

**Chairman Shelley Moore Capito Opening Statement  
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security**

**Hearing to Review the FY2020 Budget Request for the for the U.S. Department of Homeland  
Security**

**May 2, 2019**

*(As prepared for delivery)*

Welcome. I call this hearing of the Subcommittee on Homeland Security to order. This is the Subcommittee's third hearing of the Fiscal Year 2020 budget cycle, and we are pleased to be joined by the new Acting Secretary of Homeland Security Kevin McAleenan.

Mr. McAleenan has been in this job in an acting capacity for just over 3 weeks now. Prior to taking on this very challenging task, Mr. McAleenan was doing an outstanding job serving as the head of one of the Department of Homeland Security's most critical components, Customs and Border Protection. Given the ongoing humanitarian crisis at our southwest border, I am sure Mr. McAleenan has done his best over the last three weeks to become an expert on the complex missions and budgets of the other thirteen components that make up the Department of Homeland Security. While quickly getting up to speed on all that is going on at the Department is a nearly impossible task, I am certain Mr. McAleenan has done it as well as anyone could.

We are pleased he is accompanied by the Department's Acting Under Secretary for Management Chip Fulghum, whose service to the Department over the past 7 years—and to the nation through a military and civilian career spanning nearly 35 years—has been outstanding. Mr. Fulghum will soon be retiring from government, and I would like to offer this Subcommittee's appreciation and congratulations for his service.

I am glad to be joined by the Subcommittee's Ranking Member, Senator Tester. We continue to consider the Fiscal Year 2020 budget request and look forward to receiving further insight today from Mr. McAleenan. [We are also pleased and honored to be joined by the Vice Chairman of the Full Appropriations Committee, Senator Leahy, who brings a great deal of experience and insight to our Committee and to this Subcommittee.]

The fiscal year 2019 bill, which we recently enacted on a broad bipartisan basis, included several significant investments.

- It provided for the largest-ever single investment in physical barriers along the border.
- It provided the largest-ever level of funding for immigration enforcement and detention.
- It provided hundreds of millions of dollars to address humanitarian needs at the border.
- It funded the first heavy icebreaker to be built by the United States since the 1970s.

- It accelerated the deployment of new aviation security equipment that will keep us safer and make airport lines shorter.
- It provided funding to help states safeguard our elections against cyber threats.
- It provided more than \$12 billion for the Disaster Relief Fund.
- And it included funding for a pay raise for nearly every employee of the Department.

But I am probably most proud of the investment our bill made in the Department's efforts to combat the opioid and methamphetamine crisis. My state of West Virginia is perhaps the state that is most acutely affected by this challenge, and so we stand to benefit most. Our bill included—\$615 million for equipment at ports of entry that will significantly increase the number of vehicles that are screened as they cross our border, funding for 600 new customs officers at our ports of entry, resources to significantly enhance ICE's ability to investigate the drug trade on the "dark web," funding to increase ICE investigative staffing in Appalachia and other regions affected by the drug crisis, and funding for opioid detection research.

These are real investments that will make a significant difference, and we plan to continue to work with you to make sure these investments are put to good use.

We are holding this hearing in the wake of yesterday's request for supplemental appropriations to address the security and humanitarian crisis at our southwest border.

I know that the number of apprehensions of illegal border crossers continues to climb. Customs and Border Protection took more than 100,000 individuals into custody in the month of March, and we expect that number to be dramatically higher for April. Despite some who have tried to call this a "manufactured crisis," these are undeniably historic numbers.

Yesterday's request included an additional \$1.1 billion dollars for the Department of Homeland Security to help address this crisis. It suggested additional resources that may be needed to humanely process and detain those who are crossing our border illegally and to support the men and women of the Department of Homeland Security as they surge to address the crisis. We look forward to speaking with you today and working together in the coming days to better understand the specific justifications for this request.

While additional resources are certainly needed in the short term, I think it is important for us to remember that we cannot just appropriate our way out of this crisis. The loopholes in our immigration laws are being exploited by criminal cartels and allowing undocumented immigrants to flood into our country.

Instead of closing the loopholes, we are spending billions of dollars every year—just within the Department of Homeland Security—to deal with the consequences. This is unsustainable. It is not good for the United States, and it is not good for those legitimately seeking safety or prosperity in the United States.

While the ongoing security and humanitarian crisis at the southwest border has rightfully received a great deal of attention in recent weeks and months, this Subcommittee has not lost sight of the Department's many other critical missions—counter terrorism, trade enforcement, opioid and other drug interdiction, human trafficking prevention, maritime security, airline security, Presidential protection, cybersecurity, infrastructure protection, emergency management, continuity of government, immigration services, law enforcement training, countering weapons of mass destruction, and state and local information sharing – just to name a few.

We are fortunate to have one of our country's top border security experts before us today—and we look forward to hearing from him about that topic.

But I hope we will remember the role this Subcommittee plays in enabling and scrutinizing all of the missions of the Department.

Given all of the Department's critical needs, I am again disappointed that many parts of this budget request are not grounded in reality. The request offsets critical investments by—assuming that the appropriate committees of Congress will authorize new revenue, assuming that the appropriate committees of Congress will restructure FEMA grants, proposing Coast Guard shipbuilding funds in a way that could force the government to break contracts, and failing to annualize the pay raise Congress provided for the Department's employees.

These imaginary offsets allow the Department to propose spending money it doesn't have. Congress is not afforded that luxury when it enacts appropriations bills. While the practice of digging budgetary holes and expecting Congress to fill them may prevent the Department from making tough choices at the time that the budget is presented, it actually reduces the Department's influence over the final outcome.

Mr. McAleenan — thank you for appearing before us today. We will make sure you and your team keep us up to date on what resources you need to continue the good work you are doing.

I will now turn to our distinguished Ranking Member, Senator Tester, and then Vice Chairman Leahy for any opening remarks they may have before asking our witness to proceed with his testimony.

Then, we will allow each Senator, in order of arrival, [five/seven] minutes for any statements or questions they may have.

Thank you. Senator Tester.

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