



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hearing Statement of Oversight, Management, and Accountability Subcommittee Chairwoman Xochitl Torres Small (D-NM)

Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers: Preparing America's Law Enforcement to Protect the Homeland

May 16, 2019

The nation is currently honoring its law enforcement officers as part of National Police Week. I would like to take a moment to thank those individuals who risk their lives to protect their country and local communities. I also honor those in law enforcement who have lost their lives in the line of duty. In conjunction with Police Week, today we have the opportunity to hear about the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers, or FLETC, the component responsible for training more than 70,000 law enforcement officers and agents annually.

I am proud to say that one of FLETC's facilities is located in my home district of Artesia, New Mexico. Artesia is home to the basic training academy for the United States Border Patrol. It is also the training site for the Federal Air Marshals Service, Federal Flight Deck Officers, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Indian Police Academy. All in all, about 4,000 law enforcement officers are trained at Artesia every year. I recently had the opportunity to visit the Artesia facility and witnessed first-hand the full extent of the work that goes into keeping that training facility running.

Whether the training occurs at Artesia or one of FLETC's many other sites across the country, it is critical that FLETC provide this training efficiently, safely, and, most importantly, in a manner that effectively prepares trainees for the real-life challenges they will encounter in the field.

The Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General (OIG) recently described, in a November 2018 report, some of the challenges FLETC faces related to a lack of resources and its dependence on partner organizations. For example, while FLETC's largest facility in Glynco, Georgia has an annual capacity to house more than 20,000 students, it still houses thousands at off-site hotels. Some of those trainees have been housed at hotels up to 74 miles away from the center. While this results in costs that are three to four times more than on-site housing, it also has non-monetary impacts. For example, one FLETC partner told the Government Accountability Office that its new hires who were housed off-site did not have the same opportunity to acclimate to agency culture.

Additionally, FLETC depends heavily on the partner organizations that use its training facilities. For example, its partners are required to provide or pay for some of the instructors that run FLETC's training programs. Some of those partners rely on short-term temporary duty rotations that come at a far greater expense than multi-year rotations that also provide more consistent instruction for trainees. Despite these challenges, I am encouraged to learn that FLETC has recently developed a Strategic Plan laying out a vision for the component's future.

I look forward to hearing about how FLETC intends to implement its Strategic Plan to work more closely with its partners to ensure that its training courses meet the needs of the Department of Homeland Security and all other partner organizations. I also look forward to hearing about possible solutions to some of the challenges FLETC faces and the ways in which this Committee and Congress as a whole might assist.

Training, both at the beginning of one's career and as one continues to learn new skills and hone old ones, is a critical piece in the career of a law enforcement. And I am confident that we can work together to ensure that FLETC is providing the best possible training for the law enforcement community.

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