



Chairman John Carter

*Subcommittee on Homeland Security
House Committee on Appropriations*

**Full Committee Markup – FY 2016 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill
July 14, 2015
Opening Statement As Prepared**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to begin this morning by thanking my good friend and the subcommittee's ranking member, Ms. Roybal-Allard, for her partnership and work on this bill. It's been a joy to work with her.

Likewise, Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey have provided leadership and encouragement, for which I'm grateful. And finally, I want each subcommittee member to know I value and am thankful for their suggestions and support, which have greatly improved this bill.

Mr. Chairman: It is my honor to present to the Committee the fiscal year 2016 appropriations bill for the Department of Homeland Security. This legislation strengthens the security of our homeland, addresses areas where management reform is needed, and cuts inefficiencies within the agencies.

Like every subcommittee, we received a challenging 302(b) allocation. After a thorough scrubbing of the numbers, however, this recommendation ensures both national security and fiscal restraint. I'd like to highlight a few examples of what the bill includes.

More than \$360 million is added to the request for the Coast Guard to improve readiness, recapitalize equipment and modernize the fleet. First responder grants are restored to FY15 levels of \$2.5 billion. The Disaster Relief Fund is fully funded for projected major disasters and known requirements at \$7.4 billion.

Funds are provided for frontline operators and critical surveillance tools to increase situational awareness and improve border security. The Secret Service is funded at levels sufficient to hire more agents and officers, address training gaps, and improve perimeter security at the White House. Cybersecurity programs are fully funded.

The mark fully funds 34,040 detention beds for individuals and families who enter the United States illegally. Finally, the E-Verify system – which enables businesses to check whether their employees are eligible to work in the United States – is fully funded.

We've achieved these funding levels by making thoughtful and appropriate cuts, which I'd like to explain.

Over the last few years, many agencies at DHS have failed to achieve their respective hiring targets, not only causing serious national security and public safety concerns, but also having

major budgetary implications. In essence, it means funding appropriated for personnel has been misspent and, Congress has been denied the level of oversight the taxpayer demands.

As a consequence, the bill before you takes \$505 million of excess funding, and applies it to programs that protect our homeland.

Let me be clear – our frontline law enforcement staffing, including 21,370 Border Patrol agents and 23,775 CBP Officers – is fully funded.

Another area where fiscal discipline is exercised is the oversight of FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund (DRF). It has become common practice for FEMA to carry over billions of dollars in DRF from year-to-year, which is completely unnecessary.

Therefore, the recommendation provides full funding for FEMA's FY16 DRF requirements as requested, but rescinds \$1.26 billion in prior year unobligated balances. Even with this rescission, FEMA expects to end the year with a DRF balance of \$1.3 billion, an amount more than sufficient for any emergencies.

Like me, I know many of you are gravely concerned about the recent, tragic consequences of a local law enforcement agency that failed to honor a federal ICE detainer. When dangerous criminal aliens who are deportable are released into our communities, the safety of everyday Americans is threatened, including those of immigration enforcement officers who have to track down and apprehend the criminal alien.

To mitigate the problem, the Manager's Amendment increases funds for ICE's Criminal Alien and Fugitive Operations programs to increase the number of enforcement officers that focus on reducing the backlog of fugitives and on executing detainees in a timely manner. Report language is included directing ICE to implement an in-depth outreach program to communities that qualify as sanctuary cities, and urge their participation and cooperation in the Department's Priority Enforcement Program. We cannot allow this type of contempt for federal laws to continue.

Finally, this bill provides no discretionary or mandatory funds to implement the President's executive actions on immigration. It goes one step further by including a provision that makes sure DHS does not take any steps to implement these actions that are under a court imposed injunction.

Again, I want to thank Mrs. Roybal-Allard, and her excellent staff, for their notable contributions.

Distinguished colleagues, threats to our country happen on a daily basis. DHS's missions are more critical than ever...and it is why I ask that you to vote in favor of passing this bill. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

#####