



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hearing Statement of Oversight, Management, and Accountability Subcommittee Chairwoman Xochitl Torres Small (D-NM)

Federal Protective Service: Ensuring the Mission is Not Lost in Transition

June 11, 2019

We are here today to discuss the plans to transition the Federal Protective Service, or FPS, from the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency to the Management Directorate of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

FPS was formally established by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) in 1971 with the mission of protecting federal facilities and their occupants. In 2002, when DHS was formed, it became the primary federal Department responsible for the protection of all buildings, grounds, and property owned, occupied, or secured by the federal government. Consequently, DHS became the new home for FPS.

However, since then, FPS has struggled to find the right placement within DHS's structure. First placed within U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), FPS's needs were passed over frequently as ICE focused on its own mission, and failed to dedicate the bandwidth to support the mission of FPS. During this time, FPS began supporting ICE's mission at the expense of its own. FPS also lost personnel – going from 1,400+ personnel to approximately 1,000. The Department re-evaluated the placement of FPS in 2009 and ultimately moved the agency to the National Protection and Programs Directorate (NPPD).

At the time, the rationale for the transfer was that, as the agency responsible for securing the nation's critical infrastructure, NPPD could better provide mission support to FPS. As a result of legislation, in 2018 NPPD was redesignated as the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to reflect its new cybersecurity focus, and the Secretary of Homeland Security was authorized to decide the placement of FPS within the Department and begin the transfer.

Last month, it was announced that FPS would be placed within the DHS Management Directorate. Although the Management Directorate and FPS are not necessarily mission-similar – I am hopeful that the Management Directorate will be a good fit for FPS. I am hopeful because FPS must succeed.

Nearly six years ago, and less than two miles away from here, 12 people lost their lives during the Washington Navy Yard shooting. In 2015, in my home state of New Mexico, a Social Security Office in Albuquerque was the target of a gunman. FPS officers were among the first-responders to both incidents, and to the tens of thousands of calls for service at federal facilities annually.

In order to ensure that we don't have repeats of these unfortunate circumstances, we must fully equip and resource FPS. That means ensuring that this latest transition – the third transition – is successful, and that it endeavors to make FPS more self-sustaining. I thank both witnesses for being here today, and I look forward to their suggestions on how we can help facilitate a successful transition for FPS.

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