



October 3, 2017

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 25,000 Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officers, Agriculture Specialists and trade enforcement personnel stationed at 328 land, sea and air ports of entry across the United States (U.S.) and at 15 preclearance locations, represented by the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), I am writing to share our views on provisions in H.R. 3548, the Border Security for America Act, that address the critical CBP Office of Field Operations (OFO) staffing shortages at the nation's ports of entry.

As you know, as of June 2017, CBP OFO has 22,810 CBP Officers onboard at the ports of entry—1,404 short of its FY 2017 staffing target of 24,214. The FY 2018 House approved appropriations bill includes funding to fill existing vacancies, but provides no new funding to address the overall CBP Officer staffing shortage of at least 2,107 additional CBP Officers as stipulated by CBP's own FY 2017 Workload Staff Model and to fund an additional 631 CBP Agriculture Specialists as stipulated by CBP's FY 2107 Agriculture Resource Allocation Model.

NTEU strongly supports Section 131 (b) of Title I, Subtitle B of the bill that addresses these OFO staffing shortages by authorizing the hiring, training and maintenance of an active duty presence of **not fewer than 27,725 CBP Officers** and the hiring of 350 full-time additional support staff by September 30, 2021. NTEU also supports the OFO applicable language in Section 131(d) that authorizes the deployment of new canine units at the primary inspection lanes at land ports of entry and Section 131(h) that authorizes the hiring of 631 additional CBP Agriculture Specialists by September 30, 2021.

Additionally, NTEU supports the OFO applicable language in Section 132 that authorizes, among other things, a hiring and retention incentive program and a pilot program for special rates of pay to help the CBP Commissioner staff-up and maintain staffing levels at hard-to-fill remote locations and areas that have been difficult to find full-time permanent CBP employees. Section 132 also includes a provision to increase the overtime limitation for CBP employees to \$45,000. These items are needed to address compensation and employee morale challenges at CBP.

NTEU also supports Section 133 of the bill that mirrors H.R. 2213, the Anti-Border Corruption Reauthorization Act of 2017, which was approved by the House earlier this year to address ongoing difficulties in filling CBP Officer vacancies. Section 133 of the bill would expand the applicant pool for vacant CBP Officer positions by allowing the CBP Commissioner to waive polygraph requirements for certain categories of job applicants, including veterans and state and local law enforcement personnel.

If you have any questions about NTEU views on this bill, please contact Jean Hutter at [jean.hutter@nteu.org](mailto:jean.hutter@nteu.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony M. Reardon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anthony M. Reardon  
National President