



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

A Review of the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Request for the Department of Homeland Security

April 27, 2022

The Committee is meeting today to review the Fiscal Year 2023 budget request for the Department of Homeland Security. I welcome our witness, Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas, and look forward to engaging with him on the budget request and other matters before the Department.

Just over a year ago, the Biden Administration inherited a Department of Homeland Security beleaguered by four years under President Trump. Vacancies in key leadership positions, flagging employee morale, and gross mismanagement left the Department in bad shape and the American people less secure.

The Biden Administration has prioritized rebuilding DHS and supporting its more than 250,000 brave, hardworking men and women. Under Secretary Mayorkas' leadership, DHS has filled critical vacancies, strengthened management, and advocated for pay raises and collective bargaining rights for frontline workers. Meanwhile, DHS has faced unprecedented challenges, from a rise in domestic terrorism, to escalating cyber threats from Russia, to more frequent and severe natural disasters, to push factors driving migrants to our southern border.

The President's Fiscal Year 2023 budget request responds by investing in the Department, its people, and programs. It prioritizes combatting domestic terrorism in the wake of threats to religious institutions and historically Black colleges. It builds on important investments Congress has made to secure Federal networks and critical infrastructure and strengthens relationships between government and the private sector. It provides over \$26 billion to enhance disaster preparedness, response, and resilience. And, it adds to the \$1.4 billion Congress recently provided for border security by funding hundreds of new Border Patrol agents and processing personnel.

As the appropriations process moves forward, I plan to work with the Administration to ensure the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) has the resources it needs to meet urgent threats. I was also pleased the Department requested \$360 million for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program to help secure nonprofit organizations at high risk for terrorist attack. I will be working with my congressional colleagues to ensure all homeland security grant programs receive the funding they need.

Finally, I would like to secure a commitment from the Secretary that the Intelligence and Cybersecurity Diversity Fellowship program will be funded from the Department's budget. Beyond budget matters, I expect to hear from the Secretary today about the situation at the border. It comes as no surprise that some are trying to make political hay over this situation, which has challenged Administrations of both parties over many years.

President Trump's border policies were a national disgrace – thousands of children were separated from their parents and kids died unattended in Border Patrol holding cells. These policies weren't even

effective – with no way to apply for asylum, desperate crossers tried to enter the U.S. repeatedly, recidivism rates soared, and thousands were stranded across the border, where many remain today.

Title 42 didn't solve anything; it made conditions more dangerous for migrants and left the underlying issues driving migration for the next administration to address. Yesterday, the Department shared a Southwest Border Security and Preparedness Plan for managing the border after Title 42 authority is rescinded next month.

I look forward to hearing from Secretary Mayorkas about how the Department will manage our border in an orderly way while allowing vulnerable people to apply for asylum consistent with our laws. We can — and must — do both.

In closing, I would like to express my condolences to the family of Specialist Bishop Evans, the Texas National Guard member who died serving along the border last week. His sacrifice will not be forgotten.

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