- Thank you to Chair Roybal-Allard and Ranking Member Fleischmann for calling this hearing.
- I have a few issues I'd like to bring to your attention that are of special interest to my constituents in Louisiana's Sixth Congressional District and to my work as a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

- **Fast Response Cutters (FRC)**
  - Admiral Karl Schultz, Commandant of the Coast Guard has said that "The Fast Response Cutters are the mainstay of the Coast Guard's coastal patrol fleet, providing multi-mission capabilities and interagency interoperability"
  - In FY18 alone, FRCs saved more than 20 lives, interdicted more than 14,200 pounds of cocaine and 874 individuals seeking to illegally enter the country.
    - In addition to domestic capabilities, the platform has succeeded in replacing the Island-class patrol boats assigned to Patrol Forces Southwest Asian, the Coast Guard's largest unit outside the U.S., anchored in Bahrain.
    - The production of this platform has been extremely successful. With 37 hulls completed, these vessels have been delivered on time, often under budget, and with high ratings on the quality of the product.
  - The Coast Guard's program of record calls for 58 FRCs to operate domestically, with 54 FRCs being funded as of last fiscal year.
    - I would like to request that the committee continue to fund this program at a level of $240 million to ensure the acquisition of the remaining four FRCs needed to get the program to full capacity for operation here in the U.S.

- **Offshore Patrol Cutter (OPC)**
  - The Offshore Patrol Cutter is one of the Coast Guard's highest acquisition needs, and it's been a top priority for me and my fellow members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.
  - While both authorizers and appropriators have supported this program to ensure the Coast Guard meets its mid-range vessel goals, we have

deep concerns that the program is running without appropriate oversight by the Coast Guard.

- The use of the 85-804 provision has allowed the Coast Guard to unilaterally appropriate $650 million to keep OPC delivery from being delayed even longer, and there is deep concern that there will need to even more relief.

o The committee should not reward this behavior by bailing out the Coast Guard. I ask the committee to hold the Coast Guard accountable for keeping control of their acquisition programs. We need the OPC, but if we can't do it in a responsible manner, we need to rethink our objectives and start from scratch.

- **H-2B Visas**
  o Currently, our civilian labor force participation rate is at 64.3% (the highest rate of participation in over seven years) and our unemployment rate is the lowest in a decade at 3.6%
    - But even in a period of economic boom like this, there is a need for temporary workers to fill low-paying, temporary and seasonal jobs which domestic workers pass on in favor of better, full-time jobs.
    - If we don't have temporary workers in place to support the lower-level functions of some of our vital industries, the cost is going to be American jobs – it's small business owners and their employees who will pay the price.
    - According to the American Enterprise Institute, a single H-2B visa supports 4.64 American jobs.
    - But according to DOL, there are three visa applications for every available H-2B visa. This is another area where the U.S. supply is not meeting demand.
  o The committee should include report language in the DHS appropriations bill urging the release of supplemental H-2B visas to provide a higher degree of certainty to seasonal businesses and their temporary workforce.
  o In FY2020, the first half of the H2B visa cap was reached one full month earlier than it was in FY2019

- o Let me be clear: This Congress should not support any H-2B program that would supplant American jobs, offer unfair wages, exploit workers, or undermine the competitiveness of the economy.
    - ▪ I'm talking about bringing people in for temporary work that Americans aren't currently filling the need for: things like peeling crawfish, yard landscaping, and processing sugarcane, and limiting the program to only those special uses.
- **FEMA**
    - o In August 2016, my district and much of South Louisiana was devastated by unprecedented rainfall. In response to this and other extraordinary disasters, Congress enacted the Disaster Recovery and Reform Act, or DRRA. More than a year has gone by, and FEMA has failed to fully implement many of the provisions of this act.
        - ▪ Sec. 1209 and Sec. 1228 of DRRA directed FEMA to collaborate with the Federal Highway Administration on evacuation routes and promulgating guidance on inundated and submerged roads. During the floods of 2016 and Hurricane Harvey in 2017, I-12, I-55, and I-10 became impassable due to floodwaters. The federal design guidelines created conditions in which the Interstate itself acted as a levee and concrete barriers acted like a dam, exacerbating flooding and creating more flood victims. However, FEMA has failed to work with FHWA to effectively address these concerns as directed by DRRA.
    - o The Committee should include report language urging FEMA to work with FHWA to revise the July 2019 guidance titled *Planning Considerations: Evacuation and Shelter-in-Place* to comply with these sections, reflect congressional intent and real-world disaster scenarios. The language should also instruct these agencies to develop guidance to assist local governments with repairing, restoring, and replacing inundated roads.
        - ▪ This is a pivotal opportunity for FEMA and FHWA to collaborate to reduce disaster costs, improve efficiency, and save taxpayer dollars – all while improving the resiliency of our communities.

- - If these policies are not implemented, this committee is going to be asked to rebuild the same roads over and over again – and the American taxpayer is going to be on the hook for the cost.
- Thank you again for requesting my testimony. Should the committee have additional questions, please direct them to me and my staff.