



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson**

***The Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Request for the Department  
Homeland Security's Office of Health Affairs***

March 29, 2012 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the full Committee hearing entitled “The Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Request for the Department Homeland Security’s Office of Health Affairs”:

“Congress cut funding for the Department of Homeland Security by \$2 billion in FY 2012.

Less money for the Department meant that programs like the Metropolitan Medical Response System had to be consolidated into larger grant programs. Funding for University Programs and Research and Development programs were dramatically reduced.

I raised my concerns about the wisdom of these budget cuts when Congress passed the FY 2012 appropriations bill at the end of last year.

I am not here to belabor those issues. But it is important to understand the context in which we must review all budget requests.

The prospect of sequestration looms, and my friends on the other side of the aisle have indicated their intention to protect certain sacred cows.

These pressures will force this committee to assure that Homeland Security dollars are spent on programs that are effective, efficient and contribute to the safety and security of this nation.

To that end, we must take a serious look at Generation 3 of BioWatch. According to DHS, over the last 10 years, we have spent \$800 million for BioWatch.

During that time, the feasibility of the technology has been called into question by the National Academy of Sciences and there is only one potential vendor.

In light of the current fiscal climate, we need to begin to ask hard questions about the feasibility of continued support.”

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