



April 3, 2019

The Honorable Gary Peters
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security
and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Ranking Member Peters:

On behalf of the 27,000 Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officers and border enforcement specialists who are stationed at 328 land, sea and air ports of entry represented by the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), I am writing to thank you for introducing the *Safeguarding American Ports Act* with Senator John Cornyn (R-TX). This bill will increase the number of CBP Officers and support staff to enhance security and commerce at ports of entry.

CBP Officers pursue a dual mission of safeguarding American ports by protecting the public from dangerous people and materials, while enhancing the Nation's global and economic competitiveness by enabling legitimate trade and travel. According to CBP's most recent onboard staffing data and Workload Staffing Model, there is a shortage of approximately 3,700 CBP Officers at the ports of entry today. Yet the Administration has not included sufficient funding in its FY 2020 budget request to address this vast CBP Officer staffing gap. This bill would help to address this shortfall by authorizing CBP to hire 600 CBP Officers and support staff each year until the staffing gap in CBP's Workload Staffing Model is met.

Proper staffing at our ports of entry is critical. The risk of successful incursions through the ports of entry by terrorists, smugglers and other criminals increases when ports are understaffed and under constant pressure to limit wait times. And, by increasing staffing between the ports of entry, more criminals, terrorists, drug and human smugglers are funneled into the ports of entry where there are severe staffing shortages. In addition, CBP estimates that the annual hiring of an additional 600 CBP Officers at the ports of entry, as called for in your legislation, would increase yearly economic activity by at least \$1 billion and could result in the creation of 16,600 new private sector jobs per year.

Thank you for your efforts to provide increased border security at our ports and for recognizing that the ports are a significant commercial driver in both private sector jobs and economic security of domestic manufacturers. Congress must fund and hire the needed CBP Officers to adequately staff the ports of entry to mitigate the country's national security threats, address public safety risks and to grow the economy. This bill is a needed and welcomed development to achieve this goal.

NTEU greatly appreciates your leadership on this important issue and stands ready to work with you to pass this vital legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony M. Reardon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Anthony M. Reardon
National President