

**Opening Statement of Chairman Ron Johnson
Business Meeting, February 1, 2017**

As prepared for delivery:

Good morning. We have had a couple opportunities to gather for nomination hearings prior to today, but I want to formally welcome our new Members to the Committee: Senators John Hoeven from North Dakota, Steve Daines from Montana, Maggie Hassan from New Hampshire, and Kamala Harris from California.

This Committee has been known for its bipartisanship, and we have had a great deal of success when Members focus on areas of agreement. In the last Congress alone, this Committee approved 85 bipartisan bills, 49 of which were signed into law by President Obama.

We will again have three subcommittees: the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, chaired by Senator Rob Portman with ranking member Tom Carper; the Subcommittee on Federal Spending Oversight and Emergency Management, chaired by Rand Paul with ranking member Gary Peters; and the Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management, chaired by Senator James Lankford with ranking member Heidi Heitkamp. The subcommittees will do important work over the next two years on oversight and reigning in federal spending and regulations.

Like any good business, a successful committee must have a clear mission and a clear set of priorities to guide its work. One of our priorities under the homeland security jurisdiction remains securing our borders. Israel is proof that a country can secure its borders when it has the political will to do so. In December, I traveled to Israel to examine Israel's approach to border security. Since Israel completed fencing along its porous border with Egypt, illegal immigration at this border has dropped by 99 percent—from more than 16,000 illegal entries in 2011 to less than 20 in 2016. Today, I am releasing a staff report that examines Israel's approach to homeland security and offers lessons for the United States to learn from the Israeli experience.

I look forward to working together.