



## HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE

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

“Department of Homeland Security Reauthorization and the President’s FY 2018 Budget Request”

June 7, 2017

Remarks as Prepared

On a sunny Tuesday morning in September 2001, the American people woke up and started their day as if it were any other. However, after receiving frantic phone calls from loved ones and after gathering around the nearest TV, people all across the country quickly learned that America was under attack.

By the end of the day the Twin Towers were knocked down, the Pentagon was on fire, and almost three thousand innocent people were dead. This was not just an attack on the United States but an attack on the civilized world, and our homeland was the battlefield.

In the aftermath we asked ourselves, *“How do we prevent this kind of attack from ever happening again?”*

Our national leaders made many important decisions in response to the 9/11 attacks and one was to create the Department of Homeland Security.

While we are on stronger footing today, we must never forget that our enemies are always trying to bring war back to our nation’s doorsteps.

Islamist terrorism continues to spread around the world. The horrifying attacks in Manchester and London are the latest examples of a hateful ideology looking to strike innocent people when they least expect it. Just yesterday we learned of attacks outside of the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris and also in Melbourne, Australia.

Drug smugglers and human traffickers are exploiting our porous borders and nation-states and others are turning digital breakthroughs into digital bombs.

There are many steps we need to take to stay ahead of our enemies. They include reforming and improving the Department of Homeland Security through a first ever reauthorization and making sure it has a budget with the necessary funds and resources to keep us safe.

Agencies like the DOD are reauthorized every year with structural, policy, and program direction from Congress. However, DHS does not have the many advantages of routine Congressional direction.

This reauthorization will:

1. Assert Congress's Article 1 authority to write laws and give direction to the department;
2. Create efficiencies, eliminate, consolidate, and streamline programs and offices;
3. Protect taxpayer dollars and hold DHS more accountable; and
4. Support America's front-line defenders and first responders.

Secretary Kelly, I know your commitment to this process is strong and I look forward to continuing to work with you on this as we go to markup and the floor. I'd also like to thank you for the note in your testimony today about the importance of this endeavor and how it will help authorities carry out their mission.

A stronger DHS is our goal and the American people deserve no less.

Mr. Secretary, as you know there is a lot of support in Congress for this reauthorization. At the beginning of the year, Chairmen of eight different Committees in the House came together and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in support of this effort under the Speaker's signature and progress is being made daily.

We must also make sure the department is adequately funded and equipped with the tools it needs to carry out its missions.

That is why I was glad to see President Trump demonstrate his commitment to the safety of our homeland in the 2018 budget proposal. It was very reassuring to see that he is keeping his steadfast promise to secure our borders, to make cybersecurity a top priority, and support other key security efforts.

Later today, the House will consider legislation sponsored by my colleague and Chairwoman of the Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security, Congresswoman McSally, that will make it easier to recruit new agents and officers to safeguard our homeland. This bill further demonstrates our Committee's focus on securing our border.

I was also encouraged by a \$127 million increase for cybersecurity operations at the National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD). Your commitment to elevate the cybersecurity mission at DHS will further enhance cyber operations and more effectively secure federal networks. From nation-state hacking to brand-name breaches, our cyber rivals are waging a silent war against us and our defenses. This crisis extends from kitchen tables to corporate board rooms but I believe this budget proposal will help provide the tools to better combat growing cyber risks.

While I am supportive of much of the President's budget request for DHS, I would be remiss if I didn't express my concern about the cuts to grants and training programs that are vital to first responders. As I mentioned earlier, we will address first responder programs in our authorization

bill and I look forward to working with my colleagues to support those who work tirelessly to secure our communities.

Mr. Secretary, I'd like to thank you again for joining us today. Keeping the American people protected is something that unites each and every one of us.

We stand ready to work with you and your team to keep this country safe and we have your back. Thank you.

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