

Chairman Johnson's Opening Statement
"The Homeland Security Department's Budget Submission for Fiscal Year 2017"
Tuesday, June 6, 2017

As submitted for the record:

I would like to thank Secretary John Kelly for testifying before the Committee today to discuss the administration's 2018 budget request for the Department of Homeland Security.

Since Secretary Kelly was confirmed, DHS has made significant progress—particularly by enhancing border security and immigration enforcement.

Illegal border crossings are down sharply compared to prior years. This confirms one of the key lessons we have learned in our 24 hearings on border security and public safety: To truly secure our border, we must identify and eliminate-or at least dramatically reduce-the incentives for illegal immigration.

Of course securing the border and enforcing immigration laws are just two of the Department's missions. DHS has significant responsibilities for protecting the nation from other threats, including the urgent threat of terrorism and cyber-attacks. President Trump's budget proposes significant new increases for border security, immigration enforcement, drug interdiction, transportation security, and cybersecurity. In total, the Department's Fiscal Year 2018 budget requests \$71.6 billion, a 7.1 percent increase over current funding.

But we should not view the proposal in a vacuum. One of the greatest threats to U.S. economic and national security is our debt and our long-term fiscal challenges. Using the Congressional Budget Office's projections and realistic assumptions, we know that the federal government is on track to accumulate \$129 trillion in deficits over the next 30 years.

It is more important than ever that we carefully review each agency's budget to ensure that each dollar is being spent wisely. As the lead authorizing committee for DHS, it is our job to oversee the Department's spending. I am pleased to see the DHS budget proposal includes recommendations for achieving cost-savings within the Department's budget, such as the proposed \$958 million reduction by achieving efficiencies in FEMA's federal assistance and grant programs.

I look forward to working with the members of the Committee and the Department on reforms to streamline DHS operations and programs to achieve cost-savings and to focus resources on the most important missions, like securing our borders and enforcing our immigration laws, protecting against cyber-attacks and threats to our critical infrastructure systems, and countering terrorism at home and abroad.