

May 15, 2002

The Honorable Tom Ridge
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20393

Dear Secretary Ridge:

I am deeply troubled by recent news reports that the Department of Homeland Security wasted scarce resources to search for a Texas state legislator. According to the Fort Worth *Star Telegram*, the Air and Marine Interdiction Coordination Center (AMICC), which is part of the Department's Bureau of Customs and Immigration Enforcement, assisted Texas law enforcement officers in trying to locate the private plane belonging to Rep. Pete Laney, former Democratic Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives. Such action, if it occurred, raises serious questions about the allocation of resources at a time when local first responders are being laid off because of scarce resources.

In light of these reports, I urge you to conduct a full investigation into this matter and ask that you provide me with the following information:

- 1) What action was requested of the AMICC, and by whom;
- 2) What action, if any, was actually taken by the AMICC;
- 3) If any action was taken, please explain how these actions fall within the missions of the Homeland Security Department, and;
- 4) What steps will be taken to ensure that something like this does not happen again.

If you or your staff have any questions concerning this letter, please contact Jason Yanussi on my Governmental Affairs Committee staff at (202) 224-2627.

Sincerely,

Joseph I. Lieberman
Ranking Minority Member