



Chairman John Carter

*Subcommittee on Homeland Security
House Committee on Appropriations*

**FY 2016 Budget Hearing
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
April 15, 2015
Opening Statement As Prepared**

Director Saldaña, welcome. We are glad to have you. Today's hearing is your first as Director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Director Saldaña comes to this position from the great state of Texas...where she served as the U.S. Attorney for the Northern District. Prior to that, she served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney, and prosecuted a variety of criminal cases, including human trafficking, public corruption, and bank and mortgage fraud.

Director...you have a challenging job. Enforcing immigration and customs laws, and investigating and dismantling transnational criminal organizations, isn't easy...but it is essential. We look forward to working with you, and all the men and women at ICE, and encourage you to keep us well informed of all operations.

All in all, the President's budget request for ICE is pretty good. Overall spending is at \$6.3 billion, which is \$16 million below fiscal year 2015. As required by law, the request includes \$2.4 billion for 34,040 detention beds, of which 31,280 are for adult detention and 2,760 are for families; \$122.5 million is for alternatives to detention to monitor an estimated 53,000 aliens; and funds sufficient to cover the costs of 6,200 criminal investigators and 5,800 deportation officers and immigration enforcement agents.

Though these recommendations are sound, I have a few concerns. First and foremost, the budget assumes funding for 100% staffing; yet, according to preliminary budget analysis, the number of on-board investigative staff is far lower than budgeted. Whether they can be hired before the end of the fiscal year is questionable. In fact, I wonder whether you can spend the funds appropriated in the fiscal year 2015 appropriations package.

Next, I am pleased that the request assumes funding for 34,040 detention beds—as mandated by law. I'm surprised, however, that the request for 2,760 family units is 972 units lower than last year. Last September, the Administration requested funds for 3,732 new family detention units, and Congress provided appropriations to that level. A reduction indicates a portion of the funds provided in fiscal year 2015 are no longer necessary. We'll have to get to the bottom of this.

Before I turn to Ms. Saldaña for her statement, the text of which will be included in the record, I'd like to recognize the distinguished Ranking Member for any remarks she wishes to make.

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