

**DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023**

U.S. SENATE,  
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,  
*Washington, DC.*

NONDEPARTMENTAL WITNESSES

[The following testimony was received by the Subcommittee on Homeland Security for inclusion in the record. The submitted material relates to the fiscal year 2023 budget request for programs within the subcommittee’s jurisdiction.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE ALLIANCE TO END SLAVERY AND TRAFFICKING  
(ATEST)

The Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking (ATEST) thanks you for your leadership in the fight to end child labor, forced labor and human trafficking. We appreciate your efforts to pass legislation and provide resources to Federal agencies engaged in combating these horrific crimes. We seek your assistance in funding essential programs in the fiscal year 2023 Homeland Security Appropriations bill and including related Committee report language. The Department of Homeland Security plays a vital role in fighting this despicable crime. ATEST recommends the creation of new victims services programs and accountability for programs in this key Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 and subsequent reauthorizations (TVPA) and related legislation. We urge you to include appropriate and necessary resources for DHS to combat trafficking and child sexual exploitation, protect trafficking victims, and effectively implement its mandate under TFTEA and the Tariff Act of 1930.

ATEST FY23 Appropriations Requests Summary: Homeland

Department	Program	FY23 Appropriation Request
Homeland Security	Customs and Border Protection	\$20,000,000
	Immigration and Customs Enforcement/Homeland Security Investigations	\$54,400,000—Requested from allocated funding, of which —not less than \$15,700,000 for forced labor investigations —\$20,000,000 for Victim Witness Coordinators
	Immigration and Customs Enforcement/Homeland Security Investigations: Office of Victims Assistance	\$33,500,000—Requested from allocated funding

Customs and Border Protection (CBP): \$20,000,000 We request funding from the ICE allocated funds for CBP to strengthen enforcement actions and processes to prevent the importation of products made with forced labor in accordance with section 307 of the Tariff Act of 1930. Recent changes in law have made it easier to enforce this prohibition on the importation into the U.S. of goods made with forced labor. Funds would be used to fulfill CBP’s budget request for fiscal year 2018 of 20 new auditors, to further enforce forced-labor restrictions in imports as was addressed in section 910 of the TFTEA of 2015 (Public Law 114–125). Increased and improved

enforcement of the act would allow CBP to stop goods made with forced labor from entering the U.S. markets and discourage foreign producers from using forced labor in their supply chains.

We continue to see a steady uptick in enforcement actions over recent years. Since the consumptive demand loophole was closed in 2015, CBP has issued 36 Withhold Release Orders (WRO), including 7 WROs and 2 Findings in fiscal year 2021. CBP estimated its fiscal year 2021 enforcement actions prevented nearly \$500 million of goods made by forced labor from entering the United States. While we appreciate this increased attention by CBP, we also recognize CBP needs additional resources in order to continue fulfilling their mandate to prevent the importation of goods made by forced labor. In the past couple of years, the Government Accountability Office has written several reports highlighting CBP's need for more resources dedicated to addressing forced labor. Additionally, Congress has recently given additional mandates to CBP on this issue, including the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act. In order to ensure CBP is able to continue increasing its Section 307 enforcement actions and tackle additional mandates related to forced labor, it is critical Congress provide additional resources specifically directed to support CBP's enforcement of Section 307.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI): \$54,400,000 HSI plays a critical role in combating severe forms of trafficking originating from foreign countries, including investigating violations of Section 307 of the Tariff Act of 1930, and is, therefore, the first line of defense against key aspects of this crime. In fiscal year 2021, ICE HSI made 2,360 human trafficking arrests, up 35 percent from fiscal year 2020. We request funding from the Immigration and Customs Enforcement allocated funds for investigations, training, victim services, and victim witness coordinators within HSI to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons as authorized by Sec. 113(i) of the TVPRA of 2013 (Public Law 113-4) and updated in the TVPRA of 2018 (Public Law 115-392).

Of these funds, \$15,770,000 should be for forced labor investigations under section 307 of the Tariff Act of 1930, and \$20,000,000 should be designated specifically for Victim Witness Coordinators. Additional resources should be used to train field officers on identifying victims of human trafficking and distinguishing between trafficking and smuggling, expand trafficking investigations, and help reduce the incidents of trafficking and forced labor in the United States. The Victim Witness Coordinator funding would allow HSI to hire 5 additional Victim Witness Coordinators specialized in human trafficking to support human trafficking victims interacting with law enforcement and ensure that the HSI response to this crime is victim-centered. The funds would also allow HSI to train all victim witness personnel on the provision of victim services and rights for this specialized victim population.

Proposed Report Language: Forced Labor—Within the total amount provided to HSI, not less than \$15,770,000 shall be for investigations and other activities related to forced labor law violations, including but not limited to forced child labor, and of which not to exceed \$6,000,000 shall remain available until expended. ICE shall submit to the Committees an annual report on the expenditures and performance metrics associated with such activities.

DHS Center for Countering Human Trafficking (CCHT): Report Language Request—We are aware of legislation S. 2991 that would appropriate \$14 million for staffing support and personnel at the DHS CCHT, while we do not take a position on a specific appropriations request for the CCHT at this time, we have recommendations on how any money that is appropriated should be disbursed. We request that all CCHT-related funding be utilized in accordance with the prevention, protection and prosecution principles enshrined in the TVPA of 2000.

Proposed Report Language: The Center to Counter Human Trafficking shall ensure that all appropriated funds to support the center's operation and functioning, including personnel and resources, place the victim at the center of all policies and procedures. The CCHT shall use these funds to support pending requests for Continued Presence, including expedited resolution of requests, and to enhance the utilization of Continued Presence in more forced labor cases, whose victims are under-represented among the individuals who are granted Continued Presence. Any appropriated funds shall not be used to support any activities related to enforcement and removal operations of any potential or identified victims of human trafficking.

As a champion for the victims of child labor, forced labor and sex trafficking, you understand the complexities of these issues and the resources needed to respond. We have carefully vetted our requests to focus on the most important and effective programs. We thank you for your consideration of these requests and your continued leadership. If you have any questions, please contact ATEST Coalition Director Terry FitzPatrick (terry.fitzpatrick@ATEST-US.org).

Sincerely,

Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST)

Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW)

Covenant House

Free the Slaves

HEAL Trafficking

Human Trafficking Institute

Human Trafficking Legal Center

Humanity United Action

McCain Institute for International Leadership

National Network for Youth (NN4Y)

Polaris

Safe Horizon

Solidarity Center

Truah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights

United Way Worldwide

Verite

Vital Voices Global Partnership

ATEST is a U.S.-based coalition that advocates for solutions to prevent and end all forms of human trafficking and modern slavery around the world.

[This statement was submitted by Terry FitzPatrick, ATEST Coalition Director.]

## PREPARED STATEMENT OF CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

April 26, 2022

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard  
Chairwoman  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Homeland Security  
2006 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Fleischmann  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Homeland Security  
1036 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Roybal-Allard and Ranking Member Fleischmann:

Thank you for your work to write this year's Homeland Security appropriations bill. We write to respectfully request that the Committee support report language establishing greater transparency measures over the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3).

In May 2021, DHS established CP3, which supports its targeted violence and terrorism prevention efforts. CP3 evolved from the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) initiatives that discriminatorily targeted Muslims in an attempt to identify individuals who might commit a terrorist attack. Department officials have rightly acknowledged that CVE was a biased program, premised on the islamophobic assumption that "individuals who are high risk were coming from specific religious and ethnic communities," and have asserted that CP3 represents a rejection of the CVE framework.

The stated commitment to reject failed approaches is welcome. In practice, however, CP3 expands the core CVE prevention model rather than jettisons it: CP3 efforts now apparently focus on a broader range of violence than only terrorism associated with Muslims, exposing even more communities to the risks it generates. Like CVE, the CP3 model employs ill-defined and commonplace phenomena among individuals — for example, social alienation, mood swings, having a "grievance" or "extremist" view — as predictors of future violence, raising the specter of reporting based on constitutionally-protected activism or racial and religious stereotypes that inform who is perceived as threatening. Like CVE, CP3 tasks state and local stakeholders (police, public safety agencies, community groups, universities, and others) with working together to identify and intervene with people experiencing such conditions, putting law enforcement between people and the help they may need. As recently as 2020, after the Department had formally abandoned the label "CVE," it noted that such targeted violence and terrorism prevention efforts were "filling a gap where law enforcement or intelligence cannot operate because of constitutionally based civil rights and liberties."

In 2021, Congress provided more than \$80 million to activities under the broader umbrella of targeted violence and terrorism prevention, but more information is needed to justify continued funding for such initiatives, especially since they generate serious civil rights and liberties risks and have never been shown to prevent violence. As further detailed in the draft report language:

- **Efficacy.** An independent, third-party accounting of whether the CP3 model has been shown to achieve its stated goal: preventing violence. Indeed, some of the government-funded studies the Department cites as support for the program clearly state that it is not possible to reliably identify in advance people who may commit violence (for example, “because there are no unambiguous early indicators of future violent behavior, the performance of risk assessment tools and methods to distinguish individuals who appear to be threats from those who actually do pose a threat is limited”). Despite DHS’s claims that these programs are successful, the agency’s evaluations rely on performance metrics that are unconnected to violence reduction, focusing instead on the reach of a program or the degree to which a grantee has fulfilled funding conditions, while simply presupposing that violence reduction will follow if the Department’s prevention framework is implemented.
- **Impact.** CP3’s predecessor programs overtly targeted Muslim, Arab, and South Asian communities. More clarity is necessary on how CP3 is currently being targeted, and a full accounting of the impacts it is having as administered, based largely on data the Department has committed to collect in public grant proposal documents.
- **Civil Rights and Liberties.** The Department says that it intends to safeguard civil rights and liberties as it carries out CP3 efforts, but it has not specified how it is doing so. More detail regarding the nature of these civil rights and liberties protections is required.

It’s essential that the kinds of violence prevention strategies we fund are effective. By allowing CP3 to continue without robust transparency requirements and public civil rights and liberties safeguards, we risk sowing distrust and causing further harm to some of the communities most in need of support in our country—including children, people with disabilities, immigrants, and families facing poverty. We ask you to support these reporting requirements, so Congress and DHS can make more informed decisions about CP3 in the future.

We urge the subcommittee to include the following report language for the FY 2023 appropriations cycle for the Department of Homeland Security’s Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3):

**Report Language Request #1:**

*Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3).*—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, CP3 shall submit to the Committee and make publicly available online a report containing the following:

1. For each risk factor, indicator, or other sign of potential violence used in DHS Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), Targeted Violence and Terrorism Prevention (TVTP), and CP3 programs, including grant-funded activities:
  - a. the form of potential threat it pertains to, for example, targeted violence or terrorism, divided by threat category, such as racially or ethnically motivated violent extremism, and sub-category, such as white supremacist violence or black separatist violence, as appropriate; and
  - b. citations to peer-reviewed research validating its predictive value and whether the federal government has funded or supported the cited research.

2. A description of all procedural and substantive privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties protections applicable to CP3 programs, whether administered directly by the Department, through grant recipients, or by other third parties, and a detailed description of how CP3 monitors grant recipient compliance with federal civil rights laws pursuant to 44 C.F.R. Part 7, as well as of any other applicable statutory or regulatory provisions.
3. Beginning with the fiscal year 2020 grant cycle, detailed descriptions of:
  - a. the operative policies for award decisions for each cycle, including the specific criteria for awarding grants and how they were applied; and
  - b. the performance metrics and evaluation criteria for grant recipients for each cycle.
4. For each grant award for the most recent fiscal year cycle and for prior year awards still within their period of performance:
  - a. a list of all subgrantees and any entities that participate in grant-funded programs without receiving grant funding;
  - b. the particular forms of terrorism or violent extremism, divided by threat category and sub-category as appropriate, and targeted violence prevention addressed by each grant;
  - c. the population demographics of the jurisdiction where each grantee will be implementing grant funded activities;
  - d. descriptions of any third-party complaints related to the grant-funded activities of the grantee;
  - e. detailed, summarized evaluations based on evaluation criteria and performance metrics; and
  - f. in particular, for each grant award that supports threat assessment and management teams:
    - i. the number, professional backgrounds, and organizational affiliations of members of the associated threat assessment and management team(s);
    - ii. the identified risk factor(s), behavioral changes, extremist ideologies (if any); and grievances (if identified) for each opened case;
    - iii. the number of referrals for mental health, substance abuse, job skills, housing assistance, or other services; and
    - iv. the number of federal, state, and local criminal inquiries opened as a result of referrals from an associated threat assessment and management team, disaggregated by investigating agency, type of inquiry, federal investigative classification, terrorism classification and sub-classification, including information on violent extremism threat category and sub-category, and subsequent law enforcement action.

**Report Language Request #2:**

*Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3).*—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, CP3 shall submit to the Committee and make publicly available online a report containing the following:

1. Disclosure of any correspondence or engagements involving CP3 staff, whether or not solicited and with Personally Identifiable Information (PII) omitted or redacted, pertaining to specific individuals identified as of-concern by state or local partners, if any, and a description of any DHS follow-up action, referral, or recommendations given, if any.
2. A description of the nature of PII received, if any, from engagements or grantees or otherwise collected by CP3, through personnel such as local prevention officers or other means.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,



RASHIDA TLAIB  
Member of Congress



SHEILA CHERFILUS-MCCORMICK  
Member of Congress



PRAMILA JAYAPAL  
Member of Congress



JESÚS G. "CHUY" GARCÍA  
Member of Congress



HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.  
Member of Congress



ALEXANDRIA OCASIO-CORTEZ  
Member of Congress



ELISSA SLOTKIN  
Member of Congress



AYANNA PRESSLEY  
Member of Congress



MELANIE A. STANSBURY  
Member of Congress



MARC VEASEY  
Member of Congress

[This statement was submitted by Rashida Tlaib, Member of Congress.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF CENTER FOR PREVENTION PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS  
(CP3)

Dear Chair Murphy, Ranking Member Capito, and members of the Senate Homeland Security Appropriations subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony concerning transparency requirements for the Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3).

In May 2021, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) established the Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3), which supports its targeted violence and terrorism prevention efforts. CP3 evolves from Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) initiatives that aimed to identify Muslims who might commit a terrorist attack. Department officials have acknowledged that CVE was a biased program, premised on the assumption that “individuals who are high risk were coming from specific religious and ethnic communities,” and have asserted that CP3 represents a rejection of the CVE framework.

The stated commitment to reject failed approaches is welcome. In practice, however, CP3 expands the core CVE prevention model rather than jettisons it: CP3 efforts now apparently focus on a broader range of violence than only terrorism associated with Muslims, exposing even more communities to the risks it generates. Like CVE, the CP3 model employs ill-defined and commonplace phenomena among individuals—for example, social alienation, mood swings, having a “grievance” or “extremist” view—as predictors of future violence, raising the specter of reporting based on constitutionally-protected activism or racial and religious stereotypes that inform who is perceived as threatening. Like CVE, CP3 tasks State and local stakeholders (police, public safety agencies, community groups, universities, and others) with working together to identify and intervene with people experiencing such conditions, putting law enforcement between people and the help they may need. As recently as 2020, after the Department had formally abandoned the label “CVE,” it noted that such targeted violence and terrorism prevention efforts were “filling a gap where law enforcement or intelligence cannot operate because of constitutionally based civil rights and liberties.”

In 2021, Congress provided more than \$80 million to fund activities under the broader umbrella of targeted violence and terrorism prevention, but more informa-

tion is needed to justify continued funding for such initiatives, especially since they generate serious civil rights and liberties risks and have never been shown to prevent violence.

In a letter to the House Appropriations Committee, Representatives Tlaib, Cherfilus-McCormick, Garcia, Jayapal, Johnson, Ocasio-Cortez, Pressley, Slotkin, Stansbury, and Veasey wrote:

“It’s essential that the kinds of violence prevention strategies we fund are effective. By allowing CP3 to continue without robust transparency requirements and public civil rights and liberties safeguards, we risk sowing distrust and causing further harm to some of the communities most in need of support in our country—including children, people with disabilities, immigrants, and families facing poverty.”<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, we urge the subcommittee to support the transparency language found on pages 6–7 of the House Homeland Security Appropriations subcommittee report. Specifically:

Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3).- Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this act, and annually thereafter, CP3 shall submit to the Committee and make publicly available online a report containing the following:

- (1) For each risk factor or behavioral indicator used in CP3 trainings and programs, the evidence base supporting its inclusion, including peer-reviewed research validating its inclusion and whether the Federal Government has funded or supported the cited evidence;
- (2) A description of all privacy, civil rights, and civil liberties protections applicable to CP3 programs, whether administered directly by the Department, through grant recipients, or by other third parties, and a detailed description of how CP3 monitors grant recipient compliance with Federal civil rights laws pursuant to 44 C.F.R. Part 7 and any other applicable statutory or regulatory provisions; and
- (3) Beginning with the fiscal year 2020 grant cycle, detailed descriptions of:
  - (A) the operative policies for award decisions for each cycle, including the specific criteria for awarding grants and how they were applied;
  - (B) the performance metrics and evaluation criteria for grant recipients for each cycle; and
  - (C) a summary of all ongoing evaluations of grantees, including evaluation criteria and performance metrics, as well as a list of all completed or published evaluations.

These transparency requirements are an important first step in allowing Congress and the public to assess the efficacy and impact of the CP3, and to examine whether civil rights and civil liberties are being protected.

Thank you again for this opportunity to submit this testimony.

[This statement was submitted by Sue Udry, Executive Director, Defending Rights & Dissent and Fatema Ahmad, Executive Director, Muslim Justice League.]

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#### PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING

Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Capito, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony on behalf of America’s public media service—1,500 public television and radio stations reaching 99 percent of the American people. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) requests \$40 million in fiscal year 2023 for the Next Generation Warning System (NGWS) within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). CPB is grateful for the strong funding support of this grant program in fiscal year 2022. Sustained support will reinforce and extend public media’s contributions to public safety and enhance alerting and warning capabilities that benefit all Americans.

While media and content delivery have changed, public broadcasting remains a trusted source for fact-based information. Local stations’ broadcast infrastructure provides not only the educational and informational content Americans expect from public media, but emergency alerting and communications services at the National,

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<sup>1</sup>Letter to Chairwoman Roybal-Allard and Ranking Member Fleischmann, dated April 26, 2022, available at: <https://bit.ly/CP3Letter>

State, and local levels. Often unnoticed until times of emergency, these services direct people to safety and transmit messages from these emergency management and public safety officials. The grant support will enable national public media organizations and local stations to continue to meet the infrastructure resilience requirements that ensures reliable, always-ready public safety communication systems.

Nationally, the public television interconnection system serves as a distribution point for PBS WARN, an essential part of FEMA's nationwide Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) system. The WEA system relies upon public broadcasters to ensure the delivery of messages that include imminent threats to life and safety, AMBER alerts, and Presidential alerts during a national emergency. Between March 12, 2020 and January 18, 2022, more than 13,091 WEAs were issued by State and local authorities and transmitted over the PBS WARN system. Approximately 644 of those alerts were for COVID-19, harnessing the reach and ubiquity of mobile device communications to address a pandemic for the first time.

Additionally, PBS leverages its contributions to the WEA system and offers the Eyes on IPAWS tool to provide public safety officials with increased transparency of issued alerts. The utility of Eyes on IPAWS was recognized by the FCC's Communications, Security, Reliability, and Interoperability Council's (CSRIC) VII in 2020. The CSRIC report States, "Alert Originators, emergency managers, and any other stakeholders can use Eyes on IPAWS to determine active WEAs nationwide; confirm transmission of issued WEAs; gain awareness of WEAs issued by other agencies; view alerts based on location, alert type, or date; and analyze the impact of WEAs using the data from Eyes on IPAWS in after-action analysis."

The public radio interconnection system, Public Radio Satellite System(r) (PRSS), managed by NPR, receives a national EAS feed directly from FEMA and distributes Presidential emergency alerts to 1,247 public radio stations nationwide, including NPR member and non-member stations. PRSS is also named as a resource in at least 20 States' emergency plans and many of the public radio stations in these 20 States serve as Primary Entry Point (PEP) stations. The PRSS national network of nearly 400 interconnected public radio stations supports secure, reliable communications during emergencies without relying on the Internet, which may be off-line during emergencies.

Stations' infrastructure also provides for public safety services tailored to the needs of their local communities. In times of disaster, enabled public radio stations use MetaPub technology to deliver graphic alerts and messages such as weather forecasts and shelter information. For example, California stations successfully tested MetaPub alerting during the Great California Shakeout earthquake drill in 2016 and demonstrated how stations could bring emergency communications to affected audiences. In the Quad Cities region, WVIK-FM is the primary relay station for emergency information concerning the Exelon Quad Cities nuclear power generating station. In the event of an emergency at the nuclear plant, the Rock Island County, Illinois, Emergency Management Agency, contacts WVIK station personnel, and the station will broadcast the EMA message. MetaPub was also used during the pandemic to direct viewers and listeners to local resources and the latest public health guidelines.

In rural and remote areas, public media is often the only source of local news and public safety information, and native-owned public media stations serve some of the most remote and least connected areas in the Nation. These stations partner with the Tribal governments, local public safety officials, local health agencies, and Regional Bureau of Indian Affairs offices to distribute essential health and safety information. Without stations' broadcast infrastructure, many Americans, especially those in rural areas, would lack access to lifesaving information and public safety alerts.

Public media's public safety capabilities are valued and utilized by local, State, and Federal public safety officials. Over the past 2 years, NC PBS partnered with the NC Department of Public Safety to provide live English and Spanish broadcasts and livestreams of emergency news conferences from the State Emergency Operations Center. Last year, the livestreamed briefings received 2.3 million views across NC PBS' online distribution platforms. In California, public television stations partner with the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) on "Listos California," a Statewide emergency preparedness campaign. The partnership produced "What a Disaster," an engaging emergency preparedness program, which challenges three Southern California families to test their emergency readiness plans in the event of the next wildfire, earthquake, flood, or another disaster.

While public media stations are dedicated to serving the needs of their communities, their ability to provide many life-saving public safety services relies on aging infrastructure, which has often surpassed its expected end-of-life. In 2017, CPB commissioned a comprehensive System Technology Assessment to better understand

public media stations' technology needs. This Assessment projected that the system's financial capacity to address equipment repair and replacement would see a cumulative shortfall of more than \$300 million by 2020. While CPB does not have an updated system assessment, there is every reason to believe that the financial challenges that stations face in meeting their equipment needs have only grown. Without resources to maintain and replace broadcast transmission infrastructure on schedule, stations have started to experience equipment failures that restrict or suspend their broadcasting capabilities, including the essential public safety services these stations provide.

Funding of the Next Generation Warning System (NGWS) will address the need for resilient public safety infrastructure. The NGWS grant program would allow public broadcasting entities to procure, construct and improve transmission and other public safety-related equipment and services that secure and strengthen public media's role in helping protect American communities. Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for allowing me, on behalf of America's public media system, to submit this testimony. I appreciate your consideration of this important funding request.

[This statement was submitted by Patricia de Stacy Harrison, President and CEO, Corporation for Public Broadcasting.]

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PREPARED STATEMENT OF CONGRESSIONAL FIRE SERVICES INSTITUTE

Dear Chairman Murphy and Ranking Member Capito:

On behalf of the Nation's fire and emergency services, we write to urge your continued support for programs that enhance our Nation's readiness, emergency response, and fire prevention capabilities: the Assistance to Firefighters (AFG) and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant programs, the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), and the Urban Search and Rescue Response System (US&R).

I. AFG and SAFER Grant Programs

A. Funding

The AFG and SAFER grant programs are imperative to addressing the needs of more than one million fire and emergency services personnel while providing an economic stimulus to American businesses. AFG and SAFER have been eminently successful in providing fire departments and EMS agencies with the tools, training, and staffing needed to protect their communities safely and effectively. As you begin work on the Fiscal Year 2023 appropriations process, we encourage you to fund these programs at the authorized level of \$750 million each.

Demand for these programs has consistently been significantly higher than the supply of available funding, and equipment costs have continued to rise while funding has remained relatively low. The most recent analysis from industry experts estimates that since 2019, the average cost for turnout gear has increased by around 35–40 percent. The cost of fire apparatus has increased by around 32 percent.

Even while costs continue to increase, demand for fire and emergency services response has also continued to grow. According to NFPA data, in 2011, fire departments responded to just over 30 million calls in that year. By 2020, the annual number of calls had risen 22 percent to approximately 36.7 million calls. Not only did the overall number of calls increase, but the number of calls across most response categories also increased. In 2020, fire departments continued to respond to more calls for medical aid, mutual aid, hazardous materials response, and other conditions than before.

The latest NFPA Needs Assessment, released in December 2021, found that staffing remains a constant need for all fire departments, regardless of their career, combination, or volunteer status. The study found that, since the previous Needs Assessment in 2015, most fire departments have seen flat firefighter staffing levels despite significant increases in calls.

The AFG and SAFER grant programs improve response capabilities across all emergency response areas. They also provide funding for crucial fire prevention and safety programs targeted toward high-risk populations. As demand for fire and emergency response continues to rise, we must ensure that our fire and EMS personnel have what they need to keep themselves and their communities safe, while also strengthening prevention efforts to improve the safety of civilians and personnel alike. This requirement is squarely in the Federal interest and necessitates Federal investments at the authorized level.

### B. Waiver Language

The COVID–19 pandemic, ever-increasing demand for emergency response, and significant economic pain due to inflation have continued to squeeze fire department and EMS agency budgets. To ensure that the AFG and SAFER programs can distribute funding to these departments and agencies as quickly and effectively as possible, we ask that you include the following waiver language in the fiscal year 2023 DHS appropriations bill.

These waivers will help ensure that vital grant funding gets where it is most needed: into the hands of local fire departments and EMS agencies. The SAFER waivers will also allow departments to retain and rehire personnel-critical to attaining and maintaining the appropriate staffing levels to keep communities safe.

#### SAFER:

In making grants to carry out Section 34 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2229a), the Administrator shall grant waivers from the requirements in subsections (a)(1)(A), (a)(1)(B), (a)(1)(E), (c)(1), (c)(2), and (c)(4) of such act.

#### AFG:

In making grants to carry out Section 33 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2229), the Administrator shall grant waivers from the requirements in subsection (k) of such act.

### II. U.S. Fire Administration

Another issue we bring to your attention is funding for USFA. USFA plays an important role at the National level, ensuring that the fire service is prepared to respond to all hazards.

Each year, USFA provides training to approximately 100,000 fire and emergency service personnel through the National Fire Academy (NFA). Through the vital funding of the State Fire Training Grants, USFA is also able to support much-needed training in the States, and thus reach a larger audience. Additionally, USFA collects important data and conducts research to reduce the threat of fire and other dangers in local communities. Furthermore, USFA’s outreach and educational materials help to ensure the safety of both first responders and community members. Unfortunately, over the past decade, USFA’s budget has remained below the authorized level of \$76.5 million.

At a time when fire and EMS personnel are facing climate change threats, including increasing numbers of natural disasters like hurricanes, tornadoes, and wildfires; more medical calls than ever before; the evolving challenge of responding on the front lines of a global pandemic; the continued scourge of structural fires, including home fires; increasing numbers of calls for hazardous materials response; and much more, it is essential that the agency tasked with supporting America’s fire and emergency services is properly resourced.

Therefore, our organizations request full funding of \$76.5 million for USFA in fiscal year 2023 to ensure that it can continue its mission to support our Nation’s fire and EMS personnel and work for a fire-safe America.

### III. Urban Search and Rescue Response System

In addition, we request \$55 million for the National Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) system. The 28-team US&R system is nationally recognized for its ability to provide lifesaving assistance during major hurricanes, tornadoes, wildland fires, and other disasters.

The US&R system is facing important funding challenges in fiscal year 2023. In 2004 and 2005, FEMA provided one-time funding for Federal US&R teams to buy vehicles, such as tractors, 53’ dry trailers, 28’ box trucks, command vehicles, and flatbed trailers. These vehicles are now reaching their end of useful life and must be replaced to ensure the Federal teams can move their personnel and equipment in times of disasters. We expect the replacement of these vehicles to cost approximately \$500,000 per Federal task force. In addition, the US&R teams are facing inflation costs for renting warehouses to store their equipment and an approximately \$10 million cost to recapitalize equipment. Furthermore, as the COVID–19 pandemic abates, the US&R system will require additional funding to conduct joint field exercises.

We remain grateful for your continued leadership in ensuring that America’s fire and emergency services are prepared to protect the public from all hazards—both natural and manmade. As you continue developing legislation to fund these programs for fiscal year 2023, we urge you to consider our recommendations to ensure

that our Nation's first responders can continue to protect and serve their communities safely and effectively.

Sincerely,

Congressional Fire Services Institute  
 Fire Apparatus Manufacturers' Association  
 Fire and Emergency Manufacturers and Services Association  
 International Association of Arson Investigators  
 International Association of Fire Chiefs  
 International Association of Fire Fighters  
 International Fire Service Training Association  
 International Society of Fire Service Instructors  
 National Association of State Fire Marshals  
 National Fire Protection Association  
 National Volunteer Fire Council  
 North American Fire Training Directors  
 Congressional Fire Services Institute  
 Fire Apparatus Manufacturers' Association  
 Fire and Emergency Manufacturers and Services Association  
 International Association of Arson Investigators  
 International Association of Fire Chiefs  
 International Association of Fire Fighters  
 International Fire Service Training Association  
 International Society of Fire Service Instructors  
 National Association of State Fire Marshals  
 National Fire Protection Association  
 National Volunteer Fire Council  
 North American Fire Training Directors

[This statement was submitted by Michaela Campbell, Director of Government Affairs for the Congressional Fire Services Institute.]

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PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING CENTERS

Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Capito, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. As President of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), I have the honor of leading a union that represents employees at 34 Federal agencies, including over 700 instructors and support personnel at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC) at their headquarter facility located in Glynco, Georgia and facilities in Artesia, NM, Charleston, SC, and Cheltenham, MD. FLETC is the Nation's largest provider of law enforcement training to Federal law enforcement personnel. FLETC's mission is to train all those who protect the homeland, and therefore, its training audience also includes State, local, and Tribal departments throughout the United States. Additionally, FLETC's impact extends outside our Nation's borders through international training and capacity-building activities.

Under a collaborative training model, FLETC's Federal partner organizations deliver training unique to their missions, while FLETC provides training in areas common to all law enforcement officers, such as firearms, driving, tactics, investigations, and legal training. FLETC also provides career-long training to Federal law enforcement professionals to help them fulfill their responsibilities safely and proficiently.

FLETC's curriculum development and review process engages experts from across all levels of law enforcement, and FLETC partners extensively with other agencies and stakeholders in training research and the exchange of best practices to ensure it offers the most effective training subject matter, technologies, and methodologies.

Since NTEU was elected as the exclusive bargaining representative for FLETC employees, NTEU has tried to work with FLETC leadership on several issues of concern. These issues include increasing instructor staffing to address ongoing staffing shortages, mitigation strategies to limit COVID outbreaks, establishing reliable COVID safety protocols on their campuses, misusing instructors to complete various construction projects around FLETC resulting in a further shortage of instructors and working collaboratively with FLETC leadership to address these employee concerns.

FLETC Staffing: Full-time FLETC instructors and support staff provide career-long training to federal, State, local, Tribal, and international law enforcement agency professionals. Under a collaborative training model, FLETC provides training to more than 100 Federal partner organizations, 12 of which are within DHS,

including law enforcement personnel that NTEU represents at Customs and Border Protection ports of entry. On average, FLETC trains over 18,000 students annually.

Fifty percent of the instructor requirements for basic and advanced training, as well as the tuition for basic training are provided through appropriations. FLETC receives reimbursable resources to fund the remaining 50 percent of instructor requirements and other training costs incurred by FLETC. The President's fiscal year 2023 request seeks funding for only 7 new hires, consisting of personnel that directly support the training mission such as Training Specialists, Training Technicians, Information Technology Specialists and Technicians, Facility Maintenance Engineers, and Utility Operators. The increase in fiscal year 2023 is attributed to the addition of one FTE for Accreditation and three associated with the Zero Trust program. According to our FLETC bargaining unit members, this funding does not meet current needs. For example, in the Driver and Management Division alone, FLETC is 15 instructors short of the 45 instructors needed.

Appropriated funding levels for FLETC has not changed in years and it shows. FLETC's lack of funding is negatively impacting the mission and the quality of training for Federal law enforcement officers. FLETC has too few instructors to teach students and instructors' skills are not being regularly updated by FLETC. The student-to-teacher ratio has diminished, and students are being shortchanged.

NTEU has been told by FLETC that the mission is first, the Federal partner organizations are second, the students third, and the instructors last. If the permanent instructor cadre is not being fully and appropriately staffed, the mission suffers. The instructors are the product that FLETC delivers. NTEU is seeking to work collaboratively with FLETC management and with Congress to provide additional funding to address the instructor staffing shortage.

NTEU is also concerned about the diversion of instructors from their teaching duties. For example, FLETC has utilized instructors to complete various construction projects on the FLETC campus. Instructors are not trained in construction, nor is it part of their regular job duties. Instructors are employed as substantive specialists in training subjects and delivery of that subject matter to students, not as construction workers. In addition, the removal of even one or two instructors for construction projects contributes to the shortage of instructors and FLETC is paying instructors significant overtime to complete these construction projects. NTEU is also concerned that FLETC may not be adhering to OSHA guidelines or safety protocols when assigning instructors to do this work.

COVID Outbreaks: NTEU has continuing concerns about COVID outbreaks at FLETC and whether FLETC has reliable COVID protocols to address these outbreaks. Over the past 2 years, there have been several mass COVID outbreaks at various FLETC locations. NTEU has expressed continuing concerns that FLETC's lack of sufficient COVID prevention protocols puts law enforcement personnel assigned there at risk. NTEU is working with FLETC to continue to improve its COVID prevention and protection protocols to keep students and personnel assigned to FLETC safe and healthy, but outbreaks continue to occur.

Just last month, FLETC once again reported 168 positive cases of COVID-19. When training was halted, there were 2,853 students representing 68 agencies on the grounds. FLETC granted an exception to continue training any class that had 75 percent or more of its trainees vaccinated, up-to-date, and boosted.

As the elected exclusive bargaining representative for FLETC employees, NTEU urges you to provide direct appropriated fiscal year 2023 funding to hire at least 25 additional FLETC instructors and associated operational support personnel and funding to ensure necessary health and safety protocols are implemented at FLETC to limit future COVID outbreaks at their facilities.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit NTEU's statement for the record.

[This statement was submitted by Anthony M. Reardon, National President, National Treasury Employees Union.]

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PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE ENERGY OFFICIALS  
(NASEO)

Chairman Murphy and Ranking Member Capito, and members of the subcommittee, I am David Terry, the Executive Director of the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO). NASEO represents the Governor-designated energy directors and their offices in the 56 States, District of Columbia and U.S. territories. One of the key functions of the State energy offices is Emergency Support Function ("ESF-12") related planning, mitigation, and response actions at the state level, as well as coordination with local governments and the energy industry—petroleum, natural gas, electricity.

We are in the midst of a severe national crisis of constrained energy resources in many areas, as well as rapid price increases. DHS as a whole, FEMA specifically, the U.S. Department of Energy, and the States must all work together in a coordinated manner with attention to each organization's expertise and authority to get the job done for the Nation. As was evidenced by the cyber attack on the Colonial Pipeline and the ongoing cyber attacks associated with the Russian invasion of Ukraine, we must put in place far more robust cyber defenses into our energy systems—petroleum, natural gas, electricity—as well as the rest of the economy.

We recommend that the subcommittee approve specific funding in the following areas in the appropriations bill:

1) Full funding of the FEMA BRIC program at 6 percent of the funds disbursed. The Administration's decision to increase the FY 22 amount and the FY 23 request is a very positive step, but more is needed as is greater attention to critical energy actions within this program.

2) New state emergency planning and response grants to support coordination between the energy offices, state emergency management agencies, FEMA and the DOE Office of Cybersecurity, Energy Security and Emergency Response.

3) New direct funding to States for public facility resilience, energy, and water system retrofits to update mission critical facilities, especially including hospitals, schools, community shelters, non-profit nursing homes, and first responder facilities, utilizing private capital for energy efficiency improvements with Federal funds directed to emergency response upgrades (this program could be operated by State energy offices, who already manage the existing \$5—\$6 billion per year in energy service performance contracting programs). In addition, special provision could be made to target underserved rural healthcare facilities.

The program recommended in #3, above, would have the double benefit of assisting States in responding to hurricanes, floods, wildfires, earthquakes, and other hazards. More energy system resilient facilities with access to longer term back-up power, efficient HVAC, lighting, and hot water systems offer far greater reliability and durability of service for communities.

We are encouraged by the FY 23 request to provide increased funding for the FEMA BRIC program. Practical, cost-effective building codes, voluntarily adopted by State and local governments, require robust training of code staff and the building trade community to be effective. The evidence that modern building energy codes result in more resilient and energy efficient construction and that such codes save lives and offer greater comfort to residents during a disaster is abundant.

Where a community has not adopted disaster resistant codes pre-disaster, post-disaster is the ideal time for that adoption or update. Post-disaster is also when permitting loads and training needs are at their greatest. Addressing these challenges through Section 1206 would allow FEMA to provide support to jurisdictions seeking to ensure that rebuilding is done to modern standards, which in turn can help impacted communities be better positioned to weather the next storm. Providing Federal reimbursement for administering and enforcing older and less resilient codes risks perpetuating an unending cycle of damage and repair if those older codes are never updated.

DRRA Section 1206(a) permits FEMA to assist communities in adopting or updating building codes post disaster, in training code officials and builders on updated or existing building codes, and in boosting efforts to ensure rebuilding work community-wide is done to code. We believe FEMA should act now to implement that Section, which is consistent with the Agency's current Strategic Plan, ongoing programmatic work, the National Mitigation Investment Strategy, mitigation research, the DRRA, and congressional intent.

If the subcommittee has any questions regarding this testimony, please contact David Terry, (NASEO Executive Director) (dterry@naseo.org) or Jeff Genzer (NASEO Counsel) (jcg@dwgp.com).

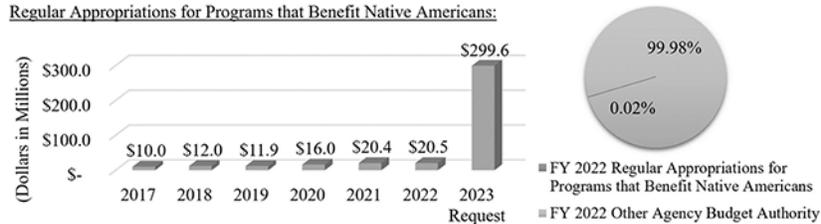
[This statement was submitted by David Terry, Executive Director, National Association of State Energy Officials.]

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PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS (NCAI)

On behalf of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the oldest, largest, and most representative national American Indian and Alaska Native organization dedicated to protecting the rights of Tribal Nations to practice self-determination and achieve self-sufficiency, thank you for the opportunity to provide written

testimony regarding Fiscal Year 2023 appropriations for Tribal homeland security and emergency management grants and programs. Natural disasters and foreign/domestic threats to homeland security are on the rise, which require Tribal communities to develop and enhance homeland security response planning, training, and exercise efforts. However, funding to Tribal Nations for critical homeland security needs through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has remained insufficient to meet their minimum needs.



Federal efforts to create a cohesive and coordinated homeland security strategy without the necessary resources for Indian Country will leave a significant, and potentially dangerous, gap in security for the entire nation. Tribal Nations’ abilities to meet a basic level of homeland security and preparedness is further diminished by burdensome DHS requirements and unfunded mandates inserted into its competitive grant process without any Tribal consultation. In 2018, the U.S. Government Accountability Office highlighted that Tribal Nations’ problems are compounded by the lack of Tribal preparedness grant funding, which limits their ability to access Federal funding when a disaster strikes.<sup>1</sup> NCAI urges the subcommittee to include strong funding levels for Tribal homeland security and emergency management programs in its fiscal year 2023 appropriations bill.

**Increase Funding to \$40 Million for the Tribal Homeland Security Grant Program:** The Tribal Homeland Security Grant Program (THSGP) is one of the only resources for Tribal Nations to develop core capabilities to meet national preparedness goals. While DHS has acknowledged the need for this program, it has yet to provide the minimum funding for Tribal Nations to develop the necessary homeland security capacity to ensure protection of the Nation. Since 2003, Congress has allocated over \$55 billion in homeland security grant funds to State and local governments, however only just over \$100 million has been provided to Indian Country during the same period.<sup>2</sup> Each year, Tribal needs are at least four times more than the funding amount provided for the program, and of the Tribes that apply, several could use the entire amount budgeted for THSGP on their own.<sup>3</sup> NCAI greatly appreciates that Congress has increased funding for this program over the last few fiscal years, and we strongly urge Congress to fund THSGP at \$40 million as an important step forward as Tribal Nations strive to protect all citizens.

**Provide \$206,640,000 to enable Tribal Develop of Vital Homeland Security and Emergency Management Programs:** Tribal homeland security and emergency management programs play a key role in Tribal Nations’ ability to respond and recover from emergencies such as COVID-19. However, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Tribal Nations could not access a vast majority the of billions in life saving funds through FEMA due to years of little or no funding for Tribal emergency management programs, which limited the number of Tribal emergency management staff leaving Tribes even further behind in meeting the core capabilities. For Tribal Nations to meet the minimum standards required by the Homeland Security Act and the Robert T. Stafford Act-along with the standards developed by FEMA, the National Fire Protection Association, and the Emergency Management Accreditation Program-each Tribe would need at least 1.5 full time employees.<sup>4</sup> To

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, GAO 18-18-443, Emergency Management: Implementation of the Major Disaster Declaration Process for Federally Recognized Tribes, Available at: <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-18-443.pdf>, Accessed on: May 25, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> National Congress of American Indians, Fiscal Year 2022 Indian Country Budget Request: Restoring Promises, Dec. 2021, at 48, [https://www.ncai.org/resources/ncai-publications/NCAI\\_IndianCountry\\_Fiscal\\_year\\_2022\\_BudgetRequest.pdf](https://www.ncai.org/resources/ncai-publications/NCAI_IndianCountry_Fiscal_year_2022_BudgetRequest.pdf) (including data from fiscal year 2022).

<sup>3</sup> National Congress of American Indians, Tribal Infrastructure: Investing in Indian Country for a Strong America, Feb. 2017, 20, <https://www.ncai.org/NCAI-InfrastructureReport-FINAL.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> NCAI, Fiscal Year 2022 Indian Country Budget Request: Restoring Promises, at 49.

meet this need, a total of \$206,640,000, or \$360,000 per tribe<sup>5</sup> must be invested, and could provide a return of six dollars for every dollar invested.<sup>6</sup>

Provide \$2 Million for the Operation of a DHS Tribal National Advisory Council: Federal advisory committees, often composed of non-federal individuals, play an important role in developing public policy and government regulations. In November 2021, DHS announced it was creating the first ever DHS National Tribal Advisory Committee (DHS Tribal NAC) to advise the Secretary on all homeland security matters. Congress must support the establishment of the DHS Tribal NAC to support homeland security initiatives in Indian Country by providing \$2 million annually for its staffing, creation, and operation. Further, Congress should require an annual report from the DHS Tribal NAC on projects, recommendations, accomplishments, meetings, membership, and other items to ensure that, as threats evolve, DHS makes significant steps toward addressing shortfalls in its support for Tribal homeland security efforts.

Provide \$10 Million to Enable Tribal Nations to Work Cooperatively with DHS in Developing Tribal Identification Cards: While Tribal Nations have shown they are willing to comply with the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative for enhanced Tribal identification (ID) cards, compliance is often cost-prohibitive. Funding Tribal ID cards has multiple benefits, such as enabling Tribal Nations to provide secure Tribal cards, allowing Tribal officials and citizens to continue border crossings consistent with longstanding treaty rights and agreements, and allowing entrance to Federal offices to conduct business. Some Tribal Nations have the human resources and logistical capacity to produce Tribal IDs if materials and technical assistance are available. NCAI asks Congress to provide \$10 million to Tribal Nations for enhanced ID efforts.

Provide \$4 Million for Tribal Emergency Management Assistance Compact Development: Congress funded the development and continuation of state-to-state program the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC)—a mutual aid agreement between States and territories of the United States. The EMAC enables States to share resources during natural and man-made disasters, including terrorism. Tribal Nations are not part of this agreement. This is an issue, as Tribal Nations are often the first, and in some cases only, responders to natural disasters in their jurisdictions. Eighty percent of Tribal disasters are never designated Federal disaster declaration status.<sup>7</sup> For this reason, providing funding to establish and operate Tribal EMACs will help strengthen national homeland security by providing Tribal Nations a first resource between and among themselves. NCAI urges Congress to provide \$4 million for inter-Tribal emergency management compact development.

Additional Indian Country funding priorities for fiscal year 2023: Provide \$10 million for Tribal Nations to train DHS personnel in cultural sensitivity; \$2 million for Tribal Homeland Security Centers of Excellence; \$15 million for the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency Tribal Cyber Security Resilience Grant Program; \$2 million for COVID-19 after action evaluations and reports that focus on the Federal response in Indian Country; \$2 million for National Response and Coordinating Center, Tribal Desk; and \$3 million for the development and delivery of homeland security and emergency management curriculum at Tribal Colleges and Universities and Tribal non-profits.

Conclusion: Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your consideration of Tribal homeland security and emergency management funding priorities for fiscal year 2023. Tribal Nations have paid for every penny obligated to Indian Country hundreds of times over by providing this Nation with our land. In order to uphold this Nation's promises to its people, it must first uphold its promises to this land's First Peoples. For more information, please contact Kelbie Kennedy, Policy Manager and Policy Lead—National Security and Community Safety, at [kkennedy@ncai.org](mailto:kkennedy@ncai.org) or Tyler Scribner, Policy Lead—Federal Revenue & Appropriations, [tscribner@ncai.org](mailto:tscribner@ncai.org).

[This statement was submitted by Larry Wright, Jr., Director of Leadership Engagement of the National Congress of American Indians.]

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PREPARED STATEMENT OF NEXT GENERATION WARNING SYSTEM

Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Capito and Members of the subcommittee,

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<sup>5</sup>Id.

<sup>6</sup>National Institute of Building Sciences, Natural Hazard Mitigation Saves Study: 2018 Interim report, at 1, [https://www.preventionweb.net/files/63003\\_nibsmv22018interimrepor.pdf](https://www.preventionweb.net/files/63003_nibsmv22018interimrepor.pdf).

<sup>7</sup>NCAI, Tribal Infrastructure, at 21.

Thank you for this opportunity to urge the subcommittee to support a continued \$40 million appropriation in fiscal year 2023 for the (NGWS) within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Federal Assistance Grants account. As part of the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS), this competitive grant program will enable public broadcasting entities to expand alert, warning, and interoperable communications and incorporate emergency technology in those activities. We are grateful for Congress' support in fiscal year 2022 to establish the NGWS program, in coordination with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). Continued support in fiscal year 2023 will provide critical funding to help public media stations repair, replace, and harden their communications infrastructure to support enhanced alerting and warning capabilities that serve all Americans.

As the President and CEO of National Public Radio (NPR), I offer this statement on behalf of the public radio system, a nonprofit public service media enterprise that includes NPR, public radio stations across every State and territory, and other producers and distributors of public radio programming. Public radio stations are not-for-profit, locally owned, licensed, and managed, and thereby accountable to the community and listeners they serve. While public radio is an essential daily local news provider, it also plays a key role in civil defense, emergency alerting, and providing coverage before, during, and after disasters and local emergencies. About 98.5 percent of the U.S. population is within the broadcast listening area of one or more public radio stations.

NPR operates the Public Radio Satellite System(r) (PRSS(r))-the satellite and terrestrial content-distribution system on which the public radio system, including almost all stations, networks, and producers depends. The PRSS transmits almost 300,000 hours of news and information, mostly live, from 100 producers through 1,247 interconnected stations and almost 400,000 downlinks. This enables near-universal reach of public radio to the U.S. population. The PRSS is open to all public telecommunications entities, including independent producers; program syndicators and distributors; national, State, and local organizations; and public radio stations. Stations that receive programming distributed by the PRSS range from those located in remote villages in northern Alaska and on Native American reservations in the Southwest, to major market stations, such as WNYC in New York City and KUSC in Los Angeles.

The PRSS is also the backbone for public radio's national emergency alert system, which receives Presidential alerts—also called Emergency Action Notification (EAN) alerts—fed directly from FEMA that transmit to public radio stations in the event of a nationwide crisis. Public radio stations can broadcast even when power grids and internet services are down. In addition to transmitting national emergency alerts, many public radio stations are connected to their state or county emergency agencies in order to transmit critical emergency messaging targeted to local communities. NPR/PRSS is named as a resource in at least 20 States' emergency plans, according to the Federal Communications Commission. On the local level, stations work with local officials as the source of record for local emergencies. For example, in cooperation with the Rock Island County, Illinois, Emergency Management Agency (EMA), WVIK is the primary relay station for emergency information concerning the Exelon Quad Cities nuclear power generating station. In the event of an emergency at the nuclear plant located on the Mississippi River, the county agency will contact station personnel, and the station will broadcast the EMA message.

Additionally, the PRSS MetaPub program enables local public radio stations to issue emergency text and graphic alerts using metadata—such as tornado and hurricane warnings, evacuation routes, and COVID-19 information—that are visible on screens and synched with over-the-air broadcasts to mobile phones, HD Radio, “connected car” smart dashboards, Radio Data System displays, and via online audio streaming. To date, about 10 percent of interconnected public radio stations have the capability to issue live text alerts using the MetaPub system in the event of a natural or humanmade disasters, such as a chemical spill. Some stations, like WWNO in New Orleans, have linked the NOAA/NWS forecast stream to MetaPub so that weather forecasts and updates for their local areas can be broadcast as well as displayed through MetaPub. Other stations have utilized MetaPub to issue COVID-19 alerts at the beginning of the pandemic, expanding access to information critical to their communities' public health and safety.

While stations may have local disaster preparedness plans in place, each disaster brings a unique set of circumstances. As a fundamental preparedness measure for the system, the PRSS maintains portable broadcast kits, including 300-watt transmitters, portable studios and temporary antennas that can be deployed immediately to stations that have lost broadcast capability, as long as air transportation is operating and delivery to the last mile can be arranged. For example, the PRSS de-

ployed these kits in September 2020 to two Fresno, CA-area public radio stations facing wildfires in their areas.

From a programming perspective, when natural disasters fall short of triggering an emergency alert, public radio stations play a critical role in offering live coverage across broadcast and digital platforms of emergency situations, local weather alerts, the State and local government response, and critical community-based information about where audiences can locate public resources. When the power goes out, communities lose connections to TV and internet news, but radio can still be accessed, particularly through car radios. Of note, FEMA recommends including a battery-powered or hand crank radio in a basic emergency supplies kit. Access to radio becomes even more important during an evacuation. Audiences repeatedly share how public radio was their primary source of information during a disaster, particularly when the power went out, and other sources of information from TV, mobile phone, or the internet became unavailable.

When Hurricane Ida made landfall in Louisiana in September 2021, public radio stations in Baton Rouge and New Orleans confronted significant technical challenges to stay on the air. Amid power outages and fuel shortages, WWNO and WRKF also suffered damage from the hurricane. In addition to roof and water damage at the stations, one transmitter for WWNO in Houma/Thibodeaux was lost when the antenna blew off the tower and had to be completely replaced. At the WWNO main studios, a lack of air-conditioning with oppressive temperatures and humidity outside threatened critical studio and IT equipment. With widespread power outages, the stations operated on generator power for nearly 10 days, amidst gasoline shortages. WWNO and WRKF shared simulcasts and studios multiple times in response to damage and technical problems to do whatever it took to stay on the air and provide access to State and local press conferences and emergency updates. Journalists filed reports and recorded interviews from their phones, working with a regional public radio journalism collaborative, the Gulf States Newsroom, to edit and produce content for broadcast and digital platforms that served local audiences and the surrounding region.

The October 2020 ice storm that hit Oklahoma and Texas represents a disaster that, instead of triggering automated alerts, was covered by real-time news reporting. The storm moved swiftly and knocked out power to many communities. KOSU in Stillwater, Oklahoma, and Oklahoma City provided nearly constant live information about power restoration, debris clean up, and alternate voting sites because the storm occurred less than one week before the 2020 election. In the February 2021 winter storms in Oklahoma that lasted for several weeks and stressed the Midwest power grid, power companies conducted controlled rolling power outages to conserve energy. These rolling blackouts caused KOSU to go off the air two times because there was no communication from the power companies as to when blackouts would occur. The station had no ability to keep generator engines warm at multiple rural locations with deep snow on the ground in anticipation of when a blackout could occur. With a lack of reliable Internet service, staff had to rely upon cell networks to conduct their work. High cellular-data usage, exacerbated by land-based outages, resulted in intermittent and sluggish connectivity, impeding the ability of news teams to report on emerging events while maintaining remote operations.

These problems experienced by the journalistic teams at public radio stations reflect the commitment of public radio to staying on the air in a crisis. However, their ability to do so could be strengthened by more resilient infrastructure. In 2017, a CPB assessment catalogued more than 60,000 pieces of equipment throughout the system that need to be updated or replaced, totaling more than \$300 million by 2020. The effects of this backlog are visible in the challenges that public radio stations face during disasters when power and internet service is unreliable. The NGWS program can play a vital role in supporting investments in backup power, backup internet systems, and remote mobile/audio and digital/transmission equipment to enhance redundancy and resiliency at local stations-particularly in rural areas.

As media and communications evolve, public radio is also committed to reaching audiences across a variety of platforms, including streaming and web content, which can provide innovative ways to keep the public informed. For example, in the wake of Hurricane Ida, WWNO tracked power outages over its social media accounts through animated graphics that visualized the data for users. Following the Almeda and Obenchain fires in September 2020 that swept through southern Oregon, Jefferson Public Radio (JPR) in Ashland, OR, conducted an evaluation of its response and public service during the emergency. As a result, JPR created an online tool, called the "JPR Wildfire Tracker," to track the status of every active wildfire during the summer 2021 wildfire season. According to the station, users reported positive feed-

back about this new JPR website resource, which allows users to keep abreast of wildfire developments before alerts for specific areas may need to be issued.

The Florida Public Radio Emergency Network (FPREN), a collaboration of 13 stations led by joint radio and television licensee WUFT in Gainesville, Florida, serves as a model for what a well-resourced public radio network approach toward public safety and emergency response can offer in terms of public service. FPREN provides white-label emergency information content to individual market stations so that public radio, in even the smallest of markets, can become their community's standard-bearer for critically important public safety information. FPREN provides live and produced on-air content, customized online content for websites, and automatic social media updates for stations. The FPREN app provides geotargeted information such as live hurricane forecasts, evacuation routes and shelter details, and the app live streams the closest Florida public radio station that can serve listeners in the midst of an evacuation when they are moving from one part of the state to another. Due to the success of this program, South Carolina Educational Television (SCETV) entered into a partnership with FPREN and launched a new emergency preparedness/weather tracking initiative called the SC Emergency Information Network (SCEIN) that further supplements this initiative.

In closing, public radio provides an essential public service for local communities across the Nation-providing critical emergency alerts to even the most remote locations, as well as utilizing local news resources to keep communities informed before, during, and after disasters. Your support for the NGWS appropriation will ensure that public media can continue to provide these essential services by addressing critical infrastructure needs-enhancing resiliency in emergency communications and the accessibility of emergency alerts and public safety information. Thank you for your support of the public broadcasting system and its public safety mission.

[This statement was submitted by John F. Lansing, President and CEO, National Public Radio.]

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PREPARED STATEMENT OF REFUGEE COUNCIL USA (RCUSA)

PREPARED FOR THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY REGARDING  
FUNDING FOR U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES

Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Capito, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to submit these funding and oversight recommendations for Fiscal Year 2023 on behalf of the 29-member organizations of Refugee Council USA (RCUSA) dedicated to refugee protection, welcome, and integration and representing the interests of refugees, refugee families, and volunteers and community members across the country who support refugees and resettlement. RCUSA recommends a fiscal year 2023 funding level of \$765,000,000 in funding for the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), in line with the President's budget request for refugee, asylum, and other application processing.<sup>1</sup>

This funding is critical to address refugee and asylum backlogs and to help process parole renewals and adjustment applications for the tens of thousands of Afghans, Ukrainians, and other individuals who have secured only temporary protection in the U.S. USCIS estimates there are nearly 100,000 refugees<sup>2</sup> awaiting an interview for continued processing and the immigration backlog is over 1.6 million with more than 660,000 pending asylum seekers awaiting hearings to resolve their cases.<sup>3</sup> These backlogs leave refugees waiting in limbo and separate families awaiting reunification, which can be extremely damaging for the mental health and overall integration of individuals who have already suffered immense trauma. There is no need for refugees to wait years-and sometimes decades-in refugee camps or dangerous situations for resettlement in the United States. It is particularly difficult for 74,000+ Afghan evacuees who were relocated from Afghanistan by the U.S. government and are seeking permanent immigration relief through asylum or U.S.-based special immigrant visa process. For Afghans who remain overseas, there are reportedly more than 43,000 Afghans<sup>4</sup> awaiting adjudication on their humanitarian

<sup>1</sup> The FY23 President's budget requests \$903,622,000 for USCIS Operations and Support, \$765 million of which would go toward application processing, such as reduction of backlogs within USCIS asylum, field, and service center offices, additional support for asylum adjudication workloads, and support of the refugee program.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.state.gov/report-to-congress-on-proposed-refugee-admissions-for-fiscal-year-2022/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://trac.syr.edu/immigration/reports/672/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.axios.com/us-turns-away-afghans-66bf3aac-4c93-46b1-828b-e08d503c007c.html>

parole applications, and as of May 2022, more than 1,000 Afghans have been paroled into the U.S. as part of phase two of the relocation. As a result, USCIS is experiencing unprecedented backlogs in humanitarian and immigration processing for refugees, Afghans, Ukrainians, and others who remain overseas, as well as the record volume of asylum, employment authorization, and other applications. This funding is urgently needed so that USCIS can quickly hire, onboard, and deploy additional officers to address these significant refugee and asylum backlogs—and to help process parole applications and renewals, other humanitarian benefits, and adjustment applications.

The President's budget requests the same level of funding to support additional staff, equipment, and support services for backlog reduction for humanitarian processing and help reduce the longest processing times. The Congressional Budget Justification for USCIS indicates that this funding would convert the Refugee, Asylum, and International Operations Directorate (RAIO)'s International and Refugee Affairs Division (IRAD) operations to be fully-funded by appropriations. Additional staff, contract support, and international travel are vital for USCIS to meet the refugee admissions goal and support in-person and remote-to-office refugee interviews on circuit rides worldwide. Funding will maximize remote technologies as appropriate; provide timely and in-depth training to adjudicators; and continue COVID-19 mitigation guidance. USCIS's initiatives include improving refugee vetting processes in both efficiency and effectiveness; providing refugee applicants with more transparent access to their own records, reasons for decisions, and the procedures that govern refugee processing; decreasing average processing times for refugee adjudications; and re-institution and expansion of programs impacting Central American Minors. RCUSA supports USCIS deploying these innovative methods to overcome these inhumane delays. Robust appropriations will ensure USCIS can proactively address the backlogs and stabilize refugee, asylum, and humanitarian processing for the years to come.

The administration's responses to the crises in Afghanistan and Ukraine demonstrate the crucial nature of responding to humanitarian emergencies with 'the urgency of now' by modernizing overseas processing capacity, including security vetting processes. In the past year the U.S. government has pursued innovative solutions to urgent crises and should continue to do so throughout the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). In response to the increasingly urgent need for Afghans to be granted protection in the U.S., the U.S. government is now operating an expedited, 30-day processing program for Afghans in Qatar where refugee referrals and processing is housed on-site. Similarly, the Uniting for Ukraine effort includes expanded operations overseas, such as referral mechanisms, and an expedited visa appointment program for the particularly vulnerable Ukrainians fleeing Russia's violence—in addition to plans to expand U.S. resettlement operations across Europe. Over 3,000 Ukrainian parolee applications have been approved since the launch of the Uniting for Ukraine program on April 25th. These humanitarian responses are supplemental to the ongoing work resettling refugees who have been languishing in the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) pipeline, in part because of USCIS processing delays and the need to scale up capacity. These innovations and collective investment demonstrate that when there's an American will, there's an American way and the U.S. should continue to expand these expedited responses to humanitarian needs.

RCUSA member organizations are eager to do their part and work hand-in-hand with Congress and DHS to build a humane, equitable, and efficient USRAP.

[This statement was submitted by Refugee Council USA.]

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#### PREPARED STATEMENT OF THE U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION

Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Capito, and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. As President of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), I have the honor of leading a union that represents over 29,000 Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Office of Field Operations (OFO) CBP Officers, Agriculture Specialists and trade enforcement specialists stationed at 328 air, sea, and land ports of entry across the United States and 16 Preclearance stations throughout the world.

CBP OFO personnel are responsible for border security at the ports of entry—including anti-terrorism, immigration, anti-smuggling, trade compliance, and agriculture protection. CBP OFO employees also facilitate lawful trade and travel at U.S. ports of entry that is critical to our Nation's economy.

CBP Staffing at the Ports of Entry: For years, NTEU has advocated for the hiring of thousands of new CBP Officers and hundreds of new Agriculture Specialists and

non-uniformed trade operations personnel that are needed based on the agency's own Workload Staffing Model (WSM), Agriculture Resource Allocation Model (AgRAM) and Resource Optimization Model for Trade Revenue (Trade ROM). These staffing models are dynamic and reflect the impact of the pandemic on CBP OFO staffing needs. Based on CBP's most recent staffing models, CBP needs to hire at least 900 CBP Officers, 240 Agriculture Specialists and 100 non-uniformed Trade Specialists. NTEU expects these numbers to increase as the economy recovers.

The Fiscal Year 2022 funding agreement did not include funding to increase CBP staffing at the ports of entry. However, Congress included \$650 million to compensate for pandemic related reduction in customs and immigration user fee revenue that funds up to 8,000 CBP Officer positions. This fiscal year 2022 funding was necessary to maintain the current level of CBP OFO staffing and avoid furloughs. Unfortunately, in his fiscal year 2023 budget request, the President included funding for only 50 CBP Officer new hires—specifically to combat forced labor—far short of what is needed to address the ongoing CBP Officer staffing gap according to CBP's own WSM.

This month, The House Appropriations subcommittee on Homeland Security approved by voice vote its fiscal year 2023 bill. The bill provides \$120.2 million for an additional 250 Customs Officers, 500 technicians, and 500 mission support staff.

NTEU commends the House subcommittee for funding these CBP OFO new hires, but it does not fully meet the need and NTEU requests that the Committee provide funding for CBP OFO new hires to the levels required by the CBP's dynamic workplace staffing models for CBP Officers, Agriculture Specialists and Trade Specialists in the Senate fiscal year 2023 DHS appropriations bill. To achieve funding to the model, NTEU strongly supports S. 3850, the Securing America's Ports of Entry Act, a bipartisan bill introduced by Senators Gary Peters (D-MI) and John Cornyn (R-TX), that would increase the authorized number of CBP Officers by 600 annually to help the agency meet its current and future staffing needs and an identical staffing authorization is likely to be introduced in the House soon.

Acknowledging the economic impact of the ongoing CBP Officer staffing shortage at the ports, NTEU works with a coalition of 24 port stakeholders, including Airports Council International-North America, American Association of Port Authorities, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the U.S. Travel Association in support on increased funding for CBP OFO new hires to address the increases in trade and travel volume at the ports-of-entry as the current international travel restrictions and public health orders are lifted. In a letter in support of this effort, the coalition wrote that "[w]hile the volume of commerce crossing our borders has more than tripled in the past 25 years, CBP staffing has not kept pace with demand. Long wait times at our ports-of-entry lead to travel delays and uncertainty, which can increase supply-chain costs and cause passengers to miss their connections. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, border delays result in losses to output, wages, jobs, and tax revenue due to decreases in spending by companies, suppliers, and consumers."

Furthermore, due to the ongoing CBP Officer staffing shortage at the ports, CBP again has found it necessary to solicit CBP Officers for temporary duty assignment (TDY) to Southwest Border (SWB) land ports of entry beginning in April 2022. A second wave of 245 CBP Officers were sent to the SWB on June 18, 2022. These TDYs will be filled by CBP Officers currently assigned to air and seaport locations.

Staffing shortages that result in excessive overtime requirements and an increasing need for TDYs are additional stressors in the workplace effecting the mental health of CBP law enforcement officers. NTEU greatly appreciate \$23 million added in fiscal year 2022 for CBP onsite mental health clinicians, employee resiliency and suicide prevention programs and strongly supports keeping this level of funding in fiscal year 2023. According to the agency, 145 CBP employees died by suicide between 2007 and 2021. Last year, CBP saw the highest number of suicides since 2010 at 11; and, as of May, CBP has lost 9 employees to suicide so far in 2022.

NTEU seeks the Committee's support for the union to work collaboratively with CBP in effectively utilizing the \$23 million appropriations to address the unique and prevalent behavioral health challenges within the Agency with a goal toward helping, and retaining employees with behavioral health challenges, that removes obstacles that prevent employees from seeking treatment; and provides meaningful support to employees struggling with suicidal thoughts, anxiety, depression, family/marriage relationship problems, PTSD, substance abuse and sleep deprivation.

In addition to supporting suicide prevention programs, the \$23 million increase will free up funding for other important resiliency programs, such as one that helps CBP employees with childcare expenses.

In addition to the increase in CBP OFO personnel and mental health staffing and support, NTEU also supports the increases in funding in the fiscal year 2023 House appropriations bill for the following CBP personnel assistance programs:

- \$15 million for an increase in the uniform allowance;
- \$3 million for personnel childcare services; and
- \$5 million personnel tuition assistance.

**CBP Agriculture Specialist Staffing:** Currently, there is a continuing shortage Agriculture Specialists nationwide according to CBP's own data-driven and vetted Workload Staffing Model. Last year, Congress approved Public Law 116–122, the Protecting America's Food and Agriculture Act of 2019. The new law authorizes CBP to hire 240 CBP Agriculture Specialists, 200 CBP Agriculture Technicians and 20 Agriculture Canine Teams per year until the staffing shortage that threatens the U.S. agriculture sector is met. NTEU's appropriations request includes funding for CBP agriculture quality inspection new hires authorized by Public Law 116–122.

**CBP Trade Operations Staffing:** In addition to safeguarding our Nation's borders and ports, CBP is tasked with regulating and facilitating international trade. CBP employees at the ports of entry are critical for protecting our Nation's economic growth and security and are the second largest source of revenue collection for the U.S. government. For every dollar invested in CBP trade personnel, \$87 is returned to the U.S. economy, either through lowering the costs of trade, ensuring a level playing field for domestic industry or protecting innovative intellectual property. Since CBP was established in March 2003, however, CBP trade operations staffing has fallen below the statutory floor set forth in the Homeland Security Act of 2002 and stipulated in the fiscal year 2021 CBP Trade ROM. NTEU strongly supports appropriated funding in fiscal year 2023 for at least 100 additional CBP non-uniformed, OFO and Office of Trade personnel.

Therefore, NTEU is asking the Committee to provide in direct appropriated funding for CBP "Operations and Support" in fiscal year 2023 to fund the hiring of at least 600 CBP Officers, 240 CBP Agriculture Specialists, 200 CBP Agriculture Technicians, 20 Agriculture Canine Teams as authorized by Public Law 116–122 and 100 non-uniformed trade enforcement specialists and associated operational support personnel.

**User Fee Shortfalls:** As you know, due to the pandemic's continued disruption of fee generating international travel and commerce, user fee collections have fallen precipitously which has necessitated the need for emergency funding to prevent furloughing CBP OFO personnel at a time when international trade and travel volume is beginning to return to pre-pandemic levels. To address the user fee shortfall, we were pleased that Congress provided millions in fiscal year 2021 and fiscal year 2022 to maintain current staffing of CBP Officers.

NTEU requests that the Committee include in its fiscal year 2023 DHS funding bill any additional appropriated funding needed to replace user fee shortfalls for CBP OFO salaries and expenses and to mitigate dependence on user fees to fund salaries and expenses of CBP OFO personnel.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this fiscal year 2023 appropriations request for CBP Officer, Agriculture Specialist, Technicians, Canine teams, Trade Operations, and mission support new hires at the ports of entry. NTEU greatly appreciates your efforts to continue building on CBP OFO staffing advances made in recent years, and we urge you to provide fiscal year 2023 funding to replace any user fee shortfall to maintain the current number of CBP employees and to hire needed additional CBP OFO employees to adequately staff the Nation's ports of entry as our economy rebounds from the pandemic. NTEU also greatly appreciates and supports the Committee's CBP suicide prevention and other resiliency program funding in fiscal year 2022 and urge that this \$23 million funding level again be provided in the fiscal year 2023 appropriations bill.

[This statement was submitted by Anthony M. Reardon, National President, National Treasury Employees Union.]

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PREPARED STATEMENT OF WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

Chair Murphy, Ranking Member Capito, and Members of the subcommittee, the Western Governors' Association (WGA) appreciates the opportunity to provide written testimony on the appropriations and activities of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). WGA is an independent organization representing the Governors of the 22 westernmost States and territories. The Association is an instru-

ment of the Governors for bipartisan policy development, information sharing and collective action on issues of critical importance to the western United States.

The western United States has seen a significant increase in major disasters and extreme weather events. In 2020 there were 230 major disaster or emergency declarations, which easily surpassed the previous record of 128 dating back to 2011. Further burdening the Nation, in 2020 the number of federally declared disasters which resulted in costs exceeding \$1 billion was 22, also a new record. Certain types of disasters are more frequent in the West than other parts of the Nation, and result in a devastating amount of damage. According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, almost 96 percent of the West is in a declared drought (compared to 12 percent in the northeast, 34 percent in the southeast, and 37 percent in the Midwest), with over 20 percent of the West in an extreme or exceptional drought. On their own, these drought conditions devastate local communities and the agricultural and livestock industries in the West. These conditions also pave the way for another disaster just as destructive, but far more deadly—wildfires. In 2020 alone, wildfires affected 10.1 million acres across the United States. Of that, 90 percent, or 9.1 million acres, of wildfire-affected land was in the West. This is more than the total acreage of the States of Maryland and Rhode Island combined.

For these reasons, DHS programs, particularly those related to pre- and post-disaster, play an enormous role in the viability of the West, not only in terms of its economic vitality, but also in its flora and fauna, its infrastructure, and its general livability. In terms of hazard mitigation, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant programs, including the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC), Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA), Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), and Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM), all play a significant role in western States' ability to help withstand disasters and lessen the damage thereof.

Hazard mitigation and risk reduction are cost-effective methods of reducing the effect of natural disasters and lowering costs associated with post-disaster restoration. In a 2019 study, the National Institute of Building Sciences found that every Federal dollar spent in mitigation grants saved the American taxpayer six dollars in future spending. That level of return on investment cannot be overlooked or ignored, and Western Governors encourage the subcommittee to fully fund FEMA's HMA grant program.

Unfortunately, not all disasters can be avoided, and post-disaster response and recovery programs are just as important as hazard mitigation, especially to the communities affected by natural disasters. FEMA programs like the Community Disaster Loan Program, Disaster Assistance, and the Fire Management Assistance Grants, should be adequately funded to give States the ability to quickly respond to and recover from disasters.

Federal agencies should provide state, territorial, local, and Tribal government officials with accessible and clear information on available Federal resources and programs and the most effective utilization of those resources in disaster recovery. WGA has worked with Federal partners to improve interagency coordination on post-wildfire restoration work, including a roadmap of assistance available to communities affected by wildfire and identification of "navigators" to help communities prioritize post-wildfire restoration needs. Western Governors urge the Federal Government to prioritize the funding of these important efforts, as they should have a positive effect on maximizing the value of restoration work and, more importantly, addressing the needs of communities affected by wildfire.

The cybersecurity of States and the Nation, which is an all-of-government and industry-wide endeavor, is an utmost priority for Western Governors as well. The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed society and accelerated the shift to a virtual environment, further increasing vulnerabilities across systems as threat actors become more complex and widespread. In recent years, the Governors have witnessed an alarming acceleration of attacks targeting every level of government and spanning across critical infrastructure sectors. Western Governors support sufficient funding for the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and its functions, including the Office of Cybersecurity and Communications, CISA Central, and State, local, Tribal, and territorial engagement. WGA was pleased to see some funding allocated to CISA in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Pub. L. 117-58) and would appreciate continued funding to the Agency for these purposes.

Western Governors encourage the subcommittee to provide funding for cybersecurity research and development, including the use of blockchain and encryption by perpetrators and its utility for defense against cyber threats, addressing vulnerabilities of other emerging technologies like connected vehicles and Internet of Things devices, and providing strong support to States to meet election security needs.

Western Governors recognize the importance these disaster and cybersecurity programs have on the Nation, but especially in the West, and urge the subcommittee to carefully consider the funding needs of these programs, especially as the number, severity, and overall cost of disasters and cyber incidents continue to rise. Western Governors recognize the enormous challenge you have in balancing competing funding priorities, and appreciate the difficulty of the decisions the subcommittee must make. These recommendations are offered in a spirit of cooperation and respect, and WGA is prepared to assist you as the subcommittee discharges its critical and challenging responsibilities.

[This statement was submitted by James D. Ogsbury, Executive Director, Western Governors' Association.]