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Chairman - Committee on Homeland Security
Testimony - House Committee on Administration
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Chairman Miller, Ranking Member Brady:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this afternoon. I am happy to be here and equally happy to be sitting next to my Ranking Member, Mr. Thompson, who has been a great partner over the last two years.

The Committee on Homeland Security (CHS) faces continuous and growing resource constraints in light of dynamic security threats, recent world events, and key national policy debates. We expect this environment to become more challenging. Our Committee is at the forefront of overseeing the U.S. government response to an alarming rise in homegrown and foreign terrorist threats; meeting the challenge of securing America's borders; countering the acute increase in cyberattacks against U.S. government and private sector networks—especially in light of the Sony attacks; and equipping our first responders to deal with biological threats and public health concerns like Ebola.

The confluence of these challenges has placed a noticeable strain on our Committee resources. We have been charged with responding to the surging threat of domestic radicalization and the threat from foreign terrorist fighters. Both issues have become more pressing in the wake of attacks in Paris, Sydney, Ottawa, and Nigeria and the disruption of terrorist plots here in the United States.

In the 113th Congress it became clear to the Committee that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) itself is not optimally organized and equipped to deal with the escalation in these security challenges—from Ebola and domestic radicalization to foreign hacks on government networks and a surge of migrants at the border. DHS badly needs legislative fixes. As a result, it is one of the highest priorities of the Committee to draft and pass the first-ever DHS re-authorization, a bill that would implement much-needed reforms at the Department and update its existing authorities to respond to crises more effectively and efficiently.

The Department of Homeland Security has never been re-authorized by Congress since it was established in 2002. This lack of authorization has translated into a lack of binding guidelines for the Department for the last 12 years. This is an abdication of Congress's responsibility, and it is unacceptable.

The 113th Congress was extremely productive for the Committee on Homeland Security. The Committee held almost 100 hearings (8 of them field hearings), passed 31 bills out of Committee, had 28 bills considered and passed on the House floor and had a dozen pieces of legislation signed into law. More important than the numbers is the impact the legislation and oversight will have on the nation: our chemical facilities will be better protected from terrorists;

American travelers will not be overcharged by TSA; and our nation's veterans will be treated with dignity and respect at airports. Additionally, cyber threat information will be enhanced and improved, and America's cyber workforce will be strengthened to combat the cyber threat.

As a Committee, we look forward to building on this success in the 114th Congress.

In order to fulfill the mission of the Committee and accomplish the priorities of CHS in the 114th Congress, we are requesting a marginal increase of 1.7% over our 113th authorized level. If granted, we would smartly allocate these resources to accomplish several goals.

First, we would focus these resources on a few key hires to accomplish the goals of the Committee.

- **Counsel dedicated to DHS Reauthorization:** In the 114th Congress, CHS will launch a concerted effort to re-authorize DHS for the first time since its creation. This undertaking is of major national security significance and will include, among other things, a full review of the Homeland Security Act in order to bring the law up-to-date, reflecting the Department's current organization and mission; meetings/briefings with all of DHS's main offices and sub-entities; the development of new authorizing legislation and appropriate reforms for each of the DHS components and programs; close coordination throughout the process with the House committees sharing jurisdictional interests; close coordination with the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee; and the mark-up of the authorization legislation through regular order. In order to successfully execute this effort, the Committee will need to hire a dedicated, full-time Counsel to spearhead the effort. This staffer would be an experienced Hill attorney with substantial experience in drafting and moving legislation. Because we recently interviewed for a General Counsel position that was vacant, we believe that we could hire somebody for this position within a month. My understanding is that the Minority would hire an equivalent attorney to spearhead the effort on the Minority side.
- **Senior National Security Investigator:** The Committee is determined to respond to the heightened U.S. threat environment with vigorous oversight and investigations during the 114th Congress. CHS has created a long-term investigations unit that has already launched a handful of investigations that will be completed and released in 2015 and which focus on leading challenges facing DHS and the broader national security community. The addition of a senior investigator will allow the team to keep up with emerging threats, particularly related to homegrown violent extremism and foreign terrorist fighters. We have had several individuals approach CHS interested in joining the investigations team and believe that we could interview and identify somebody for this position within several weeks. The Minority staff anticipates a similar need.

With additional resources, CHS could launch a series of investigations into the following areas over the next year:

- Growth of lawless terrorist safe havens and threats to the homeland;
- Cybersecurity;
- Biological attack preparedness and response; and
- High-profile cases of DHS waste, fraud, and abuse.

In an October 26 article in Politico, Leader McCarthy stated that House Committees should be doing far more fieldwork. CHS has been working harder to find the resources to do exactly that. Fieldwork is absolutely essential for gathering the data to conduct rigorous oversight, generate policy positions, and inform legislation.

Along these lines, if awarded additional resources, CHS would apply it toward:

Field Hearings: In the 113th Congress, CHS held three Full Committee field hearings and five Subcommittee field hearings. Full Committee field hearings covered the Ebola response, human trafficking, and the surge of unaccompanied alien children at the border. These hearings allowed the Committee to highlight issues of critical importance to the public, hear from those directly impacted, and drive the implementation of impactful solutions to real-world problems. In the 114th Congress, we would like to increase this number of Full Committee field hearings to five and the number of Subcommittee field hearings to ten.

Investigations Travel: The extremist threat to the United States is geographically diverse, and engaging in full coverage of this threat puts tight demands on Committee resources. In the 114th Congress, the Committee plans to launch additional national security investigations which will require staff travel to baseline U.S. homeland defense programs, identify gaps, and develop legislative solutions to reconcile U.S. vulnerabilities.

In addition to personnel compensation and additional field work expenses, we are requesting only minimal changes to funding for other categories. Our request is primarily based on actual spending in 2014 with small increases to reflect rising costs and specific needs such as the upgrade of telecommunications and IT equipment. Our request for supplies and materials is decreasing significantly in 2015 as a result of having renewed several of our larger subscriptions for two years at the end of 2014.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify. I appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to a productive 114th Congress.