

Joint Opening Statement Opening Statement
U.S. Senator John Hoeven, Chairman
U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

Subcommittee Markup of the FY2017 Homeland Security Appropriations Bill

May 24, 2016

“As a result of our joint efforts, we have a strong product that addresses the Department’s needs. The bill recommends \$48.1 billion in total discretionary appropriations to support DHS’s critical operations and programs. This includes \$41.2 billion in net discretionary appropriations, which is \$246 million above the fiscal year 2016 enacted level and \$578 million above the President’s request.”

Of the many priorities funded in the bill, the chairman and ranking member wanted to make sure that the necessary resources were applied to: (1) maintain aviation security while shorten TSA lines; (2) invest in cybersecurity; (3) improve border security; and (4) continue the subcommittee’s commitment to state and local grants, including countering violent extremism.

Summary of bill priorities:

First, the legislation provides robust funding to support aviation security operations. The Transportation Security Administration, or TSA, interacts with two million passengers every day. As such, it is undoubtedly the face of DHS to the American public.

The bill includes \$7.7 billion for TSA in FY2017. That is \$228 million above fiscal year 2016 and \$79 million above the request. The measure increases funding for the TSA without increasing fees.

For FY2017, as they did last year, the committee again provided funding above the request for screeners, canine teams, equipment and innovation to avoid unacceptable wait times in the future. Specifically, these increases support 1,344 additional screeners; 50 new canine teams, which takes the TSA total to 1,047; new explosives trace detection systems; and investments in TSA’s Innovation Task Force looking at future technology solutions.

In one example of such technology solutions, with the support of Delta Airlines, TSA will start testing automated lanes at Atlanta Hartsfield International Airport this week. The system is already in place at Heathrow Airport where it has demonstrated 25 to 30 percent increases in throughput without any changes in procedures.

Second, the bill also prioritizes cybersecurity. For DHS efforts to support the protection of federal civilian, state, local and private sector networks, \$1 billion is included in the bill, \$186 million above the amount provided in fiscal year 2016. DHS also must continue to protect its own systems, so funding is included for DHS headquarters and across the agencies in this bill.

Third, the bill includes robust funding for border security, including \$11.2 billion for Customs and Border Protection, or CBP, which is \$125 million above fiscal year 2016. This funding supports efforts to hire 21,370 Border Patrol agents and 23,775 CBP officers, as well as supports more tactical infrastructure, technology, and aircraft.

The Coast Guard is also strongly supported including nearly \$1.3 billion for their acquisition account. Of those funds, \$18 million support program costs associated with the Polar Icebreaker Recapitalization Project. That is in addition to \$1 billion in the Department of Defense Appropriations bill that will fully fund the new ice breaker and which also was reported out of subcommittee today.

Fourth, the measure provides continued support for State and local grants and training that support law enforcement, first responders and other critical partners in homeland security.

The FY2017 request proposed to reduce these programs. The bill rejects that reduction and provides \$2.6 billion, including \$50 million dedicated to countering violent extremism.

The senators also highlighted the Committee's efforts to measure the return on investment of homeland security. The bill continues to include requirements that DHS demonstrate its effectiveness through data and metrics. Congress needs that information, but so do the American people, particularly when it comes to border security.

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