Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Homeland Security

November 30, 2004

Dear Mr. President,

Since September 11, 2001, you have led both our national and international effort to bring Bin Laden and Al Qaeda to justice and to eliminate the global threat of terrorism. As part of that effort, you have given me the opportunity to serve as the first Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and then the first Secretary of the new Department of Homeland Security.

United by a powerful sense of purpose and mission, my fellow employees have sought more and better ways to integrate people and technology to make our country more secure. As we have merged the many legacy units within the Department, we have made significant progress in strengthening the security of our nation. Working with Governors, Mayors, police and fire chiefs, the private sector, academic community, and all Americans, we have built relationships that will permanently sustain the national effort to protect our country.

We have been guided by your direction to keep America's doors open and her borders secure. Critical bilateral and multilateral relationships, coupled with significant new programs, have enhanced security and facilitated commerce.

There will always be more to do, but today, America is significantly stronger and safer than ever before. I am grateful for the opportunity to have served our country and to have worked daily with the exceptionally talented and dedicated public servants in your Administration and the Department.

It is with both gratitude and regret that I submit my letter of resignation. I have been honored to serve you and humbled by the trust you have placed in me. After more than twenty-two consecutive years of public service, it is time to give personal and family matters a higher priority. With your concurrence, it is my desire to continue to serve as Secretary until February 1, 2005, or until the Senate confirms my successor.

One of the few consolations for the families affected by the tragedy of Flight 93 is the fact that the passengers and crew, knowing their fate, fought back to avoid an even greater tragedy. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to fight back. It has been an extraordinary privilege to work with my fellow employees and to partner with so many dedicated patriots around the country to preserve our freedoms, to protect America, and to secure the homeland.

With gratitude and friendship,

Tom Ridge

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