



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement of Chairman Bennie G. Thompson

The FY 2010 Budget for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Customs and Border Protection, and the U.S. Coast Guard

June 11, 2008 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Chairman Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Border, Maritime, and Global Counterterrorism Subcommittee hearing entitled *The FY 2010 Budget for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Customs and Border Protection, and the U.S. Coast Guard*:

“As I stated when Secretary Napolitano testified before the full Homeland Security Committee last month, the Administration has managed to submit a very comprehensive budget that answers a lot of our questions about where the Department wants to go, despite having numerous challenges on its plate.

As our witnesses well know, ICE, CBP, and the Coast Guard shoulder responsibility for many of the Department’s challenges.

The men and women of these agencies are quite literally on the front lines of America’s security.

That is why I support the Administration’s funding request for the three agencies as well as several proposed programmatic changes in the budget.

For ICE, I am pleased that additional resources were requested for southwest border enforcement and for removal of dangerous criminal aliens.

Similarly, for CBP, I support funding requested to combat smuggling of firearms and currency, which fuels drug-related violence along the southwest border, and to deploy technology along our Nation’s borders.

For the Coast Guard, I am pleased that the budget provides the funds necessary to ensure it can move forward with long-overdue recapitalization of its fleet.

These resources will help ICE, CBP and the Coast Guard better secure our borders and the Nation as a whole.

While I support the budget proposal overall, I do have some concerns, however.

In certain instances, additional funding, personnel, or infrastructure may be necessary to ensure that ICE, CBP, and the Coast Guard have the tools they need to fulfill their missions.

These agencies must have adequate resources to carry out critical initiatives such as 100 percent scanning of inbound cargo, safe and humane detention of undocumented aliens, and deployment of effective border security technology.

It is also imperative that they have appropriate internal resources to oversee important procurements, such as SBInet and Deepwater, to ensure that our limited homeland security

dollars are well spent.

In these tough economic times, I am committed to helping secure a budget for the Department that is both fiscally responsible and strengthens the security of the United States.

I look forward to hearing from each of our witnesses today about how the proposed budget will help you meet the homeland security goals set forth by the President.

Going forward, I hope to continue working cooperatively with you to advance the Department of Homeland Security's mission in the interest of the American people."

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FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact Dena Graziano or Adam Comis at (202) 225-9978

United States House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
H2-176, Ford House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515
Phone: (202) 226-2616 | Fax: (202) 226-4499
<http://homeland.house.gov>