

CONGRESSWOMAN SHEILA JACKSON LEE (TX-18)

STATEMENT BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

VIRTUAL MEMBER DAY HEARING ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT FOR FY2022 THURSDAY, MAY 20, 2021 10:00 A.M. CISCO WEBEX

Chairwoman Roybal-Allard, Ranking Member Fleischmann and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee:

- As a senior member of the Committee on Homeland Security, and the Chair of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security, let me offer my appreciation and thanks to Chairwoman Roybal-Allard and Ranking Member Fleischmann for the difficult work and choices that must be made to produce a truly bipartisan Homeland Security spending bill, and for their commitment to providing the resources needed to secure our homeland.
- Madam Chair, I understand that my entire statement will be made part of the record so I will keep my remarks brief. In the few minutes allotted I wish to highlight several programs that warrant the Committee's continuing attention and support.
- **I support \$14 billion for Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Program**
The Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program within FEMA takes a forward-looking approach to prepare for a disaster before it occurs. Mitigation enables communities to recover more quickly when a disaster strikes, and ultimately saves money associated with costly disaster recovery efforts. In fact, it is estimated that each \$1 spent on mitigation saves roughly \$3 to \$4 on disaster spending.

- I support \$130 million for the Port Security Grant Program (PSGP)**
 The Port Security Grant Program directly supports State, local, and private maritime infrastructure by making funds available to improve port-wide maritime security risk management; enhance maritime domain awareness; support maritime security training and exercises; and to maintain or reestablish maritime security mitigation protocols that support port recovery and resiliency capabilities.
- I support \$9.0 billion for TSA to fully address additional requirements in screening processes and procedures**
 These additional requirements will allow TSA the opportunity to address the additional requirements previously identified more fully in response to findings from covert testing of screening processes and procedures. \$3.0 billion to support FTE Transportation Security Officers (TSO)s to ensure effective screening operations and maintain an appropriate staffing level at checkpoints.
- I support \$65 million for University Programs, Homeland Security Centers of Excellence for HBCUs**
 The Centers bring together leading experts and researchers to conduct multidisciplinary research and education for homeland security solutions. The Centers are authorized by Congress and chosen by the Science & Technology Directorate through a competitive selection process. Each Center is led by a university in collaboration with partners from other institutions, agencies, laboratories, think tanks, and the private sector.
- I support robust funding for the FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grants program**
 FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grants reduce disaster losses and protect life and property from future disasters. Mitigation includes community risk reduction, improved resilience of critical infrastructure, risk reduction for vulnerabilities from natural hazards and climate change, and initiatives to reduce future risks. Projects must provide a long term solution.
- I support \$435 million for the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant Program**
 At minimum, fund the SAFER Grant Program at the \$435 million. This program, authorized in 2003, provides much-needed funding for career and volunteer fire departments to hire new firefighters and recruit and retain volunteer firefighters. This program is critical to the thousands of fire stations across the country that are currently operating short of staff and to those seeking to retain current first responders in the face of the economic downturn and recovery.
- I support \$775 million for the Urban Area Security Initiative**
 I respectfully request FY 2022 funding levels of \$775 million for the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI). UASI funds are provided to urban areas across the country that are at high-risk of terrorist attacks. These funds are used for planning,

operations, training and exercise to prevent, respond to, and recover from acts of terrorism.

- **I support \$135 million for the Transit Security Grant Program**

I request \$135 million for the Transit Security Grant Program (TSGP). Mass transit systems have unique security challenges, and one way the federal government fulfills its obligation to secure our homeland is by assisting localities in protecting them. TSGP provides critical funds for public transit entities to shield against terrorist attacks. Our request also asks that TSGP be kept separate and not consolidated into a larger grant program.

- **I support \$27 million for immigrant integration and citizenship programs within U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)**

These funds will assist the more than 8.8 million legal permanent residents who are currently eligible to realize their dream of U.S. citizenship, and will help ensure the full and successful integration of immigrants into our society at a critical time in the evolution of our national immigration policy.

REQUESTED REPORT LANGUAGE:

- Finally, Madam Chair, I would request the Committee to include the following language in the report:

1. **Anti-White Nationalist Domestic Terrorism Actions**

“The Committee is cognizant of the vulnerabilities to the safety and security of persons, property, and interests working or located in the U.S. Capitol and its environs. The insurrection that occurred on January 6, 2021, when an incited mob of domestic terrorists, white nationalists and supremacists laid siege to the Capitol Building in order to disrupt a constitutionally mandated duty of the Congress is a dark stain on the nation’s history, and exacerbated by the fact that a large number of the marauders had previously taken oaths – as law enforcement officers, as members of the military, and as civil servants and contractors - to uphold and defend the Constitution, and to do so with true faith and allegiance.

“The U.S. Intelligence Community has assessed that domestic terrorism, particularly white supremacy and white nationalist organizations, is the greatest and most imminent threat to our nation and democratic form of government. The Committee applauds the service and sacrifice of the men and women who serve the American people in the civilian and military sectors of government. The Committee, however, cautions and directs the Secretary to exercise vigilance and take decisive action to identify, isolate, and remove from service individuals whose actions of January 6 2021 at the U.S. Capitol or whose connections, actions, or affiliations with white nationalist organizations pose a threat to the security of the United States. Actions the Secretary should take include undertaking an immediate review of a clearance when a security clearance holder is reported to have engaged in violent acts against individuals, property, or public spaces based on the security clearance holder’s association or sympathy with persons or organizations that advocate, threaten, or use force or violence, or any

other illegal or unconstitutional means, in an effort to prevent others from exercising their rights under the Constitution or laws of the United States or of any State, based on factors including, at a minimum, race, religion, national origin, or disability.”

2. Pre-Disaster Mitigation

“The Committee encourages FEMA to give priority consideration to grants that address heightened risk for natural disaster hazards due to climate change.”

3. 300 Foot Rule for LEO Coverage at Category X Airports

“The Committee encourages the Department to pursue a rulemaking that will guarantee full law enforcement coverage at every security checkpoint at our nation’s largest airports. All Category X airports should have a law enforcement officer stationed within 300 feet of every security checkpoint during operating hours. The Under Secretary ought to have authority to waive this requirement only if the police chief or local law enforcement lead with jurisdiction over such airport certifies in a written application to the Under Secretary that adherence to such a rule would adversely affect airport security or cause undue hardship for the airport policing entity.”

4. Public Private Partnerships Promoting Integration of Lawful Immigrants

“The USCIS to examine the feasibility of soliciting and accepting donations from the private sector to enhance the capacity of the Office of Citizenship and the Citizenship and Integration Grants program.”

CONCLUSION

- Madam Chair, I thank you and the Ranking Member for your leadership and for extending me this opportunity to share some of my priorities with you.