

**Regina Chapline
Texas Citizen Corps Manager
Texas Association of Regional Councils**

**United States House of Representatives
House Committee on Homeland Security
Subcommittee on Emergency Communications, Preparedness, and
Response**

“Citizen Preparedness: Helping Our Communities Help Themselves”

**June 13, 2007
11:00 a.m.**

DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENT
Required by House Rule XI, clause 2 (g)

1. Name:

Regina Chapline

2. Business Address:

Texas Association of Regional Councils
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3. Organization you are representing:

Texas Association of Regional Councils
Texas Citizen Corps Program

4. Any federal grants or contracts (including sub grants or subcontracts) which you have received since October 1, 2005, from Federal Agencies under the purview of the hearing, the source and the amount of each grant or contract:

NONE

5. Any federal grants or contracts (including sub grants or subcontracts) which you have received since October 1, 2005, from Federal Agencies under the purview of the hearing by the organization(s) which you represent at this hearing, including the source and amount of each grant or contract.

Date: October 14, 2005
Agency: Texas Association of Regional Councils
Amount: \$485,444.86
Federal Source: Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP)
Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
CFDA 97.073 SHSP

Date: July 30, 2006
Agency: Texas Association of Regional Councils
Amount: \$485,445.00
Federal Source: Office of Grants and Training
U. S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)
CFDA 97.073 SHSP

DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENT

-CONTINUED-

Date: November 1, 2006
Agency: Texas Association of Regional Councils
Amount: \$65,003.00
Federal Source: Office of Grants and Training
U. S. Department of Homeland Security
CFDA 97.053 CCP

Date: September 30, 2006
Agency: Texas Association of Regional Councils
Amount: \$55,000.00
Federal Source: Office of Grants and Training
U. S. Department of Homeland Security
CFDA 97.053 CCP

Date: December 18, 2006
Agency: Texas Association of Regional Councils
Amount: \$20,000.00
Federal Source: Office of Grants and Training
U. S. Department of Homeland Security
CFDA 97.053 CCP

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

My name is Regina Chapline, and I am pleased to be here this morning to discuss the Citizen Corps Program.

My testimony will focus on (1) the accomplishments and impact of the Citizen Corps Program, and (2) future challenges in maintaining and improving the Citizen Corps Program.

The program was created in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and sought to engage Americans to help make our nation's communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to terrorism and natural disasters. This program drives local citizen participation in emergency and community preparedness, response, and volunteer service. Citizen Corps answers the essential question of every citizen: "How can I help?" by providing local opportunities for every citizen to prepare, train, and volunteer. By partnering with their community's emergency service providers, citizens participate in making themselves and their communities safer.

The programs under Citizen Corps are:

Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) provides education and training to citizens in basic disaster response skills;

Fire Corps promotes the use of citizen advocates to provide support to fire and rescue departments;

Medical Reserve Corps, helps medical, public health and other medical volunteers offer their expertise;

Neighborhood/USA On Watch incorporates terrorism awareness education into its existing crime prevention mission;

Volunteers In Police Service works to enhance the capacity of state and local law enforcement by utilizing volunteers.

The successes of the Citizen Corps Program are many. In response to Hurricanes Frances and Ivan in 2004, the national Citizen Corps Office worked with the Federal Emergency Management Agency for the first ever nationwide deployment of Citizen Corps volunteers. More than 2,600 Citizen Corps volunteers responded and worked across the eastern sea board

to provide victim relief, damage assessments, and many other services. Citizen Corps has traditionally been a grassroots, local movement. This nationwide activation of Citizen Corps members expanded the mission of Citizen Corps from a locally-based program to a national resource. By tapping Citizen Corps Members who have received first aid or disaster response training and who volunteer in their communities, the state and federal response systems gain an additional response resource for large scale disasters.

The largest utilization of Texas Citizen Corps volunteers was in 2005, in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Over 250 shelters were in operation during that time all across Texas, and over 6,500 Citizen Corps volunteers worked in those shelters. Many worked in the Astrodome in Houston, under the leadership of then Harris County Judge Robert Eckels, and as a result, the Harris County Citizen Corps Volunteer Coordinator was named ABC News Person of the Week. 3,000 Citizen Corps Volunteers processed the 60,000 spontaneous volunteers who came to the Astrodome to help. Citizen Corps Volunteers coordinated volunteer assignments and managed volunteer shifts until the Astrodome closed.

In rural communities across the nation, Citizen Corps Volunteers have been used in different capacities. During the 2006 wildfires that burned hundreds of thousands of acres across the United States, Citizen Corps volunteers worked with the Forest Service and many other first responder agencies to notify citizens of imminent evacuations, while other volunteers provided rehabilitation to firefighters who had been fighting fires for hours, worked in temporary shelters and provided information to the public regarding road closures. Citizen Corps volunteers have assisted in searches for missing people and flood victims, assessed damage caused by storms, and provided invaluable assistance to citizens and jurisdictions in numerous other ways. They continue to train and to prepare on an ongoing basis, and always work at the direction of local first responders.

In Texas, the Governor's Office of Homeland Security decided that the Governor's Planning Regions, (regional councils of government or COGs) would be utilized to quickly and effectively plan and administer all Homeland Security funds, including Citizen Corps. Today, the Governor's Division of Emergency Management, with the help of the 24 regional councils of government, administer all Homeland Security planning funds for local jurisdictions across our state on a regional basis.

Nationally, there are approximately 2,196 Citizen Corps Councils, 2,667 Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), 629 Fire Corps programs, 667 Medical Reserve Corps programs, 14,791 Neighborhood Watch programs, 1,556 Volunteers in Police Service programs and 25 Affiliate Programs.

Citizen Corps training and information is offered nationally in both English and Spanish. Local jurisdictions with high concentrations of other nationalities have developed preparedness materials and training in many different languages.

Local jurisdictions have also been able to effectively leverage the resources in their own communities through the various Citizen Corps programs. Many programs have been successful in working with Community Services for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired population, and are planning training exclusively for deaf and hearing impaired later this fall. They also have trained people from the low socio economic areas.

To calculate the return on investment for this program, think of this: The value of one volunteer hour in Texas is \$18.20. Assuming that each of the 6,500 Citizen Corps Volunteers worked two eight-hour shifts in a shelter, it would total \$1,892,800. This is more than the federal Citizen Corps Allocation to Texas for an entire year.

In 2005, the Office of the Governor released our state's Homeland Security Strategic Plan. The goals of this plan are aligned with the National Response Plan, as developed by the Department of Homeland Security, but have been tailored for Texas. The state is prepared to utilize all resources, including Citizen Corps volunteers, in fighting terrorism by securing our borders. The utilization of Citizen Corps volunteers is outlined in the following Objectives and Priority Actions listed in the Texas Statewide Strategic Plan:

- Strategic Objective 1.3: Prevent terrorists from exploiting the Texas Mexico Border;
- Priority Action 1.3.4: Work with local law enforcement leaders along the Texas-Mexico Border to expand the Neighborhood Watch, Reserve Deputy, Reserve Police Officer, and Citizen Academy programs along the border;

- Strategic Objective 3.8: Increase citizen participation in statewide preparedness efforts;
- Priority Action 3.8.1: Expand the Texas Citizen Corps by establishing and sustaining Citizen Corps Councils in each of the Governor's 24 Council of Government Regions;
- Priority Action 3.8.2: Develop and execute a state-level media and communications campaign to increase participation in the Texas Citizen Corps;
- Priority Action 3.8.3: Conduct regional train-the-trainer classes to expand the capabilities of Citizen Corps and Community Emergency Response Teams.

The Citizen Corps Program is particularly concerned about school safety, in the wake of recent tragic incidents, and as a result, the TEEN CERT Curriculum, which was recently developed and nationally approved. The curriculum is being considered for use in cooperation with our secondary schools and universities.

In order to ensure that these goals and objectives are achieved, we must turn to Congress for continued support of these programs through proper funding appropriations.

This concludes my testimony. I appreciate your time and attention. I will be happy to respond to any questions you may have.

ATTACHMENT A

