

H.R. 4940

The Border and Port Security Act

FACT SHEET

As introduced by
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- U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officers (CBPOs) are the country's frontline in facilitating the flow of commerce and travelers coming to the United States. On a daily basis, CBPOs, stationed at international airports, seaports, and land ports of entry, screen more than 1 million foreign nationals and U.S. citizens and approximately \$6.3 billion worth in imported goods at ports of entry.¹
- According to the U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee, the volume of commerce entering the United States has more than tripled in that last 25 years, which has led to an increased flow of commercial traffic through U.S. ports of entry.² At the same time, today, CBP's port of entry operations are short 3,700 additional Officers and more than 720 Agricultural Specialists.³
- For the past several fiscal years, CBP has been unable to hire and retain enough CBPOs to keep up with increased commerce and travel flows. While estimates vary, research suggests there is a clear link between staffing levels at ports of entry, processing wait times, and broader economic impact.⁴
- In order to meet minimum staffing needs, CBPOs are working overtime hours and being temporarily reassigned to different ports of entry. According to the President of the National Treasury Employees Union which represents more than 25,000 CBP employees: *"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, erode morale, and are not a solution for staffing shortages at the ports."*⁵

¹ U.S. Customs and Border Protection, "Snapshot: A Summary of CBP Facts and Figures," December 2017. Available at: <https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/assets/documents/2017-Dec/cbp-snapshot-20171208.pdf> (accessed on February 5, 2018).

² U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee, "Economic Impact of Understaffing U.S. Ports of Entry," April 2017, 1. Available at: https://www.jec.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/88c66173-5dc9-4e5e-b144-6f9517443409/economic-impact-of-understaffing-u.s.-ports-of-entry.pdf (access on February 5, 2018). Hereafter, JEC CBP staffing report.

³ Senate Committee on Finance, Statement by Kevin McAleenan, Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, during confirmation hearing on October 24, 2017.

⁴ JEC CBP staffing report, 3.

⁵ U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security, Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee, Tony Reardon written testimony for hearing "On The Line: Border Security From An Agent And Officer Perspective," January 9, 2018. Available at: <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/HM/HM11/20180109/106754/HHRG-115-HM11-Wstate-ReardonA-20180109.pdf> (accessed on February 5, 2018).

- There are also some indications that transnational criminal organizations and smugglers have exploited vulnerabilities at ports of entry. The Drug Enforcement Administration noted in its 2016 and 2017 National Drug Threat Assessment Summaries that the vast majority of illegal drugs, except for marijuana, are smuggled into the country through ports of entry.⁶ Without the necessary manpower, CBP may not be as effective in detecting and preventing dangerous drugs, such as opioids and other narcotics, from moving across our borders.
- According to CBP estimates, for every 1,000 CBPOs hired, economic activity nationwide would increase by \$2 billion and add 33,148 jobs annually.⁷ Hiring additional CBPOs is both an economic and homeland security imperative.

THE BORDER AND PORT SECURITY ACT would—

- **Increase CBP’s capacity to screen passengers and facilitate trade** by authorizing an additional 500 CBP Officers and 100 Agriculture Specialists per year to address existing domestic staffing shortages at U.S. airports, seaports, and land ports of entry.
- **Provide CBP with the staff necessary to support its frontline personnel** and ensure that the Office of Professional Responsibility can keep pace with the number new personnel added to the field.
- **Improve CBP’s staffing model** to require seasonal surges and changes in traffic volume to be taken into account.
- **Require CBP to report to Congress on enhancement to ports of entry** to better detect, and prevent the smuggling of narcotics and other contraband into the country.
- **In the event that the staffing increases called for under the bill are not achieved, it requires the Comptroller General to review the factors contributing to CBP’s failure to increase staffing**, including CBP’s hiring policies and processes and attrition challenges.
- **Authorize roughly \$90 million per year for seven years** to invest in CBP’s border security staffing operations at ports of entry.

⁶U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, (DEA), 2016 National Drug Threat Assessment Summary, November 2016, 7. Available at <https://www.dea.gov/resource-center/2016%20NDTA%20Summary.pdf> (accessed February 5, 2018).

DEA, 2017 National Drug Threat Assessment Summary, October 2017, 111. Available at https://www.dea.gov/docs/DIR-040-17_2017-NDTA.pdf (accessed February 5, 2018).

⁷ U.S. Customs and Border Protection, FY2013 Report on Business Transformation Initiative, April 2013.