October 9, 2009

President Barack Obama
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear President Obama and members of the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation:

I am pleased to write you on behalf of Congressman Barney Frank's proposal to reduce defense spending by 25 percent and reinvest in our nation's cities and economy. As you will note from similar letters of support from Boston, many of us share the belief that it is critically important for the federal government to increase substantially the funds for Boston as well as for cities and towns across this country.

Elected officials and political activists have watched the continuous decline in federal resources in Boston from 2001 when President Clinton left office to 2009 when you took office. During that same period we have watched the Defense budget consume a larger and larger share of our tax dollars as it rose from $297 billion when Clinton left office to almost $700 billion (not including the war expense) when you took office. Yes, we have important defense priorities, particularly protecting our troops abroad, but this huge jump in defense spending has contributed to significantly raising the federal deficit and lowering our economic security.

Boston needs a renewed federal-local partnership to rebuild our schools, our public housing and our transportation systems, while reinvesting in our human capital. We need more job training programs, especially for our at-risk youth. We also need to stabilize local finances as despite our best efforts to manage over $90 million in state aid cuts, in many departments city employees had to forgo wage increases in order to avoid layoffs.

We in Boston believe that you will provide the leadership necessary to assure that we can gain the resources that our people need. While one-time stimulus packages can be somewhat helpful, you know as we know that we have to have funding streams that can be dedicated year after year. It took years and decades for us to find ourselves in the present financial abyss. Therefore we need a financial strategy that will work over the long term, not the short term. It's time to find the savings in military spending, both inside and outside the Defense Department. This includes obsolete weapons systems, waste, and most of the over 700 non-war-related overseas military bases.

Thank you for your time and interest. We know that you will do the right thing for Boston and for our nation.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Menino
Mayor, City of Boston