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April 2, 2014

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Pete Visclosky
Ranking Member
Defense Appropriations Subcommittee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghusyen and Ranking Member Lowey:

As you begin your work on the Fiscal Year 2015 Defense Appropriations bill, we respectfully request your strong support for the Combating Terrorism Technology Support applied research program (PE # 0603122D8Z). The President's budget request proposes to reduce appropriations for this important initiative by over $30 million. Such actions would cause critical technological advances in biometrics research to be lost and leave our military personnel without valuable battlefield tools.

As you know, the aim of the Combating Terrorism Technology Support program is to close gaps in our military's forensic biometrics capabilities. Advancing biometrics technology presents a valuable opportunity to transform our ability to be able to respond to threats against our military and foreign intelligence capabilities abroad. But to achieve this goal there is an urgent need to continue research in three core areas: long-range face and iris recognition; low resolution, off-angle and partially-occluded facial recognition; and the ability for real-time database matching capability.
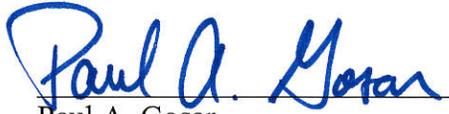
Through research at U.S. universities, we have already seen great potential and demonstrated progress in these areas. Researchers have been successful in capturing and enrolling iris images from a distance of ten meters, enhancing low-resolution images to produce a match out of a law enforcement database of one million images, producing three-dimensional facial models from a single two-dimensional image to match off-angle face poses to a frontal database image, and perhaps most critically, demonstrating the power of combining graphics processing unit (GPU) computing with advanced algorithms to enable rapid and real-time processing of large image databases – a capability that does not exist in the field currently.

The Combating Terrorism Technology Support program is critically important to ensuring the safety of our men and women in uniform. Many of the technologies developed are now indispensable items for accomplishing their missions. For that reason, we believe that continued resources for the program are certainly warranted, and we respectfully urge your support.
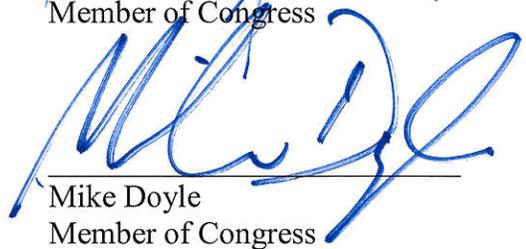
Sincerely,

Michael G. Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

Keith Rothfus
Member of Congress

Paul A. Gosar
Member of Congress

Mike Doyle
Member of Congress