



# COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Hearing Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS)**

***A Review of the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Request for the Department of Homeland Security***

**June 17, 2021**

I welcome the Members and our witness, Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas. Secretary Mayorkas testified before the Committee in March regarding the way forward for the Department, and we are pleased to have him here today to discuss DHS's 2022 budget request.

Overall, the Biden Administration is requesting \$52 BILLION for DHS, roughly equal to the FY 2021 funding level. Though there is always room for improvement, the Administration's request would provide the Department with the resources necessary to meet its diverse and ever-evolving mission. The request prioritizes funding to improve Federal cybersecurity, respond to heightened domestic terrorism threats, and enhance border capabilities. It invests in creating a more fair and equitable immigration system, preparing local communities for the effects of natural disasters, and revitalizing the Department's research and development capabilities. It further seeks to strengthen national resiliency in these crucial areas. Many of these homeland security priorities were all but ignored by the last Administration. I am pleased the Biden Administration is giving these matters the attention and resources they demand.

Members will have questions for you, Mr. Secretary, about areas where additional resources will be necessary, such as a homeland security grants to State and local governments and cybersecurity funding given recent cyber attacks. Be assured will be engaging the Administration on these funding needs as the appropriations process moves forward. Beyond the budget, the Committee looks forward to working with the Department on a range of pressing legislative and policy matters. For example, we look forward to the Administration completing the nominations process for the Department and seeing competent, Senate-confirmed individuals leading DHS components, agencies, and offices once again.

I urge you, Mr. Secretary, to help ensure those remaining nominees reflect the diversity of the homeland your Department seeks to secure. With respect to legislation, we are ready to help bring about the transformational reforms you outlined for the TSA workforce earlier this month. That means enacting H.R. 903, the "Rights for TSA Workforce Act," to provide better pay and protections to this workforce that has steadfastly protected our transportation systems even in the face of government shutdowns and COVID.

I also believe that we can come together to bolster cybersecurity. For four years, we struggled with a lack of consistent leadership from the White House on cybersecurity issues, and late last year, the chickens came home to roost as the Russians infiltrated Federal networks with a sophisticated supply chain attack. More recently, the country has felt the effects of a series of ransomware attacks, including the attack on Colonial Pipeline. From day one, the Biden Administration has sought to improve Federal network defenses, better manage supply chain risk, and work with the private sector to improve

cybersecurity across critical infrastructure sectors. Much more must be done to provide funding, personnel, and authorities to address this growing threat.

Increasingly, we see support growing for changes in the law to require the reporting of certain ransomware attacks and cyber intrusions – particularly when the operations of most critical of critical infrastructure systems are implicated. With your partnership, Mr. Secretary, I think we can get there. I also think we can help shore up cybersecurity at the State and Local level by ensuring dedicated grant funding is available as the Committee seeks to do with H.R. 3138, the “State and Local Cybersecurity Improvement Act.”

Beyond these two areas, with your engagement, we have an opportunity to put the Department on a far better footing and address its longstanding morale, acquisitions, and management challenges in a comprehensive bill. With respect to policy matters, I want to commend the Administration’s release this week of the first-ever National Strategy for Countering Domestic Terrorism – a promise the President made on day one in the wake of the events of January 6. We look forward to examining this strategy in depth and hearing more details from the DHS, the Intelligence Community, and the other agencies tasked with this important work and the bold plans they have to implement the strategic vision that President Biden has set forth.

Finally, I would note that you join us today, Mr. Secretary, straight from your trip to Mexico this week, where you engaged your counterparts on border security and facilitation matters. Your visit follows Vice President Harris’ recent trip to Mexico and Central America to work with government leaders on addressing root causes of migration. More remains to be done, but I am pleased the Biden Administration is doing the hard work necessary to address the situation at the border for the long term, while prioritizing a more secure border and more humane immigration system today.

Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here, and the Committee looks forward to working with you on these critical issues and positioning DHS for success in all its missions.

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