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Letter to Senator Scott Brown: May 7, 2011

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May 7, 2011

The Honorable Scott Brown
United States Senate
317 Russell Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Brown:

I am writing to urge you to protect funding for the Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate. This funding directly supports the Office of University Programs and its DHS Centers of Excellence program. Northeastern University leads a DHS Center of Excellence that was funded in 2008 in partnership with other institutions in Massachusetts. The recently passed continuing resolution would eliminate support for this critical research. I ask that you contact DHS to oppose these cuts and any similar cuts in subsequent appropriations.

Eliminating the Centers would jeopardize the ability of DHS to safeguard the United States against terrorist attacks and other disasters. The 12 Centers funded by this legislation create greater capacity to safeguard our nation's ports, coasts, borders, and transportation infrastructure as well as protect against terrorist and cyber attacks.

For example, Northeastern's Center (ALERT) covers four fundamental areas of research: explosives characterization, explosive detection sensors, explosive detection sensor systems, and blast mitigation. Our goal is to take this research and partner with members of industry and national laboratories to ultimately help build practical systems to detect and prevent terrorist attacks. Finally, the economic impact of these cuts is significant in our state and region. Our partners in this endeavor include Raytheon NCS (Marlborough), American Science & Engineering (Billerica), and Reveal Imaging (Bedford) to name a few.

I understand the nation faces difficult budgetary constraints, but cutting the Department of Homeland Security and the Centers of Excellence program could jeopardize the nation's security infrastructure at a time we can ill afford such a move. The ALERT Center of Excellence at Northeastern is doing extremely important work that will help protect our soldiers and our citizens. Please do all you can to ensure this important work continues.

Sincerely,

Joseph E. Aoun
President