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**CBP WORKFORCE CHALLENGES: EXPLORING SOLUTIONS
TO ADDRESS RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

**BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT,
MANAGEMENT, AND ACCOUNTABILITY
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

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Chairwoman Torres Small, Ranking Member Crenshaw, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today. As President of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), I have the honor of leading a union that represents over 27,000 Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officers, Agriculture Specialists and trade enforcement personnel stationed at 328 land, sea and air ports of entry across the United States (U.S.) and 16 Preclearance stations currently in Ireland, the Caribbean, Canada and United Arab Emirates airports. CBP's Office of Field Operations (OFO) pursues a dual mission of safeguarding American ports, by protecting the public from dangerous people and materials, while enhancing the nation's global and economic competitiveness by enabling legitimate trade and travel. CBP OFO employees are responsible for border security, including anti-terrorism, immigration, anti-smuggling, trade compliance, and agriculture protection at U.S. ports of entry.

In addition to CBP's trade and travel security, processing and facilitation mission, CBP OFO employees at the ports of entry are the second largest source of revenue collection for the U.S. government. In 2018, CBP processed more than \$2.6 trillion in imports and collected approximately \$4 billion in duties, taxes, and other fees. That is why it is critically important for this Subcommittee to address the issue of CBP understaffing.

For years, NTEU has been working with the Administration and Congress to try and improve recruitment and retention at federal agencies, especially those individuals with hard to find critical skills and areas with critical staffing needs. However, shutting down the government and making federal workers go without pay while implementing a pay freeze does nothing to help with this effort.

For 35 days, over 800,000 federal employees, including 27,000 at CBP OFO missed two paychecks that jeopardized their families' financial stability. Those who were required to work without pay had limited to no ability to earn additional income with part-time work and were unable to get unemployment benefits. Furthermore, some who worked unpaid were required to make prompt payments on official government purchases made on their government-issued

credit cards while the federal government was shut down and unable to reimburse them. This 35-day shutdown was hard on all employees, but especially so for those with the least means, who could not float government purchases or live on savings while they went without their paychecks. This was an unconscionable way to treat the dedicated employees who serve the American people.

NTEU appreciates that Congress agreed on a funding bill that not only granted all federal employees a pay raise, but also funded 600 new CBP Officer hires that are desperately needed. Having met with thousands of CBP Officers at the ports of entry, I can tell you that the **number one CBP workforce challenge from the CBP OFO employee perspective is the critical staffing shortage at the ports of entry, and this staffing shortage is staggering.** Understaffed ports lead to long delays in travel and cargo lanes and also create significant hardship and safety issues for frontline employees. Involuntary overtime and involuntary work assignments far from home disrupts CBP Officers' family life and destroys morale.

With the addition of FY 2019 funding for 600 new CBP Officers plus an existing 1,000 vacant funded CBP Officer positions, CBP now has 1,600 vacancies. According to CBP's updated analytic workload staffing model (WSM), an additional 1,900 CBP Officers and 721 Agriculture Specialists need to be funded and hired in order to meet current staffing needs, bringing the **total CBP Officer staffing shortage to 3,500 today.**

The more than 27,000 CBP employees represented by NTEU are proud of their part in keeping our country free from terrorism, our neighborhoods safe from drugs, and our economy safe from illegal trade, while ensuring that legal trade and travelers move expeditiously through our air, sea and land ports. But frontline CBP Officers and Agriculture Specialists at our nation's ports of entry need relief.

The economic cost of the CBP OFO staffing shortage is also staggering. CBP employees at the ports of entry are not only the frontline for illegal trade and travel enforcement, but their role of facilitating legal trade and travel is a significant economic driver for private sector jobs and economic growth. According to CBP WSM data, for every 1,000 CBP officers hired there is an increase in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$2 billion; \$642 million in opportunity costs are saved (the quantification of time that a traveler could be using for other purposes than waiting in line, such as working or enjoying leisure activities); and 33,148 annual jobs are added. **If CBP filled the 1,600 vacant positions and Congress funded the additional 1,900 needed new positions, the impact could be as high as a \$7 billion increase in GDP; a \$2.25 billion savings in opportunity costs; and the creation of 106,000 new private sector jobs.**

Also, according to the Joint Economic Committee (JEC), the volume of commerce crossing our borders has more than tripled in the past 25 years. Long wait times lead to delays and travel time uncertainty, which can increase supply chain and transportation costs. According to the Department of Commerce, border delays result in losses to output, wages, jobs and tax revenue due to decreases in spending by companies, suppliers and consumers. JEC research finds border delays cost the U.S. economy between \$90 million and \$5.8 billion each year.

Noting the positive impact of hiring additional CBP Officers, it is troubling that the

President's 2017 Border Security Executive Order and his subsequent budget requests did not ask for one additional CBP officer new hire. In 2017, CBP Officers at the ports of entry recorded over 216,370 apprehensions and seized over 444,000 pounds of illegal drugs, and over \$96 million in illicit currency, while processing over 390 million travelers and \$2.2 trillion in imports through the ports. Imagine what they could do with adequate staffing and resources.

The risk of successful incursions through the ports of entry by terrorists, smugglers and other criminals increase when ports are under constant pressure to limit wait times while working short staffed. As port traffic increases, it will become more difficult for CBP Officers and Agriculture Specialists to stop bad actors and bad things from coming through the ports without significantly increasing wait times, which will harm legal international trade and travel.

CBP Officer Staffing Challenges

NTEU continues to have significant concerns about the slow pace of hiring at CBP. CBP struggled to fill the initial 2,000 positions Congress authorized in 2014. One factor that may be hindering hiring is that CBP is not utilizing to its full extent available pay flexibilities, such as recruitment, retention and relocation incentives (3 Rs) and special salary rates, to incentivize new and existing CBP Officers to seek vacant positions at hard to fill, remote ports, such as Columbus, New Mexico. **When using a recruitment incentive to attract employees to a certain location, CBP must be mindful that this incentive should be used in conjunction with retention incentives. Otherwise, a situation is created where a newly hired employee is working side-by-side with a veteran employee that not only is denied the opportunity to transfer out, but may also now be paid less than a new recruit.** The 3 Rs are also needed to attract transfers to the most severely short-staffed ports, such as San Ysidro and Nogales.

Another major impediment to fulfilling CBP's hiring goal is that CBP is the only federal agency with a congressional mandate that all frontline officer applicants receive a polygraph test. Until last year when CBP initiated a polygraph pilot, two out of three applicants failed its polygraph—about 65 percent—more than double the average rate of eight law enforcement agencies according to data provided to the Associated Press, which had an average failure rate of 28 percent. For example, only 36 percent of applicants failed the polygraph test at the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration in the past two years.

NTEU does not seek to reduce the standards used by CBP in their hiring process, but believes that there is a problem with how the polygraph is currently administered. CBP reviewed its polygraph policy to understand why CBP is failing applicants at a much higher rate than individuals applying to work at other federal law enforcement agencies and is currently piloting a change in the CBP polygraph test, which appears to be resulting in improved passage rates. Since the pilot has shown a polygraph passage rate that is more in line with other federal law enforcement agencies, **NTEU supports ending the pilot and CBP adopting this polygraph test for all CBP applicants.**

NTEU also recommends that CBP allow immediate polygraph retesting opportunities to those with a "No Opinion" or "Inconclusive" result, including those with a "No Opinion Counter Measures" finding.

NTEU commends Congress for including a provision in the Fiscal Year 2019 Defense authorization bill that authorized the CBP Commissioner to waive polygraph examination requirements for certain veterans applying for CBP job openings. NTEU also supports legislation that expands the authority to waive polygraph examinations for veterans and to allow exemptions for existing state and local law enforcement officers who apply for these positions at CBP.

In addition to issues with the polygraph process, NTEU has heard that CBP candidates frequently are subject to a segmented hiring process where, in some cases, they are required to travel hundreds of miles to fulfill the required tests and procedures. This can be a significant hardship for applicants that results in some of them withdrawing from consideration.

Finally, as CBP makes progress in filling new and vacant positions, they may need to expand their training classes. When experiencing a hiring surge in the past, the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) instituted a 6-day training program to accommodate the expanded classes. NTEU supports FLETC 6-day training, as long as the employees are paid for 6 days of training. NTEU is proud to represent FLETC employees that work and reside in various locations across the country.

Accenture Hiring Contract

To address some of these hiring concerns, on November 12, 2017, CBP awarded a \$297 million contract with Accenture Federal Services “to manage the full life cycle of the hiring process from job posting to processing” of 7,500 CBP Border Patrol, Air and Marine, and OFO new hires.

NTEU strongly believes that these federal funds would be better spent actually hiring new CBP employees using CBP’s in-house human resources department rather than contracting out this work to a private sector consultant.

After evaluating the first year of CBP’s contract with Accenture, the DHS Office of Inspector General concluded that “CBP may have paid Accenture for services and tools not provided.” And, “CBP risks wasting millions of taxpayer dollars on a hastily approved contract that is not meeting its proposed performance expectations.” (OIG-19-13, page 6) NTEU applauds CBP for its decision to negotiate an end to this imprudent contract.

Peer-to-Peer Recruitment

Like most employers, CBP’s best recruiters should be current CBP Officers. Unfortunately, morale continues to suffer because of the recent shutdown, staffing shortages, possible pay freezes, and the Administration’s proposed cuts to retirement, health care, and workers’ compensation programs. In addition to being overworked due to excessive overtime requirements, temporary duty assignments are a major drag on employees, especially those with families. Based on their experiences, many Officers are reluctant to encourage their family members or friends to seek employment with CBP.

NTEU strongly believes that addressing OFO hiring shortages by funding needed

new CBP Officer and Agriculture Specialist to fill the WSM staffing gap and by ending pay freezes, shutdowns, and proposals to cut employee benefits will improve morale and encourage peer-to-peer recruitment, which would be much more beneficial to CBP recruitment than spending millions on a private contractor.

CBP Officer Overtime

Due to the ongoing current staffing shortage of 3,500 CBP Officers, CBP Officers nationwide are working excessive overtime to maintain basic port staffing. Currently, CBP Officer overtime pay is funded 100% through user fees and is statutorily capped at \$45,000 per year. All CBP Officers are aware that overtime assignments are an aspect of their jobs. However, long periods of overtime hours can severely disrupt an officer's family life, morale and ultimately their job performance protecting our nation.

Because of the ongoing staffing shortages, CBP Officers can be required to regularly work overtime which results in individual Officers hitting the overtime cap very early in the fiscal year. This leaves no overtime funding available for peak season travel, resulting in critical staffing shortages in the third and fourth quarter of the fiscal year that usually coincide with holiday travel at the ports.

At many ports, CBP has granted overtime exemptions to over one-half of the workforce to allow managers to assign overtime to Officers that have already reached the statutory overtime cap, but cap waivers only force CBP Officers already working long daily shifts to continue working these shifts for more days. Officers are required to come in hours before their regular shifts, to stay an indeterminate number of hours after their shifts (on the same day) and are compelled to come in for more overtime hours on their regular days off as well. Both involuntary overtime--resulting in 12 to 16 hour shifts, day after day, for months on end--and involuntary work assignments far from home, significantly disrupt CBP Officers' family life and erode morale. As NTEU has repeatedly stated, this is not a long-term solution for staffing shortages at the ports and has gone on for far too long.

Temporary Duty Assignments at Southwest Land Ports of Entry

Due to CBP's ongoing staffing shortage, since 2015, CBP has been diverting hundreds of CBP Officers from other air, sea and land ports to severely short-staffed Southwest land ports for 90-day temporary duty assignments (TDYs). Owing to the failure to fill CBP Officer positions, neither the San Ysidro nor the Nogales land ports can safely function without these TDYs. Last summer, CBP asked for volunteers for TDYs because, according to CBP, the San Diego and Tucson Field Office were experiencing critical shortages of frontline personnel, further stating that **"These long-term staffing shortfalls continue to stretch the limits of operational, enforcement and training capabilities at the ports of entry."**

In November 2018, CBP began a new TDY program to support "Operation Secure Line--Mobile Field Force (MFF) Plan Implementation." This TDY again diverts CBP Officers with MFF site security and crowd control training from other short-staffed ports of entry to sustain enforcement level posture at San Ysidro and Nogales to manage the influx of asylum seekers at

these ports. Also, as the focus of TDYs changed from passenger processing to site security the number of inadmissible travelers CBP is operationally capable to process is reduced.

To end all these TDYs, CBP must fill existing CBP Officer vacancies and fund the hiring of the additional CBP Officers called for in CBP's own WSM. In the meantime, to encourage volunteers for these TDYs and avoid forced TDYs, NTEU suggests Congress ask CBP to include the following in its future TDY solicitations:

- Increase the TDY pool by including non-bargaining unit personnel such as qualified Headquarters staff, supervisors, and other employees on special teams such as the Tactical Terrorism Response Team and the Strategic Response Team, and by including all Officers who have graduated from FLETC and who have received a sufficient amount of post-academy training;
- Schedule TDYs in such a way that the supplemental staffing through TDYs remains constant, so there is not a gap between the departure of one round of TDYs and the arrival of the next, and a surplus of volunteers for a TDY from one Field Office should be allowed to make up for a shortage of volunteers in another Field Office;
- Establish an advertised cash award for individuals who volunteer for a TDY and should offer available incentives such as student loan repayments, overtime cap waivers, and home leave; and
- Allow approved leave during a TDY.

Agriculture Specialist Staffing

CBP employees also perform critically important agriculture inspections to prevent the entry of animal and plant pests or diseases at ports of entry. For years, NTEU has championed the CBP Agriculture Specialists' Agriculture Quality Inspection (AQI) mission within the agency and fought for increased staffing to fulfill that mission. The U.S. agriculture sector is a crucial component of the American economy, generating over \$1 trillion in annual economic activity. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, foreign pests and diseases cost the American economy tens of billions of dollars annually.

NTEU believes that staffing shortages and lack of mission priority for the critical work performed by CBP Agriculture Specialists, CBP agriculture detector dog teams and CBP Technicians assigned to the ports is a continuing threat to the U.S. economy. At many ports, such as the port of Houston, there are not enough Agriculture Specialists to staff all shifts and CBP Officers are backfilling for Agriculture Specialists.

NTEU worked with Congress to include a provision in P.L 114-125, the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act (TFTEA), which required CBP to submit, by the end of February 2017, a plan to create an agricultural specialist career track and a timeline for fulfilling staffing deficits identified in the most recent agricultural resource allocation models (AgRAM). CBP's AgRAM showed a need for an additional 721 frontline CBP Agriculture Specialists and

supervisors to address current workloads through FY 2018; however, even with the 2016 increase in AQI user fees, CBP proposed to fund only 2,418 CBP Agriculture Specialist positions in FY 2018, not the 3,149 called for by the AgRAM.

Because of CBP's key mission to protect the nation's agriculture from pests and disease, NTEU urges the Committee to authorize the hiring of these 721 CBP Agriculture Specialists to address this critical staffing shortage that threatens the U.S. agriculture sector.

CBP Trade Operations Staffing

CBP has a dual mission of safeguarding our nation's borders and ports and regulating and facilitating international trade. CBP employees at the ports of entry are critical in protecting our nation's economic growth and security. **For every dollar invested in CBP trade personnel, we return \$87 to the U.S. economy**, either through lowering the costs of trade, ensuring a level playing field for domestic industry or by protecting innovative intellectual property. Since CBP was established in March 2003, however, there has been no increase in non-uniformed CBP trade enforcement and compliance personnel. Additionally, CBP trade operations staffing has fallen below the statutory floor set forth in the Homeland Security Act of 2002 and stipulated in the FY 2017 CBP Resource Optimization Model for Trade Positions. NTEU strongly supports CBP funding 140 new hires at the CBP Office of Trade through direct appropriations to support TFTEA implementation.

CBP Canine Program

The CBP Canine Program is also critical to CBP's mission. The primary goal of the CBP Canine Program is terrorist detection and apprehension. The working CBP canine team is one of the best tools available to detect and apprehend persons attempting entry into the country to organize, incite, and carry out acts of terrorism. The Canine Program's secondary goal is detection and seizure of controlled substances and other contraband that is often used to finance terrorist and/or criminal drug trafficking organizations. Currently, there are 1,500 authorized canine teams and, as with all CBP resources, there is a shortage of OFO canine teams nationwide and many canine teams at international airports have been sent to southwest border ports to alleviate shortages there. NTEU supports Congress fully funding and staffing the CBP canine detection program.

Opioid Interdiction

CBP OFO is the foremost DHS component tasked with stemming the nation's opioid epidemic. In a report released on May 10, 2018, by the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee Minority titled "***Combatting the Opioid Epidemic: Intercepting Illicit Opioids at Ports of Entry***", CBP Officers at the ports of entry were found to "play a key role in stopping opioids and that CBP has significant shortages of Port Officers that may be compromising efforts to seize additional opioids before they can reach U.S. communities."

The smuggling of fentanyl and other opioids has increased markedly. According to the report, "between 2013 and 2017, approximately 25,405 pounds, or **88% of all opioids seized by**

CBP, were seized at ports of entry. The amount of fentanyl seized at the ports of entry increased by 159% from 459 pounds in 2016 to 1,189 pounds in 2017.”

The scourge of synthetic opioid addiction is felt in every state and is a threat to the nation’s economic security and well-being. The majority of fentanyl is manufactured in other countries such as China, and is smuggled primarily through the ports of entry along the southwest border and through international mail and express consignment carrier facilities (e.g. FedEx and UPS). As the Senate report states, CBP Officers are, “in the majority of cases, the last line of defense in preventing illicit opioids from entering the United States...CBP’s current shortage of over 4,000 Port Officers is directly influencing operations and staffing these positions could increase CBP’s ability to interdict opioids.” The nation’s busiest land port of entry San Ysidro, along with the Tucson area land ports, account for “57% of all opioids seized by ports of entry, including 75% of all fentanyl and 61% of all heroin seized.” These two land ports are also the most critically understaffed.

On January 26, 2019, CBP OFO made their biggest fentanyl seizure ever, capturing nearly 254 pounds of the deadly synthetic opioid at the Nogales port of entry. According to the DEA, just two milligrams of fentanyl is considered a lethal dose. From the January 26 seizure alone, it is estimated that **CBP Officers seized enough fentanyl to kill 57 million people.** That’s more than the combined population of the states of Illinois, New York and Pennsylvania. The street value for the fentanyl was over \$102 million. CBP Officers also seized an additional 2.2 pounds of fentanyl pills and a large cache of methamphetamine.

Also, over the past five years, CBP has seen nearly 50 percent increase in express consignment shipments. In FY 2013 CBP processed more than 76 million express bills; in FY 2017, that number totaled 110 million. International mail shipments have increased by more than 200 percent over the past five years, from approximately 150 million to more than 500 million. **Yet, according to CBP, over the last three years, there were only 181 CBP employees assigned to the five Postal Service International Service Centers and 208 CBP employees assigned to the Private Express Carrier Facilities.**

In the past year, the FedEx hub in Memphis processed 38 million imports and 48 million exports--equaling 86 million in total package volume. There are approximately 24 CBP Officers screening all 86 million shipments, and on average, about 15 CBP Officers are working the main overnight FedEx “sort” shift. Considering the volume at the FedEx hub, NTEU has been told that the port requires a minimum of 60 CBP Officers to facilitate the flow of legitimate freight and ensure successful interdiction of these synthetic chemicals. NTEU urges Congress to provide CBP OFO with the critical funding it needs to support these efforts at the air, sea and land ports of entry, as well as international postal and express consignment hubs.

NTEU worked with Congress on the passage of P.L. 115-271, the Synthetics Trafficking and Overdose Prevention Act, or STOP Act. The new law requires CBP to provide additional CBP Officers to express consignment and international mail facilities and requires CBP to report to Congress on an annual basis on the individuals and companies that violate the electronic advance data requirements of the Trade Act of 2002. Requiring CBP to annually report this useful information on violators and violator penalty assessments will enhance CBP’s interdiction of prohibited items from entering the U.S. through express consignment operators.

CBP Funding Sources

CBP collects Customs User Fees (CUFs) , including those under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA), to recover certain costs incurred for processing air and sea passengers and various private and commercial land, sea, air, and rail carriers and shipments. The source of these user fees are commercial vessels, commercial vehicles, rail cars, private aircraft, private vessels, air passengers, sea passengers, cruise vessel passengers, dutiable mail, customs brokers and barge/bulk carriers.

COBRA fees are deposited into the Customs User Fee Account and are designated by statute to pay for services provided to the user, such as 100% of inspectional overtime for passenger and commercial vehicle inspection during overtime shift hours. Of the 24,576 CBP Officers currently funded, Customs User Fees (CUFs) fund 3,825 full-time equivalent (FTEs) CBP Officers. Further, Immigration Inspection User Fees (IUF) fund 4,179 CBPO FTEs. **CUF and IUF user fees fund 8,004 CBPO FTEs or one third of the entire CBP workforce at the ports of entry.**

NTEU strongly opposes the diversion of CUFs. Any increases to the CUF Account should be properly used for much-needed CBP staffing and not diverted to unrelated projects. Unfortunately, while section 52202 of the FAST ACT indexed CUFs to inflation, it diverted this funding from CBP to pay for unrelated infrastructure projects. Indexing COBRA CUFs to inflation would have raised \$1.4 billion over ten years—a potential \$140 million per year funding stream to help pay for the hiring of additional CBP Officers to perform CBP’s border security, law enforcement and trade and travel facilitation missions. **Diverting these funds has cost CBP funding to hire over 900 new CBP Officers per year since the FAST Act went into effect. These new hires would have significantly alleviated the current CBP Officer staffing shortage.**

In order to find alternative sources of funding to address serious staffing shortages, CBP received authorization for and has entered into Reimbursable Service Agreements (RSAs) with the private sector, as well as with state and local governmental entities. These stakeholders, who are already paying CUFs and IUFs for CBP OFO employee positions and overtime, reimburse CBP for additional inspection services, including overtime pay and the hiring of new CBP Officer and Agriculture Specialist personnel that in the past have been paid for entirely by user fees or appropriated funding. According to CBP, since the program began in 2013, **CBP has entered into agreements with over 149 stakeholders covering 111 U.S. ports of entry, providing more than 467,000 additional processing hours for incoming commercial and cargo traffic.**

NTEU believes that the RSA program is a band aid approach and cannot replace the need for Congress to either appropriate new funding or authorize an increase in customs and immigration user fees to adequately address CBP staffing needs at the ports.

RSAs simply cannot replace the need for an increase in CBP appropriated or user fee funding—and make CBP a “pay to play” agency. NTEU also remains concerned with CBP’s

new Preclearance expansion program that also relies heavily on “pay to play.” Further, NTEU believes that the use of RSAs to fund CBP staffing shortages raises significant equity issues between larger and/or wealthier ports and smaller ports.

Ratio of Supervisors to Frontline Personnel

Another concern is that CBP continues to be a top-heavy management organization. Since its creation, the number of new managers has increased at a much higher rate than the number of new frontline CBP hires. CBP’s own FY 15 end of year workforce profile (dated 10/3/15), **showed that the supervisor to frontline employee ratio was 1 to 5.6 for the total CBP workforce, 1 to 5.7 for CBP Officers and 1 to 6.6 for Agriculture Specialists.** Prior to 2003, the supervisor to frontline ratio was closer to 1 supervisor to 12. It is also NTEU’s understanding that nearly 1,000 CBP Officers are serving either at CBP headquarters or non-Office of Field Operations locations. This means that nearly 4,000 CBP Officers are serving in supervisory positions.

The tremendous increase in CBP managers and supervisors has come at the expense of national security preparedness and frontline positions. Also, these highly paid management positions are straining the CBP budget. CBP’s top heavy management structure contributes to the lack of adequate staffing at the ports, excessive overtime schedules, and flagging morale among the rank and file.

NTEU Recommendations

To address CBP’s workforce challenges, it is clearly in the nation’s economic and security interest for Congress to authorize and fund an increase in the number of CBP Officers, CBP Agriculture Specialists, and other CBP employees.

In order to achieve the long-term goal of securing the proper staffing at CBP, NTEU recommends that Congress take the following actions:

- Fill the 1,600 CBP Officer funded positions that are currently vacant;
- Fund an additional 1,900 new CBP Officers;
- Address the polygraph process to mitigate excessive (60%) applicant polygraph failures;
- Fund 721 new CBP Agriculture Specialists hires;
- Fully fund and utilize recruitment and retention awards, and other incentives; and
- Restore cuts in mission support personnel that will free CBP Officers from performing administrative duties such as payroll processing, data entry and human resources to increase the numbers available for trade and travel security and facilitation.

Congress should also redirect the increase in customs user fees in the FAST Act from offsetting transportation spending to its original purpose of providing funding for CBP Officer staffing and overtime, and oppose any legislation to divert additional fees collected to other uses or projects.

Shutdowns, pay freezes, and proposed cuts to benefits, rights, and protections do nothing

to help with recruitment and retention of CBP Officers. The employees I represent are frustrated and their morale is indeed low. These employees work hard and care deeply about their jobs and their country. These men and women are deserving of more staffing and resources to perform their jobs better and more efficiently.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today on their behalf. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.