

**U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
“Resources and Authorities Needed to Protect and Secure the Homeland”**

OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER GARY C. PETERS

March 4, 2020

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Secretary Wolf for being here today, and for your service to our nation.

Every year, the Homeland Security Secretary comes before this committee to discuss the “tough choices” that were made to arrive at these final budgetary numbers. But we don’t often hear how those decisions were made.

The numbers in this budget proposal represent decisions that will have a real effect on the safety of the American people – choices that I hope were made after extensive deliberation and thoughtful consideration.

It is our duty to carefully consider your proposal and thoroughly evaluate the process that lead you to these conclusions.

If we went through this proposal line by line, we would likely find any number of areas on which we disagree. But we share the common goal of keeping the American people safe.

At the same time, your mission to secure the homeland and protect the American people must coexist with a diverse set of responsibilities: to facilitate lawful trade and travel, to uphold basic civil rights and liberties, to protect the integrity of our elections, and to assist communities around the country recovering from disasters.

It is my hope that this budget, and our discussion here today, will reflect that broad scope of challenging responsibilities. Secretary Wolf, I look forward to hearing from you today.