



Chairman Hal Rogers

House Committee on Appropriations

Full Committee Markup – Fiscal Year 2015 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill June 11, 2014 Opening Statement As Prepared

The \$39.2 billion in discretionary funding contained within this legislation addresses some of the most pressing challenges facing the Department of Homeland Security. First and foremost, it prioritizes funding for frontline security operations and enforcement – to keep our nation secure, to protect against those who seek to do us harm, and to punish those who violate the laws of our land.

This includes supporting intelligence and threat-targeting activities, and acquiring the essential tactical assets needed to support these efforts. Particularly, the bill contains important investments in the fight against cyber threats and illegal narcotics.

Beyond these critical frontline efforts, the bill also ensures that FEMA has the resources it needs to provide assistance in the case of natural disasters or other catastrophes. The bill fully funds their stated requirement of \$7 billion, and provides for important first responder grant programs that provide direct, on-the-ground support during emergencies.

In addition, we have taken serious strides to address the recent influx of unaccompanied alien children and the obstacles this has presented. Over the last several years, we have seen an exponential rise in the number of undocumented alien children – a tenfold increase from 6,600 in 2011 to 66,000 for fiscal year 2014 – and the projected number for 2015 is even more staggering – 127,000. Clearly, something needs to be done.

This bill provides \$76.9 million above the President's request so that ICE personnel can safely transport these children to HHS' Office of Refugee Resettlement. We intend to keep a close eye on this problem as we consider future Appropriations bills to respond to these challenges and developments.

This legislation also addresses a number of flaws in the President's budget request. I was disheartened to see a budget request that would have left the Coast Guard at a five-year low for drug interdiction, particularly as our nation faces a growing battle against heroin. This legislation denies these cuts, and increases aviation and cutter hours by 5 percent to continue our battle against illicit drug trafficking in the Caribbean.

The President's budget also would have cut critical resources needed by CBP frontline personnel, so this bill includes funding above the request for Air & Marine Operations and border security technology. Lastly, the bill denies the President's proposal to increase aviation passenger security fees and CBP user fees.

While tackling these serious issues and sufficiently funding our homeland's first lines of defense, this bill actually tallies lower than last year's bill. In total, this bill is \$50 million below last year's enacted level – proof of the subcommittee's commitment to weeding out excess, eliminating waste, and making responsible decisions to reduce spending. Cuts were made to lower-priority programs, and unnecessary increases proposed by the President were denied. For example, the bill trims \$76.4 million from Coast Guard acquisition funding, and denies a consolidation of DHS headquarters, saving the taxpayer \$73 million. The bill also continues the strong oversight and close scrutiny of how DHS spends its resources.

This bill truly makes the best use of the taxpayer dollars used to protect our homeland and our people. I am pleased to support the bill today, and I ask that the Committee do the same.

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