

**Statement of Elizabeth M. Harman
Nominee for Assistant Administrator of the
Federal Emergency Management Agency before the
U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs
December 10, 2009**

Good morning Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Collins, and Members of the Committee.

I understand that Senator Mikulski could not be here this morning due to a scheduling conflict, but I would like to thank her for her written statement of support, and for her years of strong support for emergency responders throughout Maryland and across the country.

I am privileged to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be Assistant Administrator of the Grant Programs Directorate for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. I would like to thank my family who is here with me today; particularly my husband who has always been supportive and my two sons who keep me focused and driven. Throughout my life, I have been surrounded by a hard-working family of public servants who have always strived to do what is right in serving their country. My father served in the Navy and retired after 30 years of service with the Environmental Protection Agency; my brother Richard served in the Army; my brother Christopher served in the Navy and has been a local law enforcement officer for more than 20 years in Prince George's County, Maryland; and my brother Matthew served in the U.S. Secret Service.

The position of Assistant Administrator for Grant Programs is a position of great responsibility as one of its primary missions is to ensure that through federal funding, our nation is better prepared to respond to and mitigate all-hazard events. The Post Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act centralized all Department of Homeland Security grants at FEMA, providing a more integrated and coordinated system of grant management. The challenge of the Assistant Administrator position is to ensure that FEMA's grant programs are administered responsibly and economically—maximizing each dollar spent to improve our nation's capabilities and provide a strong return on investment.

As a former volunteer and professional fire fighter and as a former paramedic, I have seen firsthand where these dollars are being spent, where they should be spent, and how important federal funding is to building capability as well as ensuring the health and safety of first responders everywhere. I understand the importance of including frontline responders of all disciplines in the design and planning phase of grant programs. Additionally, I understand the importance of keeping these key stakeholders informed throughout the decision making process.

Over the years, I not only have had the opportunity to serve as a first responder on the front lines in both the volunteer and career capacity, but I have also been fortunate to serve in other emergency response managerial, teaching, policy, and leadership positions. I

believe this experience has prepared me well to serve, if confirmed, as the Assistant Administrator of the Grant Programs Directorate.

As a young volunteer fire fighter in Prince George's County, Maryland; as a career fire fighter with the City of Fairfax Fire and Rescue Department; and as a member of IAFF local 2702, I have firsthand knowledge of the planning, training, and equipment needed to perform the duties of a first responder. The City of Fairfax Fire Department is a combined career/volunteer organization that provides fire suppression and emergency medical services (EMS) to over 22,000 residents. The department responds to over 11,000 incidents, an average of over 30 responses per day from only two fire stations. It is a privilege to have been affiliated with them.

In my tenure on the faculty of the University of Maryland, Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute (MFRI), I provided vital training to first responders from across the country to better prepare them for all-hazards events.

During my service at the Maryland Emergency Management Agency as State Administrator for Exercise and Training for the National Capital Region, I worked with various local, state, federal and private sector partners to evaluate the effectiveness of response to both small and large scale disasters; I helped coordinate disaster declarations under the Stafford Act; I counseled counties on the assistance that was available to them; I helped coordinate EMAC requests to provide aid to affected areas; I led Maryland's NIMS rollout efforts; and, during the catastrophic events of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, I served as the State Liaison under the incident management system and coordinated efforts to receive evacuees from affected states.

Most recently, as the Director of the International Association of Fire Fighters Hazardous Materials and Weapons of Mass Destruction Training Department, I have been involved in all aspects of the federal grant process—from the interpretation of guidance and preparation of submission packages to financial and programmatic direction and oversight—including oversight of IAFF's federal grants that support a full-time staff and more than 100 instructors, who train over 12,000 first responders each year. I have established a progressive evaluation program to measure the effectiveness and impact of these training programs—a program which has become the evaluation model by several supporting federal agencies.

If confirmed, I will work diligently to measure the current level of preparedness to ensure federal dollars have been accounted for and are producing positive results, and I vow to prioritize outreach efforts to ensure grantees and potential grantees are using their dollars wisely and are building capability effectively. I also commit to cooperating fully with this Committee as it fulfills its important oversight function.

In closing, I am honored and humbled by this opportunity to serve, and, if confirmed, I pledge to work with Secretary Napolitano, Administrator Fugate, the FEMA leadership team, this Committee and Congress to ensure that the FEMA Grant Programs Directorate efficiently and effectively executes the Department of Homeland Security's grant programs

and properly supports the reforms contained in the Post-Katrina Emergency Reform Act and the Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Senator Collins for the opportunity to appear before you, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.