



Chairman John Carter

*Subcommittee on Homeland Security
House Committee on Appropriations*

FY 2017 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill – Subcommittee June 9, 2016 Opening Statement

I'm proud to present to you the fiscal year 2017 appropriations bill for the Department of Homeland Security.

Before I describe the mark, however, I want to acknowledge our ranking member, Mrs Roybal-Allard. As always, this mark is better because of her intelligent, thoughtful suggestions, and I want to thank her publicly.

I also want to acknowledge our very able subcommittee staff, Darek Newby, Kris Mallard, Annie Wake, Laura Cylke, Chris Romig, Bob Joachim, and Valerie Baldwin, and our personal office staff, Karen De Los Santos and Steve Gilleland. We appreciate their contributions moving this bill through the appropriations process.

This year, the subcommittee had over 2,000 requests, including 143 from you. I directed my staff to accommodate as many as possible. Some of you have additional suggestions, and I appreciate your willingness to wait until full committee to offer them.

Before I describe the mark, I want to address the topic of aviation security. In FY16, Congress provided TSA with significant increases above the budget request to ensure the safety of the traveling public, while keeping checkpoint wait times low.

However, Americans who travel have been suffering from unacceptably long screening lines at airports around the country. With the support of Congress, TSA has taken several additional steps to address these concerns, including adding hundreds of new Transportation Security Officers (TSOs).

Though I commend the Administrator for taking swift action – while maintaining his focus on public safety – I remain disappointed with TSA's overall inability to plan and organize around the growth in passenger volume that started in 2014. I'm encouraged by the Administrator's ongoing efforts to improve TSA's planning capabilities, and I hope these efforts will support an FY18 request that is based in reality rather than wishful thinking.

The recommendation for the fiscal year 2017 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations bill is \$41.1 billion, which is \$432 million above the President's request and \$100 million above the fiscal year 2016 baseline. Here are some highlights.

For FEMA, \$507 million above the President's request is provided for first responder grants, bringing them to \$2.6 billion, and \$7 billion, as requested, is provided for the Disaster Relief Fund.

For ICE, \$46 million above the request fully funds 34,000 detention beds, and \$18 million above the request expands the Visa Security Program to two additional high-threat, overseas locations.

For CBP, the mark retains the goal of having 23,775 CBP officers and 21,370 Border Patrol agents by the end of FY17, and includes \$15 million above the request to ensure the entire unmanned aerial system fleet is in the same upgraded configuration.

For TSA, nearly 43,000 Transportation Security Officers are fully funded, and \$19.8 million above the request will result in deployment of 50 new canine teams.

For Coast Guard, \$37.6 million is provided for the heavy icebreaker, which is the amount that can be obligated in FY17, rather than \$150 million as requested; \$85 million above the request is for two additional Fast Response Cutters; and \$95 million for a fully missionized C-130J to enhance long-range surveillance capabilities.

And for the Secret Service, \$39.9 million is provided for retention initiatives in an attempt to stem attrition.

For Cybersecurity and Infrastructure protection, \$1.1 billion is provided to secure government networks and prevent cyber attacks, and \$257 million is for infrastructure protection programs, including the electrical grid.

Finally, the E-Verify system – which enables businesses to check whether their employees are eligible to work in the United States – is fully funded at \$119.1 million.

More than \$309.1 million has been cut from the request because DHS cannot maintain its staffing levels.

In addition, \$126.0 million was cut from the St. Elizabeths headquarters consolidation initiative.

Despite the request, legislation to authorize \$880 million in new TSA fees is not included in the recommendation.

Finally, no discretionary or mandatory funds are provided to implement the President's executive actions on immigration while DHS is under a court imposed injunction.

Colleagues, this is a good bill, and I ask you to support it.

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