



July 17, 2017

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen:

On behalf of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU) and the more than 25,000 employees at U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) that we represent and in advance of the full committee markup of the FY 2018 Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Appropriations bill, I urge you to increase funding for CBP Officers and Agriculture Specialists to end the current staffing shortages at the nation's ports of entry.

Despite the fact that CBP has been chronically understaffed at the ports for years, the FY 2018 Homeland Security Appropriations bill includes no new funding to address CBP's current frontline staffing shortages at the ports of entry.

The current CBP Officer shortage is staggering. There is a longstanding existing vacancy rate of nearly 1,400 funded CBP Officers at the ports, and according to CBP's analytic workload staffing model, an additional 2,100 CBP Officers need to be funded and hired in order to meet FY 2017 staffing needs—translating into **a total CBP Officer staffing shortage of 3,500 today.**

NTEU asks the Committee to increase the funding for CBP Office of Field Operations (OFO), specifically OFO Operations and Support. NTEU requests funding to ensure CBP OFO can meet both its FY 2017 CBP Officer frontline staffing target of 24,214 and to begin the hiring of 2,107 additional CBP Officers needed to achieve the staffing target of 26,300 CBP Officers as stipulated in CBP's own FY 2017 Workload Staff Model (WSM). Additionally, CBP's Agriculture Resource Allocation Model (AgRAM) shows a need to fund an additional 631 CBP Agriculture Specialists over the 2,418 currently onboard.

The economic cost of this shortage is staggering as well. For every 33 additional CBP Officers hired, the U.S. can potentially gain over 1,000 private sector jobs. According to the U.S. Department of Treasury, more than 50 million Americans work for companies that engage in international trade and travel. Understaffed ports lead to long delays in passenger and commercial lanes as travelers and cargo wait to enter the U.S. These delays result in real losses to the U.S. economy. Trade and travel-related job creation, border security, and mitigating wait times at the ports of entry require adequate CBP staffing at the ports of entry.

On behalf of all of the CBP employees at the ports of entry, I ask you to support increasing the funding for CBP Officer and Agriculture Specialist staffing to end the current staffing shortage as stipulated by CBP's own Workload Staffing Models.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony M. Reardon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anthony M. Reardon
National President

cc: The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations