

For Immediate Release
by Congressman Virgil H. Goode, Jr.

In response to several media inquiries, Congressman Virgil Goode releases the following statement:

In this age of globalization and terrorism, I have been and am concerned about the roll of foreign entities in supplying goods and products to the Department of Defense. While I prefer a policy of only purchasing American-made products and services, the reality is that a number of defense-related products are being purchased from foreign sources. I am concerned about the dangers such purchases present. The recent controversy surrounding a UAE company taking over several of our nation's ports is another example of why we must closely investigate foreign involvement in defense and security matters. In 2003, I supported the creation of a Foreign Supplier Assessment Center (FSAC) within the Department of Defense. The Center, now located in Martinsville, Virginia studies foreign suppliers of products and goods that are used for systems, military equipment, and other DOD requirements.

My appropriation request was for the Foreign Supplier Assessment Center program in the Department of Defense and not for any specific company. The decision of who would run the Center was made by the Department of Defense through its procedures. After the FSAC was included in the Defense Appropriation legislation, the Pentagon selected MZM to run the facility. I believed then and believe today that a Foreign Supplier Assessment Center is important to our national security, and I am pleased that this important work is being done in the Fifth District of Virginia.

Economically, Martinsville and Henry County has been one of the hardest hit areas in Virginia with unemployment levels at times exceeding ten percent. Athena Solutions, the company that now runs the FSAC, employs approximately 30 to 40 persons in Martinsville at an average wage nearly twice that of the median salary for the area, and employment is expected to increase this year.

When several media outlets reported that MZM employees had been coerced into making campaign donations, the Goode for Congress campaign wrote to all MZM or MZM related personnel offering to return their contributions if they were not freely and voluntarily given. When the news revealed that the former MZM executive was involved in the Cunningham scandal, the donations from the MZM PAC and persons who worked at or related to MZM were contributed to nonprofits and charities throughout the Fifth District, such as volunteer rescue squads, volunteer fire departments, and SPCA-type entities.

As I indicated previously and as indicated by federal investigators, neither I nor Representative Harris had any knowledge that some of the contributions from MZM personnel were illegal.

At no time have I or, to my knowledge, any member of my staff been contacted by federal authorities investigating MZM. With regard to the MZM donations, I do not know which were legal or which were illegally made. The court papers did not identify them.

Some MZM donations were made at events, some were mailed, and some were handed to me or others for me.

I do not have an attorney. Since I have not done anything wrong, I see no reason to get one.

I have submitted hundreds of appropriations requests since I have been on the Appropriations Committee. I have submitted requests that I feel benefit the Fifth District. A factor in my consideration of requests is the impact the request will have on employment and the economy of the area. I also consider any national benefit in addition to the positive impacts on the Fifth District of Virginia. I believe that my requests for the Foreign Supplier Assessment Center have benefited Martinsville and Henry County and will benefit the area in the future. I also believe that the FSA C is very important to our country and our National Defense.

I have had numerous successful appropriations amendments that have benefited jurisdictions throughout the Fifth District. I will be discussing these in greater detail during the campaign. I also look forward to discussing issues surrounding the financing of campaigns.