

**Opening Statement of Chairman Ron Johnson
Nomination Hearing to consider the Honorable Chad F. Wolf
to be Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security
September 23, 2020**

As prepared for delivery:

Today, the Committee will consider the nomination of the Honorable Chad Wolf who has been nominated by the President to serve as the Secretary of Homeland Security. As I have told former nominees, I believe that serving as the Secretary of Homeland Security is one of the most difficult jobs in government. The challenges and threats facing our country are complex, and the Department plays a critical role in addressing many of these issues and keeping Americans safe.

The Department of Homeland Security was formed nearly two decades ago and tasked with extensive responsibilities. During the last six months alone, DHS and its components have responded to unprecedented challenges including the COVID-19 pandemic, violent riots, and natural disasters. Additionally, DHS and its components must continue its missions to protect our nation's infrastructure, safeguard our cyberspace, secure our borders, enforce our immigration laws and combat evolving terror threats.

The more than 240,000 men and women of DHS play a crucial role in keeping our country safe and secure. They need a leader who can effectively work with other Federal agencies, our neighboring countries, and can ensure coordination between components. Our Committee has held a series of hearings to examine the government's role in the COVID-19 pandemic response. While much work remains to be done, it is evident that the men and women of DHS have worked tirelessly to respond to this crisis. The Department has been involved in almost every aspect of the response, from securing and distributing personal protective equipment, to screening travelers, and targeting fraudulent activity.

In addition to responding to the ongoing pandemic, DHS has been instrumental in combating recent violent and destructive riots. Congress mandated that DHS protect our federal buildings and assets, and we have seen our men and women in law enforcement do just that. There is no room in this country for the acts of violence we have seen, and I commend Acting Secretary Wolf's decisive and effective leadership during these times.

The Department of Homeland Security benefits from confirmed leadership and it is an important role of this Committee to ensure it has an effective leader. The Secretary of Homeland Security must be willing to work with Congress as an active and willing participant to ensure effective oversight. Acting Secretary Wolf has done just that, as he has testified before our Committee multiple times this year despite the Department having more than 100 Congressional oversight committees.

The Department is not perfect by any means so we must ensure that the next Secretary of Homeland Security vow to work towards fixing its shortcomings and addressing problems as they arise. Acting Secretary Wolf's extensive management experience combined with his

leadership of the Department over the last ten months make him uniquely qualified to serve as the Secretary of Homeland Security.

Acting Secretary Wolf, I thank you for your service and your willingness to continue serving the Department. I look forward to your testimony.