

**Statement of Chairman Michael McCaul (R-TX)**

**Homeland Security Committee**

*“H.R. 6439, Biometric Identification Migration Alert Program Authorization Act of 2018”*

July 24, 2018

Remarks as Prepared

The terror attacks on 9/11 made clear that we needed to strengthen our information sharing. It needed to be stronger among our law enforcement and intelligence agencies, but also with our international partners.

As terror threats evolve over time, our adversaries become more agile. They are desperate to avoid detection and sneak into our country.

While testifying before our Committee last month, Secretary Nielsen stated, “On average, my Department blocks 10 known or suspected terrorists a day from traveling or attempting to enter the United States.”

We know that one of the ways they try to come here is through the exploitation of illicit pathways in South and Central America.

To combat this threat, we need to leverage our international partnerships and use the most advanced technology to our advantage.

One of the best programs we have for this is ICE’s Biometric Identification Transnational Migration Alert Program, known as BITMAP.

BITMAP was created in 2011 by the Obama administration and is utilized throughout the world.

Through this program, law enforcement officers in participating countries collect biometric and biographic data on special interest individuals.

That valuable data is then shared with our own law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

This enriches our intel community databases with new and vital information.

In the last few years BITMAP has identified several hundred known or suspected terrorists.

While highlighting the importance of BITMAP, former Acting Director of ICE, Thomas Homan stated to us in May that, “People that were known terrorists had been turned around in Panama and sent back before reaching our shores…[BITMAP] has already proven successful.”

BITMAP does not just target suspected terrorists, however.

It also identifies drug smugglers, human traffickers, murderers, child predators, and dangerous gangs like MS-13.

My bill will fully authorize BITMAP and help identify national security threats.

Simply put, it will help stop dangerous individuals who want to bring harm to the American people from entering the country.

I look forward to passing this legislation out of our Committee and continuing our efforts to secure the homeland.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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