



**One Hundred Fifteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515**

March 21, 2017

Secretary John Kelly
Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20374

Director Mick Mulvaney
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Secretary Kelly and Director Mulvaney,

As the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee on Homeland Security's Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee, and Members of Congress whose districts represent nearly half of the U.S-Mexico border, we write today regarding the President's recent supplemental appropriations request to Congress.

As Representatives of the communities that make up our southern border, we recognize the need for robust border security and infrastructure to ensure public safety and increase cross border commerce. To that end we are pleased with the request for funding to increase the number of Border Patrol Agents, investments in infrastructure, and supplemental technology. However, we also have an obligation to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars and as such have a number of questions regarding the single largest dollar amount in the request, which is, "\$999 million for planning, design, and construction of the first installment of the border wall."

While we have both publicly stated in the past that we believe physical barriers to be one of many tools required to gain operational control of the border, we also believe that an expenditure this large, and submitted with limited details, deserves additional scrutiny to ensure funds are being used effectively in pursuit of our shared goal of securing the southwest border. As such, we have the following questions and ask for a response to the subcommittee by April 18, 2017.

1. What methods will DHS use to determine which areas along the border need physical barriers?
2. When constructing new barriers, will DHS consider existing manmade and natural barriers?
3. To what extent will Sector Chiefs and the Joint Task Force commanders have input on the methods used to achieve operational control of their relevant AORs?
4. To what extent will Governors, local law enforcement, ranchers, and other stakeholders have input on the methods used to achieve operational control of the southern border?

5. In light of the request for proposal's specific call for 30 foot concrete barrier, what steps will be taken to protect agent safety and ensure there are no impediments to agent's ability to visually identify threats?
6. What are DHS' plans to alleviate the current hiring backlog of both Customs and Border Protection officers and Border Patrol agents?
7. What steps, if any, does the Department plan to take to address the high rate of polygraph failures during the onboarding process for these employees?

Sincerely,



Martha McSally
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security



Will Hurd
Vice Chairman
Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security