

Mr. David Price, NC (Ranking Member).
 Mr. Silvestre Reyes, TX.
 Ms. Lois Capps, CA.
 Mr. Rush Holt, NJ.
 Mr. Adam Schiff, CA.
 Mr. Artur Davis, AL.
 Ms. Allyson Schwartz, PA.

Best regards,

NANCY PELOSI,
Democratic Leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1817.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. THORNBERRY). Pursuant to House Resolution 283 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 1817.

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IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 1817) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2006 for the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes, with Mr. SIMPSON in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered as having been read the first time.

Under the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. COX) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. COX).

Mr. COX. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself 7 minutes.

Mr. Chairman, we begin today a historic debate on the floor of this House that commences the annual authorization process for the Department of Homeland Security. This annual process is designed to recognize that the function of the Department of Homeland Security is the essence of our government's national security mission, protecting the American people and our territory.

This is the same national security mission ultimately that is performed in different ways by the Pentagon and by the intelligence community. Both the Pentagon and the intelligence community for this same reason undergo an annual authorization process in the Congress. That is a collaboration between the executive and the legislative branches that is necessary to ensure that we fulfill this most vital function.

We must remember that the Department of Homeland Security in the executive branch and the Committees on Homeland Security in this House and in the other body were formed because the congressional leadership and the President recognized that neither branch of government as then constituted was properly organized to deal with the 21st century threat of terrorism directed against Americans on our own territory. On an ongoing basis, the Congress and the executive need to focus together on this vital process and the annual authorization is the means for doing so.

The Department of Homeland Security authorization bill that is before the House today reflects an impressive bipartisan effort. That is due, in large part, to the strong and able leadership of the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON). The Members on both sides of the aisle have never forgotten for a single day since September 11, 2001, that the security of the American people must be placed above politics.

So as we meet today to consider the Department of Homeland Security authorization bill for fiscal year 2006, we find that we have forged agreement on many important challenges facing our country and the Department, and on ways to begin to address them. In establishing the procedures for bringing this annual authorization bill to the floor, we have been guided by the longstanding practices of the Committee on Armed Services and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. Those committees have always brought to the floor bills that live within the spending boundaries established in the House-passed budget. H.R. 1817, the Department of Homeland Security authorization bill also does exactly that.

To have credibility, a national security authorization bill must set the executive's priorities within the framework of its actual budgetary resources. It does little good for us to pretend that the Department of Homeland Security has infinite budget resources, and then give it mandates that it cannot carry out. So this bill funds priorities within the overall DHS budget, not on top of it.

Within that constraint, we have been able to accomplish a great deal more for the security of the American people and for this country. We fully fund the 2,000 new Border Patrol agents called for in the Intelligence Reform Act passed last year, and we increase the Department of Homeland Security's funding by nearly one-quarter of a billion dollars for this purpose.

The bill authorizes \$40 million so that immigration and customs enforcement can expedite illegal alien removal. It provides \$5 million in new funding to implement the Safety Act so we can more quickly deploy anti-terrorism technologies to protect the American people from terrorism. It adds \$20 million for interoperable communications and technical assistance for our first responders. It increases

funding for cybersecurity research and development and for cybersecurity education and training.

Within the Department of Homeland Security budget that this House has already approved, we have authorized \$40 million in additional funds to support the training of State and local law enforcement personnel so they can help enforce Federal immigration laws. This provision is contained in a separate amendment that I will offer today with the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) of the Committee on the Judiciary.

On these and all other funding decisions in the bill, we have had to make hard choices and set priorities. That is our responsibility. As a result, we have not funded every initiative to protect against every conceivable means by which terrorists might mount an attack. But what we have done is based on our funding decisions on the best intelligence available, on terrorist capabilities and intentions, and on the actual risk of terrorist attack. The bill also advances our prime objective of preventing terrorism by improving our intelligence capability within the Department of Homeland Security.

Prevention of terrorism requires that information sharing about terrorist threats be seamless, that it be timely, and that that communication be secure. That is exactly what this bill accomplishes, both within the Department of Homeland Security and across the Federal Government and with our State, local and private sector partners. It provides the Department of Homeland Security with new tools to build a robust intelligence capability. It strengthens the partnership with these other stakeholders.

Those partnerships are essential in sustaining the counterterrorism mission into the foreseeable future, and the bill will help the Department of Homeland Security to streamline and integrate the multitude of different background checks and security screenings that are conducted for travelers, workers and other critical personnel who are required to undergo security checks by the Department.

The bill revises the color-coded homeland security advisory system to make sure that threat warnings are specific and informative, and wherever possible, that these warnings be targeted. By targeting these warnings to the areas of the country or sectors of the economy that are threatened, we can be sure that we are warning the right people and not needlessly scaring the wrong people. We also need to make sure that the Federal Government gives clear guidance and speaks with one voice when it issues such warnings. This bill will ensure this happens.

This authorization bill is shorter this year than it will ever be in future years. That is because, first, the Department itself is only 2 years old, and Congress has just recently written the entire legislative charter for the Department.