



# Chairman Hal Rogers

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## House Committee on Appropriations

**U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
FY 17 Budget Hearing – Secretary Johnson  
February 24, 2016**

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Thank you for yielding, Mr. Chairman. Secretary Johnson, thank you for being here today to discuss your Fiscal Year 2017 budget request for the Department of Homeland Security. Before wading into the merits of the request, I want to share my gratitude for the men and women under your charge who serve our great nation – many of whom put themselves in harm's way on a daily basis to keep our homeland safe.

Mr. Secretary, last year for the first time, I expressed optimism with the agency's budget request. Unfortunately, and much to my disappointment, your Fiscal Year 2017 budget request reverts back to the familiar submissions of old that used gimmicks and failed to prioritize funding for the national security of this country.

The request for the Department is \$40.5 billion, which is \$380 million below last year's enacted level. It would be great if you were able to magically find that much savings in your budget but sadly it's all just smoke and mirrors. As you know the President and Congress came to an agreement to set funding caps for Fiscal Year's 2016 and 2017. Unfortunately, it appears the President does not want to live up to the Bipartisan Budget Agreement that he signed only a few short months ago. That legislation was a product of compromise, and these caps, while unquestionably difficult to administer, are necessary to ensure that our nation is on sound financial footing today – and into the future. The risk to our homeland security posed by out-of-control debt is a threat we need to take seriously, and the budget gimmicks, unrealistic new fees and politically motivated cuts to detention beds in this proposal you're defending today – sends a signal to me that the Administration is not serious about tackling this issue. For instance, the agency uses an imaginary offset of \$909 million of new revenue generated by unauthorized TSA fees in order to fund other programs in your agency. Time and again, the Congress has rejected this approach - and it's unfortunate that you and the President have chosen to go this route yet again, particularly when the security of our homeland is at stake.

I am also disappointed by efforts to ratchet down border security and enforcement of our immigration laws. The budget proposes a reduction of 300 Border Patrol Agents, decreasing the statutory floor to 21,070, at a time when drug cartels from Mexico and elsewhere are flooding our communities – urban and rural alike – with heroin. Others in the Administration have rightfully labeled the abuse of opioids as a national epidemic, with roughly 100 Americans losing their battle to addiction every day – and yet you have proposed to reduce our first line of defense against the entry of these dangerous, deadly drugs without the benefit of any supporting analysis that Border Patrol's mission won't be compromised.

You have also requested a reduction in the statutory requirement of detention beds from 34,000 to 30,913 – a cut of \$137.8 million to the Custody Operation account – which is another move we have rejected in the past.

President Obama’s executive order on immigration still remains one of the most divisive issues in Congress and this country. The President’s unilateral action demonstrates he has no intention of working with Congress or respecting our Constitutional authority. Unfortunately, you and your agency are caught in the middle of this fight and it has made passing an annual appropriations bill for your agency incredible difficult. It also makes it impossible to move forward on any meaningful immigration reforms while the President remains in office.

I have been involved with funding for this department since it was authorized, and have seen it grow and mature over the years. I know we both take very seriously the role this agency plays in keeping Americans safe. I hope you will work with us moving forward so that we can craft an appropriations bill that properly supports our men and women on the frontlines as they protect our homeland.

I look forward to your testimony today, Mr. Secretary, and I yield back.

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