

Chairman Hal Rogers
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Hearing on FY15 DHS Budget Request
Secretary Jeh Johnson
March 11, 2014
Opening Statement as Prepared

Thank you, Chairman Carter. Secretary Johnson, we welcome you for your first visit before the Appropriations Committee. Thank you for being with us today to discuss the Department of Homeland Security's budget request for Fiscal Year 2015.

In the past several years, Ranking Member Lowey and I – along with our counterparts across the Capitol Dome -- have worked hand-in-hand to restore regular order, thoughtful oversight and austerity to this Committee. The omnibus bill for Fiscal Year 2014 is truly emblematic of this commitment, making responsible choices to right-size our federal government and target precious tax dollars where they are needed the most. That bill was a true product of compromise, reflecting our shared desire to roll up our sleeves, cast partisanship to the wayside and do the critical work expected from this storied Committee.

All of us are committed to moving forward in a similar fashion in Fiscal Year 2015 with honest and fair negotiations. That it is why I am disappointed that we're here today to review a budget request that, as Chairman Carter pointed out, is overtly partisan and political at its core. The protection of our homeland is a responsibility of paramount importance, and I fear this budget request undermines that duty with the same budget gimmicks, unauthorized legislative proposals and cuts to frontline security operations that we've sadly come to expect under this Administration. Mr. Secretary, we've got to do better:

Once again, the Department has proposed to significantly reduce Coast Guard and ICE funding that supports the men and women who bravely defend our homeland on the frontlines.

In particular, the budget would decrease custody operations by \$202 million and domestic investigations by \$27.7 million, in addition to reducing the mandated detention level by over 10% – another strong signal that this Administration is not interested in enforcing the immigration laws on the books in this country.

This budget cuts over 500 military and civilian personnel at the Coast Guard. When the Attorney General is describing the uptick in heroin abuse in our country an “urgent public health crisis,” I simply don't see the wisdom in reducing one of our first lines of defense against international drug trafficking.

Once again, the Department has budgeted with imaginary money, relying on \$1 billion in unauthorized increases to multiple CBP user fees and to TSA's aviation passenger fees to support critical security measures.

Once again, the Department has proposed a new FEMA grant program that has not been formally submitted to or vetted by the relevant authorizing Committees.

Once again, the Department has failed to submit a number of plans and reports which are essential to help this Committee do its work – and do its work well. These are not merely suggestions or requests; they are required by law.

I could go on, Mr. Secretary, but the bottom line is this: We have to do better. I hope your testimony today will allay my concerns as we work together in protecting our homeland. Thank you.

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