

**Opening Statement of Chairman Ron Johnson**  
**“Nomination of the Honorable Elaine C. Duke to be Deputy Secretary,**  
**U.S. Department of Homeland Security”**

**March 8, 2017**

*As prepared for delivery:*

Good morning. We are here to consider the nomination of Elaine Duke to be the next Deputy Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

Ms. Duke, welcome back. You are no stranger to this Committee. You have testified many times before our Committee. That includes your June 2008 nomination hearing for the position of Under Secretary for Management at DHS, for which you were confirmed by voice-vote. I appreciate your willingness to once again answer the call to serve.

Following the President’s inauguration, the Senate immediately confirmed General Kelly to be the Homeland Security Secretary with overwhelming bipartisan support. As I told General Kelly during his nomination hearing: leading DHS is one of the most challenging positions in government. DHS is assigned some of the federal government’s most important responsibilities—including transportation and border security, enforcing our immigration laws, securing our federal cyber assets, protecting critical infrastructure, and working to keep the American people safe. Successfully leading this 240,000-person agency requires DHS officials to work effectively with other federal agencies and coordinate between the Department’s own components.

Much work remains to be done at DHS to achieve its priority missions: we must secure our borders; we must effectively enforce our immigration laws; and DHS must continue to fight the evolving terrorist threats that target the homeland.

In addition, DHS faces significant challenges as an organization. Low morale is still pervasive at the Department. Although this appears to be improving under a Secretary committed to following the law, we must continue to monitor the issue of attrition as we look to increase manpower within the Department. The Inspector General and other oversight bodies have found that DHS continues to mismanage expenditures. And the Department’s many components still do not effectively work together.

Ms. Duke, I know that you appreciate these challenges. You have valuable first-hand knowledge and the experience to serve in this critical role at this time. You have served under two different administrations. I believe the fact that President Obama asked you to stay at the Department following your service during the Bush Administration is a testament to your character and dedication to DHS. Based on your qualifications, it is no surprise that five former DHS Deputy Secretaries spanning both Democratic and Republican administrations have endorsed your nomination.

Thank you again for your willingness to serve. I look forward to your testimony today.