



Committee on  
**HOMELAND SECURITY**  
Chairman Michael McCaul

*Opening Statement*

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**Statement of Chairman Michael McCaul (R-TX)  
Committee on Homeland Security**

**“The President’s FY 2015 Budget Request for the Department of Homeland Security”**

**Remarks as Prepared**

Today we convene to take an in-depth look at the President’s budget, as it relates to protecting the homeland. Budgets are important documents, not just operationally, but because they expose priorities. After a review of the budget, I must say I was disappointed that the President’s FY 2015 request proposes new entitlement spending, while recommending nearly a billion dollars in cuts to the Department of Homeland Security.

As continuous unrest around the world makes clear, America’s national security does not end at our shores. Ongoing tensions in the Middle East, Africa, Syria, and now in Ukraine, constantly remind us that security at home is linked to actions abroad. Al Qaeda and its ideas have grown into a proliferating web of affiliates signaling its escalation - not its demise. And as the tragic loss of life in Boston last April all too clearly reminded us, this radical ideology continues to threaten us here at home.

Unfortunately, the realities of growing threats are not reflected in the proposed budget. While domestic programs are important, now is not the time to create new entitlements at the expense of national security. The President is calling for \$56 billion to fund non essential programs, like climate research – while at the same time, reducing funding for United States Coast Guard and border security missions, and cutting DHS Science & Technology explosives detection research by \$15.5 million. Last year, after the Boston Marathon Bombing, Congress undid the multi-year funding decline for the Office of Bombing Prevention, by providing \$13.5 million. This year’s budget request, unfortunately, drops that amount back down to \$11.5 million, nearly as low as before the tragic attack.

Security must remain a top priority. As the tragic Malaysia Airlines disappearance last week is investigated, we are reminded that airlines remain vulnerable to numerous threats, whether mechanical or manmade. From our skies to our seas, the Department cannot sustain its mission under this proposed budget. The proposal reduces the Coast Guard’s acquisition budget by \$300 million just as old assets

that should be replaced are retired, and proposes a \$32 million cut in funding to CBP Air and Marine flight hours along the border – reducing our situational awareness of what is coming across. At the same time, the Administration again is aiming to reduce the number of congressionally mandated ICE detention beds by 3,500. This is all while the budget gives over \$320 million to GSA and DHS to construct access roads and a building to house the Secretary’s office at the St. Elizabeth’s Headquarters – a construction project that is now slated to be finished in 2026.

This means the Administration, in my judgment, is putting bureaucracy over the safety and security of our own shores. The Navy has already stopped counter drug missions in South America post-Sequestration; and now we’re retiring a significant part of our Coast Guard fleet, without replacements on deck. This will allow more drugs to make it into our communities. This is particularly egregious since the majority of illicit drugs are seized off the coasts of Columbia and Honduras, not coming across our land borders. For perspective: last year CBP and Border Patrol seized around 45,000 pounds of cocaine, while The United States Coast Guard took in almost 200,000 pounds, so it is critical that we maintain presence in the transit zones.

While I am concerned about these cuts, I was relieved to see the FY 2015 request includes a \$90 million increase for video surveillance along the border. Enhanced technology is something this committee has called for repeatedly. In addition, funding for the office of Cybersecurity and Communications has been increased by roughly 1 percent. The increase includes \$746 million dollars to secure Federal civilian networks – the .gov domain – and to help protect the nation’s critical infrastructure sectors from cyber threats.

Still, the majority of the cuts to the Department fall under its most critical mission areas, and the current budget request is strikingly similar to those we’ve seen under your predecessor. Ultimately beyond the cuts, today we must discuss the lack of new strategic planning that the budget proposal reflects.

DHS was scheduled to submit to Congress its Department Review in December 2013, which outlines its priorities for the coming year. We are now well into 2014 and we have yet to receive such a document. How can DHS determine what funds need to be directed toward what missions, when it hasn’t outlined its missions?

Last month, you sat before this committee and told us about your vision for the future of homeland security and for the Department. Today, I would like to examine how, within the parameters of this budget request, your vision for homeland security will be executed.

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