

WASHINGTON – U.S. Rep. Spencer Bachus (R-AL) announced today that police in Homewood, Hueytown, Bessemer and Vestavia Hills are receiving federal funds to purchase bulletproof vests.

"These police officers are out there putting their lives on the line each and every day to make our communities safer. We must make sure they have every possible advantage as they fight crime and protect our families, our homes, our schools and our businesses," said Bachus.

Bachus said Bessemer will receive \$8,440, Homewood \$6,487, Hueytown \$1,977, and Vestavia Hills \$1,000 in federal funds.

The funds are made available through the Bulletproof Vest Partnership program created by Congress in 1998. The program assists state and local police departments to equip law enforcement officers with bulletproof vests.

Bachus commented: "Over the past decade, bulletproof vests have saved the lives of more than 2,000 police officers. The FBI estimates that the risk of a gun-related death is 14 times higher for an officer who does not wear a bulletproof vest than for one who does. The evidence is clear that a bulletproof vest is one of the most important pieces of equipment any law enforcement officer can have.

"Unfortunately, many police departments do not have the resources to purchase these vests on their own. In fact, figures from the Department of Justice show that 25 percent of our state and local police officers do not have access to bulletproof vests," Bachus said.

"While there has been some debate in this country about the reasons for the drop in the crime rate over the past few years, one thing is absolutely clear -- a huge factor in the declining crime rate has been the hard work of our local police officers. They deserve our gratitude and our help, and I'm very pleased these federal grants will help them do their jobs," Bachus said.