

September 20, 2016

The Honorable Pete Sessions  
Chairman  
The Committee on Rules  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-312 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Sessions:

In advance of the upcoming Rule X hearings for reorganization for the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, we are writing to recommend the streamlining and consolidation of Congressional oversight of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. This is a matter of critical importance to national security on which there is broad bipartisan agreement, and it remains the only major recommendation of the 9/11 Commission that ten years later has not been acted upon.

In 2013, members of the Sunnyslands-Aspen Institute task force—including former 9/11 Commission co-chairs Tom Kean and Lee Hamilton, Rep. Loretta Sanchez, and former Reps. Howard Berman, David Dreier, and John Tanner—recommended that:

- Congress should significantly reduce the number of committees with jurisdiction over homeland security and consolidate primary oversight of the key DHS component agencies under one committee in the House and one in the Senate, with coordinated jurisdiction.
- DHS should have an oversight structure that resembles the one governing other critical departments, such as the Department of Defense and the Department of Justice. (In the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, DHS answered to 92 Congressional committees and subcommittees and 27 additional caucuses, commissions, and groups, three times the number overseeing the Department of Defense.)

We believe that the current structure of the authorizing committees in the House of Representatives for the Department of Homeland Security should be revised as follows to vest in the House Homeland Security Committee:

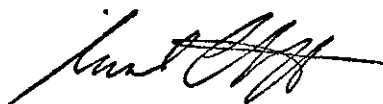
- Primary jurisdiction over authorization matters for DHS;
- Organization, administration, and general management of DHS and its components;
- Federal civilian cybersecurity operations;
- Functions of DHS relating to the following:
  - a. Border security and non-border enforcement (except immigration policy), port security, and visa security
  - b. Customs (except customs revenue)
  - c. Integration, analysis, and dissemination of homeland security information
  - d. Domestic preparedness for, and collective response to, terrorism and other emergencies
  - e. Research and development
  - f. Transportation security

Major changes are avoided; in particular, this proposal leaves immigration jurisdiction with the Judiciary Committee and does not disturb the Permanent Select Committee's broad jurisdiction over intelligence-related matters. We recognize that this proposal vests less jurisdiction in the House Homeland Security Committee than past versions we have supported, but believe that this change is achievable, and represents real progress toward resolving a longstanding and thorny challenge.

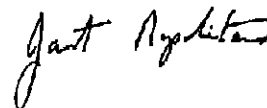
Sincerely,



Tom Ridge  
Former Homeland Security Secretary



Michael Chertoff  
Former Homeland Security Secretary



Janet Napolitano  
Former Homeland Security Secretary

cc: The Honorable Paul Ryan, Speaker of the House  
The Honorable Virginia Foxx, Vice Chairman, House Committee on Rules  
The Honorable Steve Stivers, Chairman, Subcommittee on Rules and Organization of the House, House Committee on Rules