
- What oversight mechanisms are in place to ensure that homeland security funds are being used for their intended purposes?
- Are the security improvements anticipated by the grants implemented in a timely and effective manner?