



**Homeland
Security**

February 13, 2013

The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Thompson:

Thank you for your letter regarding the potential impacts of the March 1st sequestration. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) shares your deep concerns about the effects this unprecedented budget reduction to Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 funding will have on DHS, its missions, and our Nation's security and economy.

Reductions mandated by sequestration would undermine the significant progress the Department has made over the past ten years and would negatively affect our ability to carry out our vital missions. Sequestration would roll back border security, increase wait times at our Nation's land ports of entry and airports, affect aviation and maritime safety and security, leave critical infrastructure vulnerable to attacks, hamper disaster response time and our Surge Force capabilities, and significantly scale back cyber security infrastructure protections that have been developed in recent years. In addition, sequestration would necessitate furloughs of up to 14 days for a significant portion of our frontline law enforcement personnel, and could potentially result in reductions in force at the Department. The following provides specific examples of the potential impacts of Sequestration on the Department:

- U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) would not be able to maintain current staffing levels of Border Patrol Agents and CBP Officers as mandated by Congress. Funding and staffing reductions will increase wait times at airports, affect security between land ports of entry, affect CBP's ability to collect revenue owed to the Federal Government, and slow screening and entry programs for those traveling into the United States.
- U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) would not be able to sustain current detention and removal operations or maintain the 34,000 detention beds mandated by Congress. This would significantly roll back progress that resulted in record-high removals of illegal criminal aliens this past year, and would reduce ICE Homeland Security Investigations' activities, including human smuggling, counter-proliferation, and commercial trade fraud investigations.

- The Transportation Security Administration would reduce its frontline workforce, which would substantially increase passenger wait times at airport security checkpoints.
- The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) would have to curtail air and surface operations by nearly twenty-five percent, adversely affecting maritime safety and security across nearly all missions areas. A reduction of this magnitude will substantially reduce drug interdiction, migrant interdiction, fisheries law enforcement, aids to navigation, and other law enforcement operations as well as the safe flow of commerce along U.S. waterways.
- Furloughs and reductions in overtime would adversely affect the availability of the U.S. Secret Service workforce, and hinder ongoing criminal investigations.
- Reductions in funding for operations, maintenance and analytical contracts supporting the National Cybersecurity Protection System (NCPS) would impact our ability to detect and analyze emerging cyber threats and protect civilian federal computer networks.
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency's Disaster Relief Fund would be reduced by over a billion dollars, with an impact on survivors recovering from future severe weather events, and affecting the economic recoveries of local economies in those regions. State and local homeland security grants funding would also be reduced, potentially leading to layoffs of emergency personnel and first responders.
- The Science and Technology Directorate would have to stop ongoing research and development including: countermeasures for bio-threats, improvements to aviation security and cyber security technologies, and projects that support first responders.
- The Department would be unable to move forward with necessary management integration efforts such as modernizing critical financial systems. This would hinder the Department's ability to provide accurate and timely financial reporting, facilitate clean audit opinions, address systems security issues and remediate financial control and financial system weaknesses.

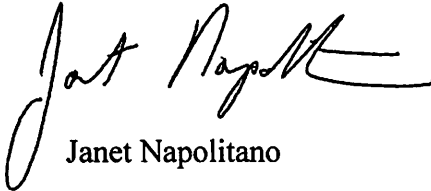
Hurricane Sandy, recent threats surrounding aviation and the continued threat of homegrown terrorism demonstrate how we must remain vigilant and prepared. Threats from terrorism and response and recovery efforts associated with natural disasters will not diminish because of budget cuts to DHS. Even in this current fiscal climate, we do not have the luxury of making significant reductions to our capabilities without placing our Nation at risk. Rather, we must continue to prepare for, respond to, and recover from evolving threats and disasters – and we require sufficient resources to sustain and adapt our capabilities accordingly. We simply cannot absorb the additional reduction posed by Sequestration without significantly negatively affecting frontline operations and our Nation's previous investments in the homeland security enterprise.

The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson

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The Department appreciates the strong support it has received from Congress over the past 10 years. As we approach March 1, Congress is urged to act to prevent Sequestration and ensure that DHS can continue to meet evolving threats and maintain the security of our Nation and citizens. Should you have any questions or concerns at any time, please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 282-8203.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janet Napolitano". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping tail.

Janet Napolitano