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BILL SUMMARY: Homeland Security Fiscal Year 2024 Appropriations Bill

Bill helps goods and people move through our ports and borders in an orderly and timely way, delivers new funding to stop the flow of fentanyl and transnational crime, and supports the refugee resettlement program

Washington, D.C. – The Fiscal Year 2024 Homeland Security Appropriations bill provides \$61.3 billion in total discretionary funding.

The bill provides new resources to stop the flow of fentanyl and strengthen efforts abroad to disrupt and dismantle transnational criminal organizations trafficking in narcotics, firearms, and people. It also provides critical investments to: support United States Coast Guard search and rescue missions, drug interdiction efforts, and national security; support U.S. businesses and grow our nation’s economy by addressing work authorization backlogs and increasing capacity at ports of entry to improve the flow of goods and people; and achieve a more humane, orderly, and secure environment along the southwest border for both noncitizens seeking asylum and our nation’s dedicated front-line law enforcement managing our borders.

“One of my top priorities as Chair was to ensure this budget supercharges our fight against fentanyl, and I’m proud this bill invests nearly \$900 million in new money to dramatically step up our efforts to stop the flow of fentanyl into the U.S. and crack down on transnational criminal organizations. It also provides funding to reduce employment backlogs at USCIS, support the refugee resettlement program, and help communities build resiliency in the face of increasingly frequent extreme weather events. This is a bipartisan budget that gives DHS the necessary resources to tackle threats to national security and humanely manage our borders, and I look forward to getting it to the President’s desk,” said Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT), Chair of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security.

“Our economy depends on our ability to ensure goods and people can move through our ports and borders in an orderly and timely way—and our security depends on our ability to do this while stopping threats like fentanyl and trafficking of other illicit drugs, human trafficking, and more. That’s why the investments provided in this bill are so important,” said Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee. **“This bill provides critical new funding to stop the flow of fentanyl at its source and at our borders to protect communities across our country, and it helps continue our long tradition of welcoming people from across the globe who are seeking safety from persecution and opportunities for a better life by funding our refugee resettlement program.”**

Key Points & Highlights

Stopping the Flow of Fentanyl: The bill provides \$719 million for Customs and Border Protection (CBP)—\$649 million more than fiscal year 2023—to improve the detection and seizure of fentanyl and other narcotics at ports of entry with investments in non-intrusive inspection equipment, forward operating labs, and personnel. This funding will increase the percentage of passenger vehicles scanned at ports of entry from 40% to 65%, which is expected to result in an increase of over 6,600 lbs of fentanyl seized and prevented from entering the country since passenger vehicles are the primary means by which fentanyl is brought into the U.S. This funding will also expand CBP’s outbound operations, tripling the number of ports of entry on the southwest border with dedicated outbound capabilities to stop the flow of currency, firearms, and other contraband resulting from the sale of fentanyl from traveling from the U.S. into Mexico.

Disrupting and Dismantling Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCOs): The bill also takes the fight against fentanyl and other narcotics to the source by providing over \$100 million—\$95 million more than fiscal year 2023—for Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) to conduct its work abroad, stopping fentanyl and other dangerous synthetic narcotics from ever reaching the United States border in the first place. It provides resources for HSI to expand its work disrupting the very organizations profiting off of the loss of human life and dismantling sophisticated smuggling networks in the process.

Supporting U.S. Businesses and Growing the Economy: The bill provides \$143 million to address the work authorization (also known as EADs) backlog, which is evenly split between efforts aimed at reducing the current EAD backlog and efforts to ensure that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) can meet all existing adjudication timelines for incoming EAD requests moving forward. These investments will reduce the backlog and strengthen our economy by ensuring that workers who can and want to work and employers who can and want to hire don’t face unnecessary administrative processing delays.

The bill also provides resources to hire 700 additional CBP officers at our nation’s ports of entry to reduce wait times for people and goods entering the U.S., which translates to an increase of over \$1.3 billion in GDP and the creation of more than 22,000 new jobs.

More personnel will also help stop the flow of illicit and counterfeit items, making America safer.

Supporting the Refugee Resettlement Program: The bill provides \$133 million for refugee resettlement—sustaining vital funding to help meet the refugee admissions goal of 125,000 for fiscal year 2024 and continue America’s long tradition of welcoming people from across the globe seeking safety from persecution and opportunities for a better life.

Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA): The bill provides \$20.261 billion for the Disaster Relief Fund in fiscal year 2024. It also provides \$3.5 billion for grants and training to state, local, Tribal, and territorial entities to help communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from both manmade and natural threats, including hurricanes, terrorist attacks, wildfires, and more. These critical investments across the country help to support the efforts of our firefighters, emergency medical technicians, and other first responders; build resiliency in our communities; increase capacity to provide alerts and warnings; and protect communities across the country. FEMA grant programs are funded as follows:

- \$489 million for the State Homeland Security Grant Program, of which \$84.6 million is for Operation Stonegarden Grants and \$14.1M is for Tribal Security Grants;
- \$578 million for Urban Area Security Initiative;
- \$287 million for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program;
- \$99 million for Public Transportation Security Assistance, of which \$9.4 million is for Amtrak and \$1.88 million is for Bus Security;
- \$94 million for Port Security Grants;
- \$338 million for Assistance to Firefighters Grants;
- \$338 million for Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grants;
- \$334 million for Emergency Management Performance Grants;
- \$294 million for RiskMAP;
- \$11 million for Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grants;
- \$122 million for the Emergency Food and Shelter Program; and
- \$53 million for Next Generation Warning System.

United States Coast Guard (USCG): The bill includes \$11.5 billion to support the Coast Guard’s mission, including search and rescue activities, drug interdiction, marine safety and environmental protection, and fisheries enforcement. It supports the Coast Guard’s ongoing surface and air operations, including the crewing and operations of new assets coming online in fiscal year 2024, such as a commercially available polar icebreaker; and invests \$1.1 billion into major capital and acquisition programs, including \$896 million for vessels, \$93 million for aircraft, and \$130 million for shore facilities. It also makes critical investments to support our Coast Guard service members, including by providing \$25 million for the Coast Guard’s child care subsidy program—meeting the President’s budget request.

Supporting Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Pay Equity: The bill includes \$1.1 billion to align TSA workforce pay with the rest of the federal workforce, retain staff, and reduce wait times for passengers as part of an effort that was initially funded in fiscal year 2023 and implemented in July 2023. This initiative allows TSA to address recruiting and retention challenges while the agency works to respond to an increase in travel volumes. Since the initiative was announced, TSA attrition is down nearly 50% compared to the beginning of fiscal year 2023, while hiring is up.

Support for Orderly Processing at the Border through Border Management Funds: The bill provides resources to CBP and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to support orderly processing at our border. Importantly, the bill continues funding for humanitarian assistance through CBP's Shelter and Services Program, which partners with state and local governments and non-governmental organizations that work with federal personnel at the border to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance. The bill provides \$250 million to support ICE's transportation account and help ensure that asylum seekers are processed quickly and that ports and other border facilities are not overcrowded. Additionally, the bill provides ICE and CBP a combined total of \$401 million to provide medical services to individuals in custody.

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