



Chairman Hal Rogers

House Committee on Appropriations

Full Committee Markup – FY 2016 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill

July 14, 2015

Opening Statement As Prepared

Safeguarding our homeland, strengthening our borders, enforcing our immigration laws, and protecting our people from terrorism and natural disasters – these are the core missions of this legislation.

Now – as we face growing threats from groups like ISIL, domestic terrorists, and other perils yet unknown – we must remain vigilant. An active and well-equipped frontline, a secure border, and strong intelligence and cybersecurity operations are paramount to keeping our nation safe, so funding is targeted to these areas.

This includes increased funding for the Coast Guard, to modernize its fleet so that they can continue providing critical surveillance and fighting the illegal drug trade. The bill also maintains the largest staffing totals in history for Border Patrol agents and CBP officers. And the bill increases funding for programs that bolster critical cyber infrastructure and help prevent cyber-attacks by foreign and domestic hackers, like the one we are currently dealing with at OPM, which is a disgrace – putting some 21 million federal workers at financial and personal risk.

Efforts to protect this nation have to begin at home – with strong enforcement of our laws. For instance, the bill provides funding to increase the number of Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents and support personnel to enforce our immigration laws.

This bill also makes absolutely certain that DHS is following and enforcing our current immigration laws – as they are on the books. The bill contains no funding to implement the President’s unconstitutional executive action on immigration and prohibits any funding from being used to carry out these actions as we await final word from the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Lastly, preparedness for disasters of a national scale is a priority in this bill. In the unfortunate case of a large-scale disaster, the bill makes sure we are ready to respond and rebuild by fully funding FEMA’s stated requirement for disaster relief. The bill also ensures that important first responder grants are maintained so that our boots on the ground are efficient and quick to address any and all needs following a disaster event.

As important as the protection of this great nation is, we cannot allow the Department of Homeland Security to have carte blanche – particularly in this more austere budgetary environment. As Chairman Carter enumerated, DHS has to clean up its act when it comes to its budgeting and hiring practices. The bill includes numerous provisions to help set the Department on a better course for the future, and strengthens the oversight that will allow us to keep tabs on the Department’s progress to this end.

The subcommittee also trimmed back programs that are lower-priority or that have excess funding to achieve the \$337 million in reductions below current levels.

Again, I want to commend Chairman Carter, Ranking Member Roybal-Allard, and the subcommittee for their good work on this bill. Though you are last, you are certainly not least, and your bill is representative of the fine work this Committee can do.

Thank you to the staff for helping bring this bill before the Committee today, allowing us to fulfill our duty of shepherding all 12 Appropriations bills through this Committee.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill – our last bill of the fiscal year – promptly to the House.

Thank you.

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