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### **King statement on the Department of Homeland Security's 6-year Anniversary**

**Washington, DC (Wednesday, March 4, 2009)**—U.S. Rep. Peter T. King (R-NY), Ranking Member of the Committee on Homeland Security, released the following statement today commemorating the six-year anniversary of the Department of Homeland Security:

“It has been seven and a half years since the devastating terrorist attacks upon our country that took the lives of nearly 3,000 innocent Americans. On that clear September day, we watched the attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and the scorched field in Pennsylvania and knew that our world had changed forever. As a Nation, we were overwhelmed with grief over the loss of friends, neighbors, family members and even strangers we had never met.

“In the weeks and months after 9/11, we worked to understand how we could have left ourselves vulnerable to such an attack, and we vowed that such a tragedy would never happen again. And so the Department of Homeland Security was established to be the central government agency charged with securing our country. DHS brought together agencies responsible for preventing and deterring terrorist attacks with those tasked with response and recovery.

“Standing up the Department has not been easy; significant progress has been made. It is no coincidence that since 9/11, we have not had a single successful terrorist attack against our Nation—for this, the hardworking men and women of the Department deserve our gratitude and continued support.

“Over the last few years, Congress has been actively working with the Department to better secure our Nation. From boosting funding for first responders nationwide, developing and hardening the ring around Manhattan that would detect a nuclear threat, ramping up security on our Nation's northern and southern borders with infrastructure and more Border Patrol Agents, to sharing technology and intelligence with our allies abroad and our state and local partners, significant progress has been made. But even more must be done.

“We in Congress must partner with the Administration to reduce the number of committees that claim oversight over the Department of Homeland Security. Over 100 different committees and subcommittees giving the Department conflicting guidance can only lead to

weakened security programs. The Committee on Homeland Security must be made the primary committee of oversight, as the 9/11 Commission recommended in 2004.

“The Federal Emergency Management Agency is a critical part of the success of the Department, and should not be removed and made a stand-alone agency. In its many roles, DHS is involved in the response and recovery following a natural or man-made disaster. FEMA plays an important role in this all-threats mission, as do the other agencies within the Department. Having all the different DHS components operate as one was designed to break down the pre-9/11 turf wars and stove pipes that put our Nation at risk seven years ago. By having FEMA prepare for all threats, both it and DHS as a whole are stronger.

“On the issue of terrorists and their access to this country, we must be sure that as the Visa Waiver Program moves forward, the threat to the United States does not grow as the list of eligible countries expands. And we must do everything we can to ensure the violence in Mexico does not spill over the southwest border into the United States. We cannot allow these dangerous drug-traffickers to gain a foothold in our country and cause destruction similar to what we have seen in Mexico.

“I thank the more than 200,000 employees at DHS for all their hard work—there is no more important job in this country, and too often they go unrecognized. I look forward to working with the Department, Secretary Napolitano and my colleagues in Congress to make the Department stronger, and our country more secure.”