

Michael T. McCaul - Committee on Homeland Security
Written Testimony - House Committee on Administration
February 15, 2017

Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the work and goals of the Homeland Security Committee. I am happy to be sitting next to Ranking Member Thompson, who has been a great partner over the last four years.

I am proud of the work this Committee has done over the past four years in a bipartisan manner.

In the 114th Congress we passed 89 bills out of Committee, passed 88 on the House floor, and were responsible for 32 Public Laws. We also held almost 90 hearings, 19 markups and produced more than 30 reports.

The 114th Congress was the most productive legislative Congress the Committee has ever had.

In the 115th Congress, the Committee will again focus on counterterrorism efforts both at home and abroad. We must remember, we still are a nation at war.

In 2016, nearly 1000 people were either killed or injured in terror attacks in Western countries alone.

Young jihadists are being radicalized online, and being urged to attack the kuffar – the non-believer – in their own backyard.

This Committee will play a vital role in keeping Americans safe in the coming years.

In the 114th Congress, much of our legislation was used in response to the attacks in Paris and Orlando.

We will also focus on the border. Our borders remain insecure, and are a matter of national security. We need to put in place a multi-layered defense system so that drug cartels and terrorists don't slip through the cracks.

This Committee also needs to do our part to defend our digital frontiers. We are fighting a silent war in cyberspace with unlimited fronts. Nation states, criminals, hacktivists, and terrorists are infiltrating our networks.

Some want to embarrass us, others are seeking to copy our innovation, steal our nation's secrets, and even undermine the very foundation of our republic. Unfortunately, the enemy is winning. We have got to get serious about playing defense, and respond in a way that will make our adversaries think twice about doing it again.

Last, but not least, we will finally re-authorize the Department of Homeland Security.

The Department has not been reauthorized since its inception after the 9/11 attacks. With an MOU in place with 7 other Committees, I am confident that this long overdue responsibility will finally be accomplished, and we will be able to provide the Department with the Congressional direction it has lacked for the last 15 years.

This MOU was a result of a Leadership backed process and was submitted as an Extension of Remarks under the Speaker's Signature in the Congressional Record. (I have a copy which I would like to submit for the record).

Our reauthorization effort will address waste, fraud and abuse as well as streamline and consolidate offices within DHS.

In order to ensure that we will be successful, we have spoken to other Committees to gather some of the lessons learned – and how to avoid common pitfalls. What we learned, which was no real surprise, was that this will be a significant legislative lift.

We have already hired one full-time dedicated staff to lead this effort. This hire has more than 15 years of experience in the House and significant expertise on legislative and parliamentary matters. Due to the urgency of this effort, we took a leap of faith and hired her before we finalized our budget for 2017. This person is spearheading the reauthorization effort which includes working with Leadership, outside stakeholders, and other House and Senate Committees. We would also like to hire a dedicated staff to work solely on the budget aspects of reauthorization – something we do not have expertise in currently.

The Committee is asking for a \$300,000 increase in our annual budget. As the Majority, we will spend our portion of this (\$200,000) on the reauthorization effort. The remainder would be at the discretion of the Ranking Member and Minority staff on how to best spend it in support of the reauthorization effort.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to testify. I appreciate your time and consideration, and look forward to a productive 115th Congress.