

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

**Hearing to Review the FY2019 Budget Request for the Department of Homeland Security**

**May 8, 2018**

*(As prepared for delivery)*

Welcome everyone. I call this hearing of the Subcommittee on Homeland Security to order. I am very pleased to begin my first hearing as Chairman of this Subcommittee. It is the Subcommittee's first hearing to review the fiscal year 2019 budget request.

We thank the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Honorable Kirstjen Nielsen, for agreeing to appear before our Subcommittee. Secretary Nielsen is appearing before our Subcommittee for her first time and we look forward to hearing her insight.

I am also very pleased to be joined our Subcommittee's Ranking Member, the distinguished Senator from Montana, Senator Tester. We look forward to working together throughout the Fiscal Year 2019 process.

As the highest ranking official at the Department of Homeland Security, Secretary Nielsen has one of the most challenging jobs in government. Her Department and its nearly 250,000 employees carry out a broad set of missions that spans the entire globe. They work to combat terrorism; manage who and what passes through our air, land, and sea borders; secure civilian cyberspace; prepare for and respond to disasters; and protect countless other security interests

This Subcommittee will work to support the Department in meeting these demands in an effective and efficient manner.

The recently enacted Appropriations Bill provided significant investments for the Department toward those ends: it made significant investments in a new "border wall system" for the highest trafficked portions of the southwest border; it provided a record level of funding for immigration enforcement; for the first time, it dedicated significant funding to opioid detection equipment and to research to improve those detection capabilities; it included the largest-ever investment in equipment for the men and women of the Coast Guard; it dramatically accelerated the deployment of the cybersecurity tools that will be used by nearly every civilian agency of the federal government; and in combination with emergency supplemental appropriations bills, it provided

the necessary Fiscal Year 2018 resources for response to and recovery from a historic disaster season.

While that bill took many positive steps, we are turning our attention to the Department's Fiscal Year 2019 budget request.

It is very clear to me that the Department's workforce, which I am proud includes many West Virginians, is its most valuable resource, and this budget request acknowledges that. I know it is your goal to ensure the Department can improve workforce recruitment, development and retention. Senator Tester and I want to be your partners in that effort.

While we saw a dramatic decrease in illegal border crossings last year, it is my understanding that those rates have increased in recent months. We look forward to hearing how your budget seeks to meet that challenge. I am pleased that the Department has provided our Subcommittee with a comprehensive plan for border security. Your budget request mirrors that plan, which suggests that continuous investments in a "border wall system" should be made over a ten-year period.

While there are areas where we believe your budget request gets it right, there are other areas where we want to work with you to ensure we are recommending a sufficient level of investment: cybersecurity operations; equipment to detect opioids and other dangerous substances before they enter our borders; Coast Guard assets; building capacity with state and local partners; and research and development.

There are also parts of this budget request that are not grounded in reality and that artificially deflate the real overall needs of the Department. It assumes hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue will be realized by fee increase proposals that have not been authorized by law.

We request your assistance as we consult with you and your staff to make adjustments necessary to allow this budget to work despite these challenges.

Again, Madam Secretary, we appreciate your testimony and your willingness to answer questions from members of this Subcommittee.

I will now turn to our distinguished Ranking Member, Senator Tester [,then to our full committee Chairman, Senator Shelby][, and then to our full Committee Vice Chairman, Senator Leahy] for any opening remarks [he/they] may have before asking Secretary Nielsen to proceed with her

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

Thank you.

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