



TESTIMONY

OF

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

BEFORE

THE

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE -
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ON

“Potential DHS Shutdown Impacts”

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Washington, D.C.

Chairman Amodei, Ranking Member Cuellar, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify on the severe impacts a government shutdown would have on your United States Coast Guard.

As a vital instrument of national power, the Coast Guard controls, secures, and defends the U.S. border and maritime approaches, facilitates the safe and secure flow of commerce that is vital to economic prosperity and strategic mobility, and responds to crises and contingencies that may come without warning. As a proud member of the Department of Homeland Security and the only Armed Force within the Department, every action the Coast Guard takes is dedicated to protecting our Nation. The American people depend on the Coast Guard, and the Service provides a remarkable return on investment — but only with consistent and predictable appropriations.

A lapse in appropriations requires the Coast Guard to suspend all missions except those for national security or the protection of life and property. Although missions like law enforcement, national defense, and emergency response continue, a funding lapse has severe and lasting challenges for the Coast Guard's workforce, operational readiness, and long-term capabilities.

Most importantly, a lapse lasting more than a few days will halt pay for the Coast Guard's approximately 56,000 active duty, reserve, and civilian personnel. This is not a distant administrative issue; the possibility of missing paychecks creates significant financial hardship for service members and their families and erodes the trust our men and women have in the Nation they serve and those who lead them. Shutdowns cripple morale and directly harm our ability to recruit and retain the talented Americans we need to meet growing demands. The work our Coast Guard crews perform every day is dangerous and challenging, often involving interactions with those who would do them and our way of life harm. Our people deserve to have the resources they need so they can perform their duties safely and efficiently.

The Gunner's Mate manning a weapon in the Straits of Hormuz should not have to worry if their family will be able to pay rent while being shadowed by Iranian vessels. The Aviation Survival Technician deploying from a helicopter into treacherous seas should not have to worry if their family can buy groceries that week. These jobs require dedication, focus, and attention to detail, and any distraction puts the member, mission, crew, and unit at risk. Short-term solutions only provide temporary relief. No one in our military should be forced to live with this uncertainty, paycheck to paycheck.

A shutdown also erodes mission readiness. Certain training stops, including training for pilots, aircrews, and boat crews who must maintain proficiency to operate in hazardous conditions. Our cutters, aircraft, and boats further degrade as scheduled maintenance is deferred, and the flow of spare parts is cut off. This results in grounded aircraft, static cutters, and a multi-million-dollar parts backlog that can take years to resolve. We are unable to pay our contractors, including small businesses that rely on timely payment to survive.

We cease activities that do not protect the safety of human life or property from imminent danger, including routine patrols, as well as some fisheries enforcement, maintenance of aids to navigation, and commercial vessel safety inspections. The National Maritime Center closes, halting the issuance and renewal of credentials for thousands of U.S. merchant mariners who rely on valid

credentials to work. The ripple effects cause delays in vessel inspections, financing, and regulatory approvals that can cost the U.S. economy billions of dollars each week and mean higher prices for Americans everywhere.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak today, and I urge you to continue your support for the men and women of the Coast Guard by not allowing funding to lapse. Since 1790, the American people have placed a sacred trust upon the Coast Guard to assure our national security and economic prosperity. Our history proves one thing above all: with a ready Coast Guard crew there is nothing we cannot accomplish. To keep our crews and assets ready to serve the American people, we require the resources necessary to fulfill our vital missions. Thank you for your support and opportunity to appear before you today, I look forward to your questions.

Semper Paratus.