

**Chairman Peters Opening Statement As Prepared for Delivery**  
**Full Committee Hearing: Resources and Authorities Needed to Protect and Secure the**  
**Homeland**  
**May 4, 2022**

Secretary Mayorkas, welcome back to the Committee. I'm grateful for your continued service to our nation. The Department of Homeland Security and its hardworking employees continue to face a challenging mission each and every day, and I appreciate your efforts to tackle these obstacles head on.

Today's hearing is an important opportunity for this Committee to discuss the Administration's 2023 budget request, and hear directly from the Secretary of Homeland Security on how the Department plans to use these resources to address the serious threats facing our nation.

As lawmakers, we must carefully examine these proposals, and how they will impact the Department's critical missions to ensure the safety and security of every American.

This year, President Biden's budget proposal includes investments that will be essential for tackling the most serious issues facing our nation, including persistent cyber-attacks that disrupt lives and livelihoods all across the country.

I have appreciated the Administration's vigilance and work to prevent additional breaches. But – as we have seen from attacks like SolarWinds, JBS, or the Colonial Pipeline, our foreign adversaries and cybercriminals will continue targeting our networks. We must be prepared for the Russian government and their proxies to continue these efforts in retaliation for our support in Ukraine.

I'm grateful that the President has signed into law a landmark provision that I wrote along with Ranking Member Portman to require critical infrastructure to report cyber-attacks and ransomware payments to the federal government, but there is more we must do to enhance cybersecurity across the board, especially for the most frequent targets of ransomware attacks like retailers and small businesses.

At the same time, DHS must continue its vital work to protect the physical security of Americans, especially by addressing hateful violence that has caused countless communities across the nation to live in fear simply because of how they look, or where they worship.

According to our national security agencies, domestic terrorism driven by white nationalist and anti-government ideologies, continues to be the most serious threat facing American communities today.

I look forward to continue working with the Administration to ensure the government has the necessary tools, resources, and data to help prevent and fight back against these hateful ideologies, while respecting the civil rights and liberties of every American.

As the Department tackles this significant issue, it also must work to ensure secure and efficient travel and trade at our Northern and Southern Borders.

While I am pleased the President's budget proposal includes funding for the Gordie Howe Bridge, I'll continue working to secure additional resources for the Blue Water Bridge, and other ports of entry across Michigan, so that my state can continue serving as a vital hub for international commerce.

Today's hearing will also provide an opportunity to discuss the serious challenges we face at the Southern Border.

It is clear that once Title 42 is lifted, the Administration must have a plan in place, and the necessary resources to deter illegal border crossings and prevent deadly and illicit drugs from reaching our communities, while safely and efficiently processing the number of asylum seekers expected to arrive at the Southern Border.

This is no easy task, and it is a complex issue that requires a multifaceted approach to both secure our borders, and address the anticipated humanitarian challenges.

I look forward to hearing additional details today on how the Administration intends to address this policy change, and the Committee will have another opportunity to hear from senior Administration officials on this issue tomorrow morning.

Finally, this Committee must also ensure that DHS is tackling long-term threats to the American people. Natural disasters continue to cause death, destroy property and small businesses, and harm livelihoods. Congress and the Administration must work together to provide investments in resiliency efforts that will save taxpayer dollars in the long run, such as the loan program created by my STORM Act.

Today's hearing provides a vital opportunity for the Committee to examine how we can all work together to protect all Americans. I hope today's hearing will reflect the seriousness of the issues facing the Department and our nation.

Secretary Mayorkas, thank you for being here and I look forward to today's discussion.