



# **Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen**

## *House Committee on Appropriations*

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**Subcommittee on Homeland Security**  
**FY 2018 Budget Hearing – Department of Homeland Security**  
**Secretary John Kelly**  
**May 24, 2017**  
**Opening Statement As Prepared**

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the time and I want to welcome Secretary Kelly to the Appropriations Committee. We look forward to your testimony and hearing your frank and candid views on the many issues.

I would also like to thank Sec. Kelly for your 45 years of dedicated service to our nation as an enlisted Marine, a Marine Officer and now Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

Today's hearing is an important part of the oversight duties of this Committee. Now that we have formally received the Administration's budget request, the Committee will undertake a thorough analysis. We will go through each and every budget line, question every witness and demand credible spending justifications and only then will we make our own determinations on the best use of tax-dollars.

We intend to put forward a complete set of appropriations bills that adequately fund important programs while working to reduce or eliminate waste and duplication.

I will work with Chairman Carter and Ranking Member Roybal-Allard to move rapidly in the coming weeks and months to complete the fiscal year 2018 Appropriations bills.

Again, today's hearing is a part of the process we follow to determine the best use of taxpayer's dollars. After all, the "power of the purse" lies in this building - it is the Constitutional duty of Congress to make spending decisions on behalf of the people we represent at home.

As you well know, hundreds of families (almost 700) in New Jersey and my Congressional District lost loved ones in the September 11 terrorist attacks. Although, it took years for our nation to recover from the attack, the events of that day made us rethink how we protect the nation and allowed us to learn from prior mistakes, in order to prepare for and stop the next attack.

I wholeheartedly agree with your recent assessment that the risk of a terror attack against the U.S. is "as threatening today" as it was on September 11, 2001. And unfortunately this week, we

witnessed another horrific terrorist attack on our British allies, and we all extend our great sympathies to these young victims and their families.

That is why we must be certain to continue to invest in critical programs, like the Federal Emergency Management Agencies Urban Area Security Initiative that ensure our communities, which face the greatest risk, are able to respond to ever growing and more complex threats. The FY 2018 budget request proposes a 25% cut to UASI and I am eager to hear how your Department will continue to ensure resilience while absorbing such a large deduction.

In light of the recent spike of anti-Semitic crimes, which were directed at hundreds of Jewish schools, synagogues, temples and Community Centers in the U.S., including those in my Congressional District, we must continue to direct funding to the UASI Nonprofit Security Grant Program, which provides at risk nonprofit institutions critical assistance to bolster their physical security.

Lastly, I would also like to highlight the important work of the 28 Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Teams, including New Jersey Task Force One, which became a federally designate FEMA team this time last year. NJTF-1, which was the first team to respond to the WTC on 9/11, was activated and responded to NC in response to Hurricane Matthew in October.

In conclusion, I welcome Secretary Kelly. I look forward to hearing from you and working with you in the months ahead.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

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