

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Lowey:

As the Committee prepares to mark up the Fiscal Year 2019 Homeland Security Appropriations bill, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce urges you to consider the following recommendations, which would promote business and economic growth, improve security, and facilitate cross-border trade and travel. Given the need to restrain overall federal spending and the discretionary spending caps currently in effect, the Chamber urges you to focus federal resources on projects and activities that offer the greatest potential to contribute to an environment conducive to stronger economic growth.

The Chamber supports funding U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) for additional customs officers at the ports of entry to improve security, trade, and travel facilitation. The dual role of CBP is to secure the homeland and facilitate trade and travel. Commercial and pedestrian crossings suffer from understaffing, which increases wait times, costs industry billions, and discourages travelers and trade from approaching the border. Investing in staffing at the ports of entry would enhance security and consumer safety, facilitate trade, and improve travel for the millions of business and leisure travelers entering the U.S. every year.

In addition, the Chamber supports funding CBP initiatives that will modernize security and trade processes. Programs like the Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) and the International Trade Data System (ITDS) single window have the potential to significantly decrease the transaction cost of trade, open trade to small- and medium-sized businesses, and improve targeting capabilities for government. The Chamber urges Congress to provide CBP appropriate funding to strengthen these programs.

Travel and tourism is critical to business and U.S. economic growth. It is essential that the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) have sufficient resources—including additional staffing, overtime flexibility, technology, PreCheck marketing support, and canine teams—to appropriately secure and facilitate the legitimate movement of air travelers. It is abundantly clear that wait times at airports are dramatically impacting travel and tourism, and

Congress should do all it can in working with the TSA to develop effective staffing models and adopt emerging technology for risk-based security strategies to minimize congestion.

The Chamber supports funding for the following programs: the National Cybersecurity and Communications Integration Center, including the Automated Indicator Sharing capability; implementing the Support Anti-terrorism by Fostering Effective Technologies Act of 2002 (SAFETY Act) program within the Science and Technology Directorate; and the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards (CFATS) program.

The Chamber also supports dedicated funding for intellectual property enforcement to CBP, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and the National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center (IPR Center). Economic analysis of resources invested in IPR enforcement has shown that every dollar spent on federal IPR enforcement efforts generates four dollars in increased tax revenues through increased jobs and economic growth. Counterfeits, and more recently, counterfeits traveling through low-value, small parcel shipments, also pose a health and safety risk. The work of ICE and CBP, individually and through coordination with other agencies engaged at the IPR Center, has been recognized and praised for its energy and effectiveness.

Lastly, small and seasonal businesses across America are struggling mightily to meet their workforce needs because the H-2B visa program's cap, which was implemented in 1990, constrains the ability of U.S. businesses in 2018 to grow and create jobs for American workers. The Chamber supports the inclusion of an H-2B returning worker exemption that would provide businesses with the ability to meet their seasonal workforce needs.

The Chamber appreciates your consideration of these recommendations as you mark up the Fiscal Year 2019 Homeland Security Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,



Neil L. Bradley

cc: Members of the House Committee on Appropriations