

**STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN PETER T. KING
Committee on Homeland Security**

**Before the
Committee on House Administration**

**Hearing on “Committee Funding for the 112th Congress”
March 1, 2011**

Thank you Chairman Lungren, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee on House Administration for the opportunity to testify in support of funding for the Committee on Homeland Security in the 112th Congress.

This marks the fourth Congress where Ranking Member Thompson and I will be working together, including in implementation of the Committee’s budget. On January 26th, The Committee held its Organization Meeting during which we adopted with bipartisan support the Committee’s Rules, Oversight Plan, Travel Policy, and Security Policy. Committee Members have historically worked together because Members recognize that “homeland security is national security,” and we share the common mission to keep our country safe. When we have policy or philosophical differences, we have been able to come to an amicable resolution, and, if not, to express our differences in a cordial way, because we know the extent of the threat our Nation faces.

On January 6, 2011, the Full House passed *House Resolution 22, Reducing the Amount Authorized for Salaries and Expenses of Member, Committee, and Leadership Offices in 2011 and 2012*. By an overwhelming vote of 410-13, House members approved a binding resolution that would reduce the operating budgets of Member, Leadership, and committee offices by five percent, or about \$35 million annually.

After prior consultation with Ranking Member Thompson, we adjusted the budget of the Committee on Homeland Security for the Majority and Minority offices to fully meet this budget reduction. We also continue to follow the Committee’s customary 2/3 – 1/3 division of funding between the Majority and Minority offices.

Therefore, we propose a budget of \$16,887,448.00 for the 112th Congress, which includes \$8,443,724.00 for 2011 and the same amount for 2012. This amount will support the Committee’s oversight responsibilities, staff salaries, and operating expenses.

Ranking Member Thompson and I intend to do more with less, and the Committee will continue to pursue its aggressive agenda to help keep our Nation safe from future terrorist attacks.

As we approach the 10th anniversary of the terrorist attacks of September 11th, we are constantly reminded that terrorists continue plotting to kill Americans, at home and abroad. We were reminded again last week when a 20-year-old Saudi national, Khalid Aldawsari, studying in

Texas was charged by the FBI with intent to use a weapon of mass destruction. His targets included New York City and the home of former President George W. Bush. His Arabic language diary stated he was inspired by Osama bin Laden and the 9/11 attacks. This case is serious, and without the quick thinking of employees at a chemical company who became suspicious and alerted authorities, he may have been able to execute a devastating attack on our homeland.

When Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano testified before the Committee on February 9th, she stated that the terrorist threat to our Nation is at its most “heightened state” since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

According to Attorney General Eric Holder, in the last two years, prior to last week’s arrest, there have been 126 indictments for terrorist related activity, including 50 U.S. citizens. They include: Times Square Bomber Faisal Shahzad; Fort Hood Terrorist U.S. Army Major Nidal Hasan; Little Rock Recruiting Center Shooter Carlos Bledsoe; New York City Subway bomber Najibullah Zazi; Mumbai Plotter David Headley; Colleen LaRose, known as “Jihad Jane;” and dozens of individuals in Minneapolis associated with the Somali terrorist organization, Al-Shabaab, including U.S. citizens who took part in suicide-bombing operations.

Because of policies the U.S. has implemented since September 11, the threat from Al Qaeda has evolved, but it is still deadly. In addition to the continuing threat from Al Qaeda Core in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region, our Nation faces threats from groups affiliated with Al Qaeda, including: Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP); Al-Shabaab; Tehrik-i-Taliban, also known as the Pakistani Taliban; Lashkar-e-Taiba; and the Haqqani Network.

Therefore, the top priority for the Committee will be to counter the serious and evolving terrorist threats facing our country. Other Committee priorities include: supporting the intelligence community and law enforcement agencies in identifying and combating domestic radicalization; identifying what is necessary to achieve operational control of the border; overseeing the Administration’s plans for Guantanamo detainees; improving cargo security on passenger planes and on cargo-only planes; strengthening our Nation’s cyber security; improving communications for our Nation’s first responders; ensuring homeland security grants are effective and risk-based; strengthening our defenses against terrorist use of weapons of mass destruction; conducting rigorous oversight of the Department of Homeland Security to ensure it is operating efficiently and cost-effectively; and passing a comprehensive authorization bill for the Department of Homeland Security.

To support the Committee in its work to combat the terrorist threat, we made a number of changes to its structure. These include: streamlining the subcommittees to sharpen their focus on major homeland security priorities; establishing a Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence; and creating a new Office of Counterterrorism at the Full Committee. We also have brought on board senior subject matter experts with real-world experience to support the Committee’s counterterrorism work.

The Committee also will conduct extensive oversight of homeland security programs and policies. This Thursday, Secretary Napolitano will make her second appearance this year before

the Committee to testify on the President's Fiscal Year 2010 budget request. Also this month, the Committee will hold the first in a series of hearings on the threat of radicalization of individuals in the American Muslim community and the community's response.

To conduct rigorous oversight of homeland security programs, the Committee will organize field hearings and site visits throughout the country. Topics include: security along the southwest and northern borders; strengthening our Nation's defenses against a cyber attack; local emergency preparedness efforts; fusion centers; and homeland security training facilities.

We appreciate the past support of Chairman Lungren, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee for the work and mission of the Committee on Homeland Security. I look forward to continuing to work with all Members of this Committee to strengthen our country's defenses against terrorist attacks.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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