



Chairman John Carter

*Subcommittee on Homeland Security
House Committee on Appropriations*

**U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
FY 2017 Budget Request
March 17, 2016
Opening Statement As Prepared**

Director Saldaña, Welcome. You have about 18 months under your belt now as Director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and we look forward to hearing from you today.

This is our subcommittee's final hearing on the Department's FY 2017 budget request, and I think I've used the words "complex, diverse, and demanding" to describe the missions and responsibilities of every agency which has appeared before us. ICE is no exception; to say your job is challenging is an understatement.

ICE is the principal investigative arm of DHS, responsible for preventing the exploitation of our borders by transnational criminal organizations, while simultaneously securing our interior through the enforcement of our Nation's immigration laws, apprehending and detaining criminal aliens. ICE agents, whether here or deployed abroad, serve on the frontline to safeguard our country, and we could not be prouder or more grateful for all they do.

This Committee also has a challenging job. It is our responsibility to ensure ICE receives the resources necessary to properly man, train, and equip your organization; enabling it to successfully accomplish the myriad of missions it is assigned. The fiscal year 2017 budget for ICE is \$5.9 billion in discretionary spending, an increase of \$76 million over fiscal year 2016. Although the budget reflects an almost \$140 million increase for Homeland Security Investigations, unfortunately the Administration yet again resorted to budget gimmicks to achieve this increase, decrementing Custody Operations funding by \$185 million and reducing the number of detention beds by 3,087 from the mandated level of 34,000 to 30,913.

This reduction makes no sense – the average adult daily population has steadily remained above 33,000 since the end of fiscal year 2015 and shows no sign of retreating. In fact, with more localities cooperating with ICE through the Priority Enforcement Program, and the potential lifting of the injunction against the Executive Order on DAPA, the requirement for detention beds is likely to exceed 34,000. This is unacceptable and will force Congress to search for offsets in your budget to fund the required number of beds. Today, we expect you to provide a thorough explanation for this short-sighted decision.

#####