



HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE

Statement of Chairman Michael McCaul (R-TX) Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee

"Border Security, Commerce and Travel: Commissioner McAleenan's Vision for the Future of CBP"

April 25, 2018

Remarks as Prepared

First, I would also like to congratulate Commissioner McAleenan (Mac Ah Leenan) on his Senate confirmation last month.

Our country is fortunate that you were willing to answer the President's call and serve as the Commissioner of this agency.

CBP has a broad and important mission – from securing our border and facilitating legitimate trade, to ensuring those who enter our country do so legally.

Commissioner McAleenan, you have a lot on your plate. But I am confident you are up to the task. Despite the historic drop in apprehensions last year, more must be done to secure the border.

During the last few months, we observed a troubling spike in illegal immigration – over 200 percent more crossings this year than last.

And many who are apprehended at the border are not looking to evade capture. They simply turn themselves in to the nearest Border Patrol Agent, or CBP Officer and claim a fear of persecution in their country.

This is what the cartels have coached them to do.

Unfortunately, the cartels understand the weakness of our immigration laws all too well.

They have marketed the use of immigration loopholes to entice illicit migrants.

I support Secretary Nielsen's call to close these loopholes.

We need to change the law that treats unaccompanied minors from Mexico and Central America differently.

We must also reform our asylum policies and ensure the prompt removal of anyone who crosses the border illegally.

In response to the recent surge, mainly in South Texas, the President deployed thousands of National Guard troops to support the effort of the men and women of CBP.

Sending the National Guard to the border is not new.

Guard troops helped build the fence in Operation Jump Start and provided much needed aviation support to supplement CBP's Air and Marine Operations under Operational Phalanx.

I would like to thank Governor Abbott for his leadership on border security. My home state of Texas has been leading the way.

For years we have used the National Guard on the border – at our state's expense – to help ensure the safety of Texans, despite years of inaction by the previous Administration.

Congress has recently provided CBP with billions of dollars to invest in technology, barrier replacement, and new levy wall construction in the Rio Grande Valley Sector.

This will serve as a powerful deterrent to illegal entry as well as provide flood protection against the Rio Grande River.

This is a very important issue and I look forward to hearing an update on CBP's progress in South Texas.

I yield the balance of my time.

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