



**United States Senate**  
**Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs**  
Chairman Joseph I. Lieberman, ID-Conn.

Opening Statement of Chairman Joseph Lieberman  
“The Homeland Security Department’s Budget Submission for FY2012”  
Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee  
February 17, 2011  
**As Prepared for Delivery**

Good afternoon and welcome to our annual hearing on the Department of Homeland Security’s budget request for Fiscal Year 2012, and welcome to you, Secretary Napolitano.

I want to extend my condolences to the family and friends of Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent Jaime Zapata, who was shot and killed Tuesday in an ambush on a Mexican highway. His colleague Jaime Avila, who was also shot and remains hospitalized, is in our prayers, as well.

This savage attack – and a suicide bombing that killed a retired CBP officer in Afghanistan last week – reminds us of the risks assumed on our behalf by the men and women who work at the Department of Homeland Security. We honor their service and thank them for their commitment.

These attacks also remind us of the variety of threats our nation faces, and the Department of Homeland Security’s equally varied mission to secure us from them. Clearly one of its most important missions is to prevent terrorism against our homeland, and as you noted last week, Secretary Napolitano, the threat of terrorism today "may be at its most heightened state" since the attacks of 9/11.

The President’s budget request for FY 2012 asks for \$43.2 billion in net discretionary funding - an increase of 1.5 percent from the current level of funding, although that is a decrease of 0.8 percent from the Department’s request for FY 2011.

Given the out of control deficits our government is struggling with today, the budget request is fair and restrained. It does not include everything I would have wanted, but I appreciate that you have had to make some very tough decisions in putting this budget together.

The Department’s budget request focuses additional resources in mission areas such as terrorist travel and cyber security, which are the right priorities.

The relentless efforts by al Qaeda and its affiliates to travel to this country to carry out terrorist attacks, require additional spending on key programs at CBP and TSA. These programs also strengthen our ability to detect Americans who have been radicalized and travel overseas for terrorist training – with the possibility of returning to attack us where we live and work.

The proposed increases to cyber security funding will improve the protection of federal information systems in real-time and will expand assistance to critical infrastructure.

The budget request funds these and other programmatic increases by cutting administrative costs by \$800 million, including a significant reduction in personal services contracts. You have also identified selected programmatic decreases across the Department, as you must in tough times.

Unfortunately, FEMA takes a particularly large hit to its operating budget, and I am concerned these cuts could jeopardize the steady progress we have made since Hurricane Katrina to transform FEMA and improve our national preparedness for disasters.

I am also troubled by a 36 percent cut in the assistance the federal government gives fire departments for equipment and training and by the elimination of the Metropolitan Medical Response System, a small but effective program that helps communities prepare for catastrophes that result in mass casualties.

I would also like to ask about your decision to postpone some of the funding for the second phase of the project to build a new DHS headquarters on the St. Elizabeth's campus. The St. Elizabeth's project is essential to DHS becoming "one" department, yet as you know under the CR currently in effect, the project will also receive no funding this fiscal year.

I understand that if funding is not provided for the remainder of FY 2011, construction on the site would be seriously impaired.

If this happens – and I will work hard to ensure it does not – DHS's much-needed headquarters would not only be delayed, but the additional construction costs caused by the disruption – estimated to be tens of millions of dollars -- would be a tremendous waste of taxpayers' dollars.

Secretary Napolitano, I look forward to your testimony and to working with you in the new Congress to ensure the Department has the resources and authorities it needs -- including though an authorization bill we are working on - to carry out its many missions.

As we mourn the death of ICE agent Jaime Zapata and honor his service, we should also thank his 250,000 colleagues at DHS for their service and work together to give you and them the tools you need to do your job.

Senator Collins.