

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

R. BRUCE JOSTEN
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

1615 H STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20062-2000
202/463-5310

May 24, 2016

The Honorable John Hoeven
Chairman
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Hoeven and Ranking Member Shaheen:

As the Subcommittee prepares to mark up the Fiscal Year 2017 Homeland Security Appropriations bill, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than three million businesses of all sizes, sectors, and regions, as well as state and local chambers and industry associations, and dedicated to promoting, protecting, and defending America's free enterprise system, urges you to consider the following recommendations, which would promote business and economic growth, improve security, and facilitate cross-border trade and travel.

The dual role of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is to secure the homeland and facilitate trade and travel. The Chamber supports funding CBP for additional customs officers at the ports of entry to improve security, trade, and travel facilitation. Over the past five years, a disproportionate amount of funding has been designated for increasing staffing of border patrol officers between the ports of entry. The Chamber has supported these efforts; however, more funding needs to be designated towards customs officers at the port of entry. 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, facilitate trade, and improve travel for the millions of business and leisure travelers entering the U.S. every year.

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 risk-based security strategies to minimize congestion. Airlines and airports have invested dramatically to ensure the safety and convenience for their customers. Government needs to step forward to ensure both safety and convenience materializes for the millions of air travelers daily, and staff airports appropriately to meet demand.

The Chamber supports full funding for the completion of the Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) and the International Trade Data System (ITDS) single window. The ACE program would replace the Automated Commercial System (ACS), a decades old system with limited capabilities that requires significant financial support to maintain. This is not only operationally inefficient for government, but also hurts the competitiveness of U.S. businesses. Completing these programs would 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 commit to fund the program in line with the President's budget request.

The Chamber also supports funding for IP 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. 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.

The Chamber appreciates your consideration of these recommendations as you mark up the Fiscal Year 2017 Homeland Security Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Bruce Josten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

R. Bruce Josten

cc: Members of the Subcommittee on Homeland Security