

**House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security Testimony**

**Congressman Steve Scalise, Louisiana District 1**

**February 26, 2020**

Thank you, Chairwoman Lucille Roybal-Allard, for allowing me to address this subcommittee on Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Department of Homeland Security appropriations. Specifically, I wanted to discuss FY 2021 funding for the United States Coast Guard. As a vital part of our nation's armed forces, the men and woman of the Coast Guard work every day to ensure the safety of our seas, waterways, and ports. As such, Congress must ensure they have the best equipment and tools necessary to keep our nation safe.

For over a decade, the Coast Guard has worked to recapitalize its fleet of aging cutters. An integral part of this recapitalize effort has been the Fast Response Cutter (FRC) program. These fast and versatile cutters are used across the Coast Guard's various mission areas, including: search and rescue, national defense, fishery enforcement, drug and migrant interdiction, and waterway and coastal security. To date, the Coast Guard has commissioned 37 FRCs, which were built in Lockport, Louisiana. Due to their broad capabilities and lack of discrepancies, FRCs have continued to be praised by the Coast Guard and strongly supported by Congress. Congress has afforded funding for the construction of 60 FRCs for domestic and Persian Gulf missions through FY 2020, including \$260 million for four FRCs in FY 2020.

With a proven track record of performance and timely delivery, the FRC program has been a prime example of how military recapitalization should be conducted. The Coast Guard's plans to station FRCs in Guam demonstrate the important role these cutters play in protecting the United States' national security, especially with a growing Chinese presence in the Indo-Pacific. Moreover, cutters stationed in Bahrain will also solidify the Coast Guard's patrol force in the Persian Gulf. That is why I come before this subcommittee today to ask for continued support for the Coast Guard's FRC program. With four remaining cutters needed to reach the Program of Record, I ask that the committee maintain funding at the FY 2020 level and approve \$260 million for four FRCs in FY 2021.

In closing, I want to thank the subcommittee for considering this important priority and for allowing me to come before you to discuss issues that impact our nation's security and military readiness.