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JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE



# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-3214

February 6, 2003

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The Honorable Joe Allbaugh  
Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20472

Dear Director Allbaugh,

I am writing to you because of my concern about the continued delay in funding to the New York City Department of Education for providing mental health services for students following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. While I was pleased that FEMA provided \$80 million to the City for lost instructional time, I was told by FEMA official Brad Gair on October 29, 2002, that the additional \$33 million for mental health services would be forthcoming within days.

As you know, I believe providing the City with funding for expenses related to the terrorist attacks is extremely important. This tragic event clearly impacted the lives of New York City's schoolchildren. A report, paid for by FEMA, issued early in 2002 based on research conducted by the Columbia University School of Public Health and the Applied Research & Consulting LLC concluded that many students reported experiencing trauma-related disorders including separation anxiety and a fear of open spaces. Counseling is vital to ensuring that these schoolchildren are able to regain some normalcy in their lives.

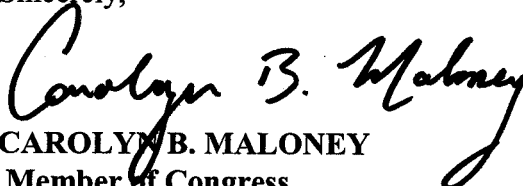
In a letter dated June 7, 2002, Acting FEMA Assistant Director Laurence Zensinger stated that FEMA had "participated in the creation of the Project Liberty Grant and the funding of crisis counseling services" and that the agency was "firmly committed to addressing the counseling needs to those affected by the attack in New York..." While I was pleased that FEMA appeared to be making this issue a priority in June 2002, I am disappointed that the level of commitment seems to have declined since then. I cannot understand why over 8 months since the original commitment was made and over four months after being informed that the funds would be forthcoming in a matter of days, why this has not been resolved and the funding actually provided?

More than fifteen months have passed since the terrorist attacks, and thousands of schoolchildren continue to experience psychological effects. I believe that it is imperative that

these students receive counseling as soon as possible. Therefore, I ask that you expedite the release of this critical funding to the New York City Department of Education.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

  
CAROLYN B. MALONEY  
Member of Congress

cc:

The Honorable George Pataki  
The Honorable Michael Bloomberg  
Mr. Brad Gair