

**OPENING STATEMENT OF SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN MARY L.
LANDRIEU**

Department of Homeland Security FY 2013 Budget Hearing

March 8, 2012 / 10:00 am

Good morning. I call the Subcommittee to order.

Secretary Napolitano, you lead a Department of 230,000 men and women who are on the front lines every day protecting our citizens. Last week, we were reminded of the danger they face when we lost four Coast Guard personnel training in a helicopter over Mobile Bay. A memorial service is being held this morning in Mobile, Alabama to honor the crewmembers lost in this tragic accident: Lieutenant Commander Dale Taylor, Lieutenant Junior Grade John Cameron, Chief Petty Officer Fernando Jorge, and Petty Officer Andrew Knight. We send our condolences to their families and to the Coast Guard personnel who served with them.

We commend Department of Homeland Security employees for their dedication and their service and I commend you for your continued leadership. We welcome you to the Subcommittee today. I look forward to working with Senator Dan Coats, our Ranking Member. I say to my friend from Indiana that we stand with him in supporting the disaster victims, the volunteers, and the first responders as they rebuild following the devastating tornados last week. I also look forward to working with Senator Frank Lautenberg, our Vice Chairman, and all of the Members of our Subcommittee as we prepare to mark up our fiscal year 2013 bill.

My goal is to produce a bipartisan, fiscally responsible Homeland Security appropriations bill for 2013 that provides the Department with the resources it needs to prepare for, respond to, and recover from all threats, both man-made and natural. It is also critical that we provide the Department with the resources that it needs to effectively execute its many core missions -- preventing terrorism, securing the borders, enforcing our immigration laws, safeguarding

cyberspace, securing our ports and waterways, protecting our currency, and enhancing commerce while enforcing our trade laws.

Securing this Nation is not just a Federal government responsibility. We must also serve as leaders, educators, and reliable partners in helping State and local governments, the private and nonprofit sectors, and our citizens achieve these goals.

In our FY 2012 DHS Act, we worked together to accomplish these goals. For the Coast Guard, we funded six Fast Response Cutters, long lead materials for the sixth National Security Cutter, design funding for the Offshore Patrol Cutter, additional funding for enhancing oil spill response capabilities, and funding to improve housing for Coast Guard families. For the Transportation Security Administration, to improve the air travel experience, we included funding for TSA's risk-based trusted traveler screening system known as "Pre-Check", which is now operating at nine airports and will be expanded to 35 airports by the end of 2012. We also funded an additional 250 Advanced Imaging Technology units to detect threats to aviation with software that protects people's privacy.

We continued to invest in efforts to improve FEMA's disaster response capabilities. Since Congress enacted the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act in 2006, we have invested considerable resources in improving FEMA's disaster response capabilities. It is not a coincidence that in the face of a terrible disaster year in 2011, with the Mississippi and Missouri River floods, the tornados in the South and East, and Hurricane Irene, that FEMA got positive reviews from the State and local communities impacted by those storms. FEMA catastrophic planning is more integrated, shelter facility data is better managed, and the disaster acquisition process is proactive, not reactive. In just one example, because FEMA pre-positioned communications equipment purchased after 2005, local officials consistently reported no unmet communications requests during Hurricane Irene, according to recent testimony by Administrator Fugate. Under my watch, we will not allow FEMA to lose ground.

Last year, we were able to enact through the Budget Control Act, a responsible funding mechanism for the Disaster Relief Fund and I am pleased that the White House is using that authority for FY 2013. Now those communities that responded so well to disasters in 2011 will also have the funds they need to recover.

It is important to note that every State has its own unique situation in responding to disasters. It is up to the Governors to evaluate their situation and then decide if they need the Federal government's help, or not. There is no mandate that says a Governor must seek assistance. No one is required to use FEMA's help.

The Fiscal Year 2012 DHS Act also added funds above the request and required the Administration to develop a more aggressive trade enforcement strategy. The President's request builds on this effort and focuses investigations in key areas such as petroleum products, textiles, and the automotive/ manufacturing sector. We provided significant funding to sustain the rapid increases in funding provided in recent years to secure our borders and enforce our immigration laws.

We also provided increased funding to address the cybersecurity threat, including funding to meet the goal of educating 1.7 million students over the next ten years. DHS is teaming up with experts to produce the cyber warriors of the future. Some of these experts are at the Cyber Innovation Center in Louisiana, and I commend them.

We also made difficult cuts, eliminating agencies that were redundant or not accomplishing their missions, and rescinded funds from low priority programs.

It is essential that the Department has the muscle it needs to defend this country. We all appreciate the bravery and skill of our military forces in eliminating Osama bin Laden and Anwar al-awlaki (pronounced OWL-LOCK-EE). However, we must remain vigilant and nimble

in responding to evolving threats. And as the tornados reminded us last week, we must continue to develop and sustain our capabilities to respond to natural disasters.

The President has proposed a budget for FY 2013 that if approved, would reduce the Department of Homeland Security budget for the third straight year. While I am pleased that the budget includes substantial increases for cybersecurity and Science and Technology, I have strong reservations about the inadequate funding requests to replace aging Coast Guard ships and planes and Customs Air and Marine aircraft. Congress has a responsibility to make sure that the next generation of Coast Guard and Customs men and women serving on the front lines has the equipment needed to accomplish their many missions. The President's budget does not pass that test. I will work with my colleagues to identify resources to restore those cuts.

With regard to the President's proposed reform of the State and local first responder grant programs, I look forward to hearing from stakeholders and to working with the Secretary as we develop reform legislation.

I also want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the tremendous work being done by the Director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Director Mayorkas and his staff have been very forward leaning in working with me and my staff on the issue of international adoptions, especially in Guatemala. He represents your Department well on this very important issue and truly cares about its humanitarian impact.

Following Senator Coats' opening statement, I will turn to our Vice Chairman Frank Lautenberg for opening remarks. After those opening remarks, we will hear from Secretary Napolitano. After, we hear from the Secretary, each Member will be recognized in order of arrival for up to five minutes for remarks and questions.

I now recognize Senator Coats for any opening remarks he may wish to make.