



# House Committee on **APPROPRIATIONS**

## **FY19 Department of Homeland Security Subcommittee Markup** **Opening Statement (as prepared)** **Chairman Kevin Yoder** **July 9, 2018**

Today we are marking up the fiscal year 2019 appropriations bill for the Department of Homeland Security.

This is the final bill of the 12 annual appropriations bills to go to mark up and I would like to congratulate Chairman Frelinghuysen, my fellow Subcommittee Chairmen, and all the Members of the Appropriations Committee on all of their hard work. The issues addressed in this bill are both challenging and critical to the security of this great country.

I would like to first thank Chairman Frelinghuysen for entrusting me with the opportunity to Chair this Subcommittee. Although I've only been Chair for two months I have seized opportunities to learn all I can with respect to Homeland Security including a tour of the border with CBP and Coast Guard. It's been exciting and the work we've done so far is only the beginning.

I would also like to thank Ms. Roybal-Allard (Lucille, the gentlewoman from California) for her work on this bill and her partnership. You have been so generous with your time and have graciously shared your experiences and insights on these complicated issues.

While I know that there are aspects of this bill that you do not support, I am grateful for what I have learned from you and this bill is a better product because of your input. Additionally, while I am pleased with what we have included thus far to ensure that we uphold our Nation's laws, we also uphold our values.

With regard to families, this legislative package includes various provisions to focus on reporting, best practices, compassion, and simply uses our hearts not just our heads as we adhere to the rule of law.

Just some of the concepts which enact this mission via this legislation are: increased support for rescue beacons in border crossing areas, these save the lives of people who are on an arduous journey many of us can't even imagine; new funding for mental health care for children in CBP custody; and language to prioritize family reunification.

To my Ranking Member, I sincerely look forward to continuing to work with you to strengthen our support for children and families in advance of Full Committee markup.

In the spirit of bipartisanship, this subcommittee, like all of our partners to the full Appropriations Committee, took a strong member focused approach to building this legislation.

While member requests numbered approximately 2,500 we were able to accommodate approximately 83% of those in this legislation.

Further, in the spirit of bipartisanship, I'd like to point out that Democratic members of the House were responsible for 77% of total requests made to this subcommittee.

Last, before I get to the details of the bill, I want to thank Judge Carter and his staff for his work which contributed to the process for this mark. His hard work before handing me the gavel on this Subcommittee left us all in a good working position as a Committee.

The bill provides \$58.1 billion in discretionary funds to provide the brave men and women of the Department of Homeland Security with the resources that they need to secure our borders, enhance national security, and prepare for and respond to disasters.

Within this amount, \$5 billion is included for new border technology and the construction of barriers to fill critical gaps along the Southwest border.

This recommendation was informed by the analysis completed by the men and women on the front lines of U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Congress tasked them to review what was needed along the U.S./Mexico border to impede and deny illegal entry into this country.

This funding will provide the technology and physical barriers in the highest priority locations that they identified.

It has become very clear to me in my role as Chairman of this Subcommittee that this funding for barrier and technology is an essential part of the ‘three-legged stool’ of border security.

We have focused this legislation on adequate funding for: physical barriers, with \$5 billion for wall and associated structures; modern technological solutions; and manpower, with increases to total staffing at ICE of approximately 400 and CBP of 500.

I encourage anyone who would characterize a single piece of this 3-part strategy as anything less than mission critical to further investigate. They should learn from the men and women who serve our country each day in these roles.

These resources will be primarily focused at the mission critical areas for drug and human trafficking.

This is especially important in the Rio Grande Valley, in which CBP has prioritized border security infrastructure.

As my colleagues on this Committee know, the RGV has the highest number of apprehensions along the southwest border at over 137,000 last year.

Even more, this sector has the highest volume of narcotics seized by the Border Patrol.

I encourage each member of this Committee to consider the crisis of drug abuse in America as they cast their vote in support of the policies in this legislation.

Drug overdoses killed roughly 64,000 people in the United States in 2016 (the most recent year with complete data).

I firmly believe this legislation puts us on footing to be one step AHEAD of the cartels and their billion-dollar criminal industry traversing our border.

Funding included not only hardens the RGV but also sectors our intelligence has shown are the next logical steps for the cartels to drive their trafficking.

We're breaking the cycle of crime being the leading edge in this battle.

This bill also provides \$223 million for CBP to make significant progress towards 100 percent scanning of all vehicles, cargo, and pedestrians coming through our ports of entry along the Southwest border.

If we want to stop the entry of illicit goods and narcotics;  
If we want to do all that we can to end the opioid epidemic;  
If we want to break the networks of human traffickers;  
We need to check every vehicle and every person that comes through our ports.

This bill puts CBP on a path to achieve 100 percent scanning of all southwest border land ports of entry by 2025.

One last note on CBP, with regard to our nation's opioid crisis, I'm proud this bill funds \$108 million specifically for opioid detection at international mail and express consignment facilities.

Our bill also fully funds U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, which adjudicates immigration and citizenship benefits for over 8 million individuals each year who choose to enter this country through the appropriate, legal channels.

Each year, approximately 700,000-750,000 individuals become American citizens having persisted through lengthy legal processes in the hopes of achieving the American dream.

In addition to addressing these border security and immigration priorities, the bill prioritizes funding for other critical activities that ensure the safety and security of our homeland.

The U.S. Coast Guard has received strong funding of \$9.3 billion.

This includes \$140 million for the National Security Cutter program post-delivery activities.

We have made a tremendous investment in Transportation Security Administration (TSA), with \$7.3 billion funding.

This includes \$20 million above the budget request for purchase and installation of 240 new advanced carry-on baggage screening systems (CT Scanners).

These systems will keep us all safer as we travel while also expediting the security check in process at airports throughout the nation.

We have taken steps to ensure that FEMA isn't simply reacting to emergencies, but that we are sufficiently prepared now.

We have funded \$7.2 billion for disaster response and recovery efforts. We have also funded \$3.1 billion for FEMA grant programs, including:

- \$538 million for the State Homeland Security Grant Program – an increase of \$31 million above fiscal year 2018;
- \$661 million for the Urban Area Security Initiative – an increase of \$31 million above fiscal year 2018 – including \$50 million for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program;
- \$700 million for firefighter assistance grants;
- \$249 million for pre-disaster mitigation grants; and
- \$262.5 million for flood mapping activities.

We have allocated strong funding (\$2.2 billion, or an increase of \$160.7 million) to the Secret Service, who serve a vital law enforcement mission of protecting Americans against cyber and financial crimes so prevalent in this modern time. We also ensure they have adequate resources for their protection missions ahead of the 2020 campaign cycle.

Last, it's so important to note the hard work of my Subcommittee staff. On my behalf and on the behalf of Joe Eannello, my associate to the Committee, I want to thank Kris Mallard, Laura Cylke, Bob Joachim, David Roth, Shannon McCully, and especially our clerk Donna Shahbaz.

Thrust into the middle of a challenging process, and even facing personal challenges in some of our lives, we managed a very effective process together.

I also want to acknowledge Darek Newby and Matt Smith from the minority staff for their partnership with majority staff.

They have worked extremely hard and will certainly continue to do so over the next week leading to full Committee.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this mark. Before we approve this legislation, I'd like to recognize our Ranking Member, Ms. Roybal-Allard, and then our full Committee Chairman and Ranking Member for any comments they would like to make.

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