

## Opening Statement of Senator McCaskill

March 7, 2018

Thank you, Chairman Johnson. As the Chairman noted, this is the first time that this Committee has passed a bill authorizing DHS since the Department was created in 2002.

The nature of the threat has evolved, and the Department of Homeland Security must evolve with it. Thanks to the explosion in e-commerce, packages of fentanyl are mixed in with the 1.3 million packages coming into this country from abroad every day. Twitter and Facebook – which didn't exist when DHS was created – are being used for ISIS propaganda and to create chaos around our elections. And Russian hackers are constantly probing for vulnerabilities in our cybersecurity.

This bill is a great opportunity to help DHS move forward. It is also a chance for the committee to set a precedent of reviewing the Department's programs and authorities on a more regular basis. I just want to briefly mention a few key areas of the bill that will protect American communities and improve oversight of taxpayer dollars.

First, I'm glad we were able to codify a lot of the agency's acquisition oversight mechanisms, including the language in the bills that Senator Daines and I introduced earlier this Congress. These are basic, good government policies that will reduce wasteful spending and failed acquisition programs, something the Department has sadly experienced too many times in the past. Our nation's security and the lives of our first responders should not be put at risk because we can't get interoperable radios. And we shouldn't spend billions of dollars on technology like Biowatch that isn't ready for prime time and won't actually make us safer.

I also think that elevating the cybersecurity role of the Department is long past due. We're facing unprecedented cyber threats not just from Russia, North Korea and China, but from non-state actors looking to steal everything from our critical national security information, to Americans' credit cards, bank information, and identities. The new Cyber Security and Infrastructure Security Agency is a good step in the right direction.

On the other hand, I'm concerned that the bill removes the funding authorization levels from the Homeland Security Grant programs. We've seen over and over again that terrorist incidents and other threats to Americans aren't limited to New York and LA. From a terrorist in San Bernardino to active shooter

situations in small town communities from Aurora to Virginia Tech to Parkland, Florida, every community needs to be prepared to defend itself. Yet many urban areas have stopped receiving funds for training and coordination efforts, and this bill gives appropriators no guidance on funding levels for these grant programs. We abdicate our responsibility as a committee if we can't do the basic work of figuring out how much funding these programs should be authorized to.

That is why I plan to offer an amendment today that will restore funding for these programs so that Kansas City, Milwaukee, Columbus, Oklahoma City, and Sacramento can simply maintain the training and equipment they have used past federal funding on. It makes no sense to have given these communities funding for training one year, only to cut them off the next so that new officers aren't prepared to deal with these threats.

Finally, I know this bill doesn't authorize every component of DHS because of the crazy Senate jurisdiction issues. Commerce still has the Coast Guard and TSA; the Finance Committee still has Customs; and the Judiciary Committee has all of the immigration components. I know that we've included a study in this bill that will look at this issue, but what we really need to do is have a discussion with leadership and the other Chairmen and Ranking Members of those committees. I'm not saying that jurisdiction needs to be consolidated into this Committee. But

the Senate needs to do something on this. DHS simply has too many masters, and as a result, it spends more time answering Congressional inquiries and preparing for hearings than any other agency. That is time and resources that DHS is not spending protecting our communities, and that should be unacceptable to every American. We have to stop with the bureaucratic nonsense and allow DHS to get on with the job of keep Americans safe.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for working with me to get this bill to a place where it can move through this Committee. As a member of the Armed Services committee, I see what it means to the Department of Defense to look at ways to improve the Department every year, and I hope we are setting up this Committee to do the same for DHS going forward.