



Chairman John Carter

*Subcommittee on Homeland Security
House Committee on Appropriations*

Opening Statement:

*U.S. Customs and Border Protection
and
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
FY 2018 Budget Requests*

Witness:

Todd C. Owen, Executive Assistant Commissioner, CBP
Carla L. Provost, Acting Chief, USBP
Thomas D. Homan, Acting Director, ICE
8:00 AM | Friday | June 9, 2017 | RHOB 2008

Welcome to our panel of witnesses. Today we have Todd Owen, Executive Assistant Commissioner of CBP for Field Operations, Chief Karla Provost, Acting Chief of the Border Patrol and Thomas Homan, Acting Director of ICE.

The subcommittee is holding a hearing on the budget requests of two DHS components – ICE and CBP – for a couple of reasons. The first is practical. Chairman Frelinghuysen wants all appropriations bills reported out of full committee before the August recess. And given the late submission of the fiscal year 2018 budget request, we are operating on a compressed schedule to meet this objective. Having both components also provides an opportunity to hear how they operate jointly and how those operations have a direct impact on the assumptions underlying their budget requests.

Let me state at the outset that I support the proposed budget increases for both CBP and ICE. Thankfully, illegal migration is down. However, the border is still vulnerable and gaining operational control remains an imperative. In my opinion, technology solutions that improve situational awareness, and infrastructure that slows illegal crossings, make the country safer.

Too often, the discussion about border security revolves around illegal migration...which is certainly part of the story. The rest of the story is that if illegal migrants can exploit vulnerabilities in the nation's border, so can terrorists, drug smuggling, and human trafficking organizations. This is unacceptable. It's time to change the dynamic, and the budget request for CBP and ICE is a start in the right direction.

The fiscal year 2018 budget request for CBP is \$13.9 billion, an increase of \$1.7 billion above the amount provided in fiscal year 2017. This includes over \$1.7 billion for new physical infrastructure.

There are legitimate questions about the request that require answers. For example, spending is proposed for various types of barriers but it is unclear where they will be located or if they can be executed in fiscal year 2018. Likewise, we need to understand why more emphasis has not been placed on technology and personnel at ports of entry – where the vast majority of illicit drugs and currency enter the United States.

The fiscal year 2018 budget request for ICE is \$7.6 billion in discretionary spending, an increase of \$1.1 billion over fiscal year 2017. The largest share of the increase supports the detention and removal of an additional 12,055 adult aliens resulting from more robust interior enforcement.

The subcommittee needs to understand if the change in policies and force structure will actually enable this level of enforcement, as well as the methodology used to calculate the costs for enforcement and removal operations.

Before I turn to our witnesses for their statements, the text of which will be included in the record, I'd like to recognize the distinguished Ranking Member for any remarks she wishes to make.

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