



**Testimony of**

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**Before**

**UNITED STATES SENATE**

**COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY**

**AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**On**

***“The Department of Homeland Security’s Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2026”***

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## Introduction

Chairman Paul, Ranking Member Peters, and distinguished Members of this Committee:

It is a privilege to present to you the Department of Homeland Security's critical work to keep our nation safe and share our priorities for Fiscal Year 2026. In the first 100 days under President Trump's leadership, the Department has established the most secure border in our nation's history, kept dangerous criminals out of America, and deported illegal aliens who threaten our people. We will not stop until there are none left.

The President's FY 2026 Budget request for DHS will establish a firm foundation upon which to surge resources in support of the Administration's border security and immigration enforcement objectives. The Administration has requested over \$175 billion for DHS as part of the reconciliation bill currently under consideration in Congress. Reconciliation would empower the DHS to implement the President's mass removal campaign and secure the border.

As we work to implement President Trump's policies, I am determined to lead the over 270,000 men and women of the Department in the most efficient and effective way possible to safeguard our nation. While the Department can seem disparate—23 component offices with broad ranging missions sets—we are united in our resolve to protect the homeland and stand ready to defend these United States against threats by air, land, sea or cyberspace. From clearing the streets of terrorists to deploying to disaster-ridden communities to help after a natural disaster, the brave men and women serving on our front lines must be fully equipped to perform their duty to keep America safe and secure.

Under President Trump's leadership, I am committed to securing our nation's borders, enforcing immigration laws, securing cyberspace and critical infrastructure, enabling transportation and trade, combating exploitation, and ensuring American resilience and preparedness.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection, for instance, is now focused on critical border security front line operations instead of serving as a pass-through agency processing illegal aliens into our country like under the last administration. The message has gotten out worldwide that America is now enforcing our laws and the border is closed. The issuing of Notices to Appear, Withdrawals, and Expedited Removals decreased by 99 percent from January 21 through April 15 of 2025, compared to the same timeframe in Fiscal Year 2024. There has been a 93 percent decrease in inadmissibility encounters throughout the southwest border since January 21, 2025. We have also seen a 94 percent decrease in encounters of unaccompanied alien children.

America is witnessing a historic decrease in illicit drug traffic due to the Trump Administration's policy changes, swift repatriation efforts, aggressive prosecutorial initiatives, and significant messaging campaigns. In March of 2025, illicit fentanyl traffic at the southwest border fell by 54 percent compared to March of 2024. The U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Customs and Border Protection have seized nearly 232,000 pounds of fentanyl and other illicit drugs-stopping them from ever reaching American communities.

There has been a significant decline in the number of illegal aliens coming over the border, as many are turning back before they even get here. March of 2025 saw the lowest number of border encounters in recorded history, at just under 7,200. On February 25, 2025, Border Patrol encountered a record low daily total of less than 160 illegal aliens at the southern border. Overall, border encounters have fallen by 99 percent, and there has been a 95 percent decrease in the number of estimated gotaways – the biggest threat to public safety<sup>1</sup>.

Following the Trump Administration’s designation of six cartels and two transnational gangs as Foreign Terrorist Organizations, we have been able to use a whole-of-government approach to crack down on these vicious groups, treating them like the terrorists they are.

Under President Trump, DHS is committed to complete construction of the southern border wall, a commonsense solution to securing our border. Currently, we have more than 85 miles of new border barrier, 17 miles of which are waterborne barriers, in various stages of construction and planning. We are also working with DoD and the Texas National Guard to deploy temporary barriers to include concertina wire, razor wire, chain link fencing, and additional barriers. This is in addition to the Administration’s request for billions of additional dollars for border barrier like new primary and secondary border wall systems, waterborne barrier systems, and technology where wall is currently installed but lacks the completed systems needed.

We are committed to enforcing the United States’ immigration laws. Our priority is to identify, arrest, detain, and remove dangerous criminal illegal aliens and those with final orders of removal. We are giving illegal aliens the opportunity to voluntarily self-deport using the CBP Home app, in response and contrast to the Biden Administration’s utilization of the CBP One app, which allowed more than 1 million aliens to illegally enter the United States. Self-deportation is the best option for illegal aliens, while preserving our law enforcement resources. It saves our taxpayer dollars and allows us to focus valuable resources on dangerous criminal illegal aliens.

Our enforcement efforts prioritize illegal aliens who have committed crimes and are a threat to public safety and national security, including aliens who are affiliated with Foreign Terrorist Organizations like Tren de Aragua and MS-13. However, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has the authority to deport anyone in the country here illegally, which is a crime.

The number of suspected gang members U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has arrested since January 20, 2025, represents a 105 percent increase compared to the same period in Fiscal Year 2024. The number of known or suspected terrorists we have arrested from January 20 to mid-April this year represents a 700 percent increase compared to the same period in Fiscal Year 2024.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A gotaway is an illegal entry that was detected and that all efforts to continue tracking the entry have stopped.

<sup>2</sup> ICE arrest data is current through April 16, 2025.

We have secured the border, decreased drug trafficking, and arrested criminal illegal aliens, but we need Congress to secure investments in staffing, infrastructure, technology, information sharing, and public-private partnerships to ensure these successes continue.

### Trade Enforcement

Our Homeland Security mission includes safeguarding the American worker. We are committed to enforcing President Trump's America First Trade Agenda. On April 2, 2025, Liberation Day, President Trump announced new tariffs on 185 countries to address the national emergency posed by the large and persistent goods trade deficits that is driven by the absence of reciprocity in our trade relationships. That day, he hammered home that the days of unilateral American disarmament in trade policy are over.

As U.S. Customs and Border Protection enforces tariffs on imports and Homeland Security Investigations performs criminal investigations on illicit trade, travel, and finance, the Department of Homeland Security stands on the frontlines of America's economic defense. We have been open and receptive to reasonable overtures made by our trading partners, who have come to the negotiating table. This has proven what we have known all along: tariffs work.

We've implemented automated systems, targeted inspections, and field guidance in the hands of frontline officers to improve tariff collections. In Antidumping and Countervailing Duty revenue collection, we secured \$1.1 billion in additional revenue as a result of targeted reviews of 774 shipments that were detected as discrepant for Antidumping and Countervailing Duty payment. Since January 20, 2025, we have collected over \$37 billion in tariffs. With a 99 percent collection rate, U.S. Customs and Border Protection has consistently shown to be an extremely reliable enforcement arm in collecting tariff revenue.

We play a critical role in enforcing U.S. laws prohibiting imports of goods made with forced labor, which is a form of human trafficking. In enforcing these laws to include the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, we keep these illicit goods from entry into our markets, preventing malign actors from profiting off human rights abuses and undermining U.S. businesses and their workers with unfairly traded goods. Eliminating goods made with forced labor from global supply chains makes legitimate supply chains more resilient and allows American made products to compete on a level playing field.

### Transportation Security Administration

Keeping American travelers safe requires that we safeguard our inherently open and vulnerable transportation systems. The Transportation Security Administration is directly responsible for ensuring Americans can travel within the U.S. safely and securely. In a single day, the U.S. sees

over 45,000 flights and 2.9 million airline passengers cross more than 29 million miles of air space.<sup>3</sup> In addition to mention maritime and land-based public transport.

We will do what other administrations failed to do – follow the law and implement the REAL ID program to stop domestic air travel of illegal aliens, criminals, and foreign nationals using fraudulent identification. This law was passed over 20 years ago, and 81% percent of American travelers are already REAL ID compliant. We will ensure compliance and security. REAL ID was created to help ensure that no horrific attack like the one on 9/11 will ever happen again. In preparing for implementation, which began on May 7, 2025, we worked closely with States to ensure compliance and urge every American to obtain a REAL ID for smoother and more secure air travel.

The Transportation Security Administration continues to improve efficiency while enhancing security through growth of the TSA PreCheck program, accounting for over one-third of all travel volume. Over 21 million travelers have seen how easy it is to enroll in TSA PreCheck, with reduced pricing for enrollments and renewals, making it more affordable for all eligible U.S. travelers.

### *Cybersecurity and Combatting Cyber Crime*

In the hyper-connected 21<sup>st</sup> century, securing the homeland now includes protecting our cyber infrastructure. The threat environment to our homeland through cyberspace now changes by the nanosecond, and we must keep up. The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency proactively addresses a rapidly evolving cyber threat environment and thwarts cyber-attacks from foreign adversaries and cyber criminals. These attacks continue to grow in frequency, scope, and severity, as demonstrated by the recent cyber espionage campaign by the threat actor known as Salt Typhoon, which resulted in the compromise of private communications of several high-profile individuals from adversaries and criminals who seek to do us harm.

China has repeatedly demonstrated its capability and intent to infiltrate and potentially disrupt critical systems within the United States. Chinese-affiliated actors have compromised multiple communications, energy, transportation, and water critical infrastructure organizations across the country. Every day, the Department of Homeland Security works with government, industry, and international partners to prevent, detect, and respond to cyber intrusions to U.S. critical infrastructure.

We have dramatically increased our cyber operations to prevent threats and address vulnerabilities within the Federal Government. This effort goes hand-in-hand with our critical infrastructure efforts, as China and other nation states are often leveraging the same tools and tactics to weaken and spy on the U.S. Our unique authorities and positioning between the Intelligence Community, law enforcement, industry, and international partners is critical to understanding cyber adversary intent and applying critical protections domestically.

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<sup>3</sup> [Air Traffic By The Numbers | Federal Aviation Administration](#)

### U.S. Secret Service

Since the beginning of the Trump Administration, the men and women of the U.S. Secret Service have ensured the safety of protectees during more than 1,400 official visits and successfully secured the safety of visiting world leaders at over 270 protective visits. At the same time, Secret Service investigative operations have recovered hundreds of millions of dollars and bolstered the law enforcement partnerships that enable these types of operations. In the first two months of this Administration, the agency's criminal and cyber investigations have enabled the Secret Service to return over \$226,000,000 in forfeited assets to American people who were victims of crimes and incurred financial loss.

Secret Service manpower needs have been reassessed in the wake of the July 13, 2024, assassination attempt on President Trump. We have since implemented targeted recruiting for experience and training that is transferable to specialty teams. We also created a talent pipeline with military organizations whose missions align with the Secret Service's technical requirements and have advanced digital platforms to enhance job candidate outreach and engagement.

Secret Service has executed two nationwide advertising campaigns to increase recruitment, which are already yielding incredible recruiting results. Under President Trump, the Secret Service has had a 194 percent increase in applications since this period last year and have hired the most Special Agents in the agency's history. We are on track to almost double last year's law enforcement hiring.

### U.S. Coast Guard

The U.S. Coast Guard is a central pillar of American national security and power projection. As a military service and law enforcement organization, the Coast Guard faces a unique set of operational challenges and opportunities, necessitating a unique posture for rapid response to a variety of evolving missions with a modernized fleet that supports these requirements. As the Arctic increases in importance to American security, the Coast Guard is uniquely positioned as the only military service possessing the fleet necessary to break polar ice and maintain sea lanes.

The Coast Guard is facing the greatest readiness crisis since World War II. We are acting now through Force Design 2028 to restore capability and deter emerging threats. With Congress' help, we will transform the Coast Guard and deliver a future-ready force. President Trump and I are fully aligned in their directive: reinvigorate the Coast Guard or risk strategic failure.

Focused on four campaigns – Force Design 2028 will reform the U.S. Coast Guard's personnel, organization, contracting and acquisition, and technology. Increased national demand for our Coast Guard requires a larger, more capable military workforce. This campaign will improve training systems, boost access to medical care, and modernize both the Coast Guard Reserve and the civilian management system.

As global security threats, technological advancements, and operational demands continue to evolve, the Coast Guard must adapt its organizational construct and internal decision-making and governance processes to remain relevant, effective, and responsive. We will develop a high velocity acquisition and contracting system to rapidly deliver the assets the Service needs to fulfill its commitment to the American people. The Coast Guard will accelerate the adoption of secure, state-of-the-market technologies to enhance data sharing, situational awareness, and operational effectiveness.

The great men and women of our U.S. Coast Guard are excited to support the efforts of the Administration to secure our border and strengthen our economy. The Coast Guard continues to conduct search and rescue missions, and to detect, deter, and interdict illegal migration, drug smuggling, and other malign activity before it reaches our shores.

### *Emergency Management and Disaster Response*

The Federal Government's role in emergency management and response needs to be both reformed and reimagined. Under President Trump's leadership, we are reorienting the Federal Emergency Management agency's responsibilities and eliminate the dysfunction of the current agency as it exists today. We need to enable preparedness against global and dynamic threats and hazards, while providing expeditious, effective, and impartial response to disasters. This alignment seeks to empower State and local jurisdictions and individuals to engage more actively in national resilience and preparedness.

Just four days after returning to office, President Trump directed aggressive actions to expedite response and recovery in areas recently devastated by hurricanes or wildfires. Within those first four days, President Trump was on the ground meeting survivors in North Carolina who endured Hurricane Helene and in California who endured preventable wildfires around Los Angeles County. Within days of the President's visit, we registered 2,600 families in North Carolina that desperately needed help and reduced by nearly 80 percent the number of assistance cases stuck in bureaucratic red tape. While taxpayer dollars continue to subsidize the majority of disaster response and recovery costs, we are identifying ways to preserve these tax dollars or use them more responsibly.

The American people need action –not red tape, and the President continues to identify opportunities to enhance efficiency while expediting response to ongoing natural disasters, including severe weather, tornadoes, flooding, or wildfires across multiple States. Thanks to President Trump's approval of Stafford Act declarations, we provided over \$58 million dollars in assistance directly to survivors and enabled rapid deployment of Incident Management Assistance Teams, emergency communication support, and Urban Search and Rescue teams, bolstering State and local disaster response operations.

President Trump remains committed to saving American lives and livelihoods, and we will institute commonsense approaches to achieve national security and resilience while empowering state and local governments and the strongest of all –American citizens.

## **Conclusion**

As the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, I can proudly say that with honor and integrity, we will safeguard the American people, our homeland, and our values. The achievements I share are just a few examples of what we have accomplished in just 100 days. With a job as big as the one the men and women of this Department take on every day, it is impossible to list all of the things that its 23 components are doing to protect the American people and improve operations to deliver a more responsive and efficient government.

I am grateful to the men and women of the Department of Homeland Security who exude bravery, dedication, and patriotism as they carry out their sworn duties allowing the American people to sleep better at night. We dutifully ask Congress to continue providing our men and women with the resources that they need to do their jobs.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.