

**Statement of Ranking Member Thomas R. Carper**  
*“The Homeland Security Department’s Budget Submission for Fiscal Year 2016”*  
April 29, 2015

*As prepared for delivery:*

My thanks to Secretary Johnson for joining us today to talk about the President’s fiscal year 2016 budget request for the Department of Homeland Security.

Before I discuss the budget, I would like to thank Chairman Johnson and the rest of my colleagues for coming together last week to confirm Russ Deyo to the incredibly important position of Under Secretary for Management at the Department. I hope that we will be able to replicate this success and quickly confirm Vice Admiral Peter Neffenger as the next Administrator for the Transportation Security Administration.

The President has requested a little more than \$41 billion dollars in discretionary funding for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). For the first time in several years, we are talking about an increase in discretionary spending over the previous year. I support the President’s budget request for DHS and am pleased that he has recognized the need to provide this Department with an increase in funds I believe it truly does need, if we expect it to efficiently and effectively carry out its vital missions.

For example, this budget request makes a sizable investment – over \$800 million dollars –in cybersecurity. These funds will help DHS better secure our banks and electric grid, as well as other federal agencies, from cyber attacks.

It also continues our recent investments in border security. This year, for example, the President is requesting roughly \$845 million dollars more than last year for Customs and Border Protection. This funding would maintain the current record level of staffing for the Border Patrol and make targeted investments in force multiplying technology and equipment. For my colleagues who are eager to pass a border security bill, I respectfully suggest that supporting the President’s budget request is a good place to start.

I was also very encouraged to see a proposed increase in funding for the ongoing consolidation of the Department’s Headquarters at St. Elizabeths. Completing this project will ultimately save the taxpayer more than \$1 billion dollars over the next 30 years by cutting down the number of costly leases. Research my staff and I have done indicates that funding the St. Elizabeths project will also improve operations and employee morale at DHS.

All of these needed investments and many more, however, may disappear if DHS is required to absorb the deep funding cuts proposed by our colleagues in the House. I understand the House has just established its high mark for DHS discretionary spending in fiscal year 2016 at a little more than \$39 billion dollars. This is \$350 million dollars less than the Department is working with this year. And it’s almost \$2 billion dollars less than what the President has proposed. Cuts this large could hurt our security and stall many new initiatives at the Department. The threats

we face as a country are just too great and too complex to fund DHS below what it received in 2015, and even 2014.

I understand some of our colleagues are willing to spare the Department of Defense from cuts, and even to increase defense spending. While defense spending is certainly important, we must remember that the Department of Homeland Security is also a vital part of our national security efforts. We need to work harder together to find a fair and responsible solution for the budget challenges facing all of our essential government agencies. I look forward to hearing from the Secretary about the impacts budget cuts would have on our security, as well as the potential impact of sequestration on DHS, should it kick in.

In closing, I would just like to thank the brave men and women in your Department, Mr. Secretary, for everything they do to keep us safe. Their work is important and they are making progress. That is why it is so essential for Congress to do its job to provide your Department with the funding and leadership it needs at this critical time.