

**Opening Statement of Chairman Johnson**  
**“Reauthorizing DHS:**  
**Positioning the Department to Address New and Emerging Threats to the Homeland”**

**As submitted for the record:**

This Committee’s mission is to enhance the economic and national security of America and promote a more efficient, effective, and accountable government. Today’s roundtable will consider the reauthorization of the Department of Homeland Security—a priority for the Committee to achieve our mission.

Congress created DHS in 2002 by combining 22 individual government agencies into one new department. Today, DHS has a workforce of more than 240,000 employees and a budget authority of \$65 billion. DHS is charged with some of the federal government’s most important responsibilities: preventing terrorism, securing our borders, administering and enforcing immigration laws, securing cyberspace, and supporting national resilience to disasters.

It is not surprising that a department cobbled together from so many separate agencies faces difficulties executing its mission and managing its programs. Watchdogs like the Government Accountability Office and the Department’s Inspector General have studied DHS’s challenges and issued thousands of recommendations. This Committee has also provided oversight and legislative fixes. But much more work remains.

DHS must not only fix old recurring problems, but evolve to address new and emerging threats. Former Secretary John Kelly said it best: the Department “cannot keep the United States and its citizens secure with authorities drafted in a time before smart phones and social media. We need updated authorities, updated support, and updated accountability for the world we live in today.”

Surprisingly, DHS has never been reauthorized—leaving many of the Department’s critical programs without clear legislative guidance and lacking the resources needed to address ever-changing threats. Reauthorizing DHS will help ensure that Congress is holding the Department accountable and will provide DHS with the tools it needs to be successful. The bill we are considering, the DHS Authorization Act, passed with bipartisan support in the House. It would better position DHS to address today’s threats by streamlining outdated and unnecessary programs, reorganizing key aspects of the Department’s operations, and strengthening unity of effort across the Department.

This Committee has worked in a bipartisan fashion to strengthen DHS. Senator Carper and I worked last Congress with former Secretary Jeh Johnson to enact legislation to strengthen DHS’s management and unity of effort, and I appreciate the opportunity to work with Ranking Member McCaskill in continuing this bipartisan tradition. Our staffs have held more than 25 joint informational briefings with DHS officials and key stakeholders in the last few months to better understand the challenges the Department faces. I look forward to gathering further input today to make this legislation as strong as possible.