

Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528



Homeland Security

February 26, 2015

Dear Speaker Boehner, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Reid, and Minority Leader Pelosi:

Thank you for your leadership and efforts to pass a clean, full-year appropriations bill for the Department of Homeland Security. As you know, our funding expires tomorrow at midnight. I write to explain to Members of Congress the real and substantial consequences of a failure to pass a full-year appropriations bill by that deadline.

As an initial matter, it must be noted that a potential shutdown of the Department comes at a particularly challenging time for homeland security. It is stunning that we must even contemplate a shutdown of the Department in the current global context. The global terrorist threat has become more decentralized and complex. Terrorist organizations are now openly calling for attacks on Western targets. Yesterday's arrests in New York City highlight the threat of independent actors in the homeland who support overseas terrorist organizations and radical ideology. We are working hard to stay one step ahead of potential threats to aviation security. Last year at this time, the spike in migrant children began to appear at our border; we are deployed to prevent this situation from recurring, and to address it aggressively if it does. The Nation is in the midst of a very cold, harsh winter, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency is working with states impacted by record snowfalls.

Here are just some of the consequences for homeland security if the Department's funding lapses and we shut down:

First, about 170,000 employees will be required to work, but will not get paid for that work during the period of a shutdown. This includes our Coast Guard, Border Patrol agents, Secret Service agents, Transportation Security Administration officers, and others on the front lines of our homeland security. These working men and women depend on biweekly paychecks to make ends meet for themselves and their families. For them, personally, work without pay is disruptive and demoralizing. Even worse for our people are the public statements by some

that make light of a shutdown, which disregards DHS employees' personal sacrifices and dedication to our Nation's security.

Second, approximately 30,000 men and women of the Department must be furloughed and sent home without pay. Our financial management, human resources, procurement and contracting, and information technology teams- the institutional backbone of the Department- will be reduced by 90 percent, from over 2,000 to just 208 people. My own immediate headquarters staff will be cut by about 87 percent. Our Science and Technology team, which is intensely focused on developing non-metallic explosive detection capabilities as well as other technologies to counter threats to aviation, will be cut 94 percent, from 448 to 26 people. Our Domestic Nuclear Detection Office, which is our Nation's primary research and development lead for development of advanced nuclear detection technologies and technical forensic capabilities, will also be cut 94 percent, from 121 to just 7 people.

Third, contracting services across the Department, including those for critical mission support activities, will be disrupted and/or interrupted altogether. Depending upon the length of a shutdown, contract awards and major acquisitions could be impacted. In the event of a shutdown, negotiations to construct the United States Coast Guard's 8th National Security Cutter will be delayed, potentially leading to an increase in costs.

Fourth, our \$2.5 billion-a-year grant-making to state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, to assist them in preventing, responding to or recovering from terrorist attacks, major disasters and other emergencies, remains at a standstill (it has already stopped because the Department is currently funded by a Continuing Resolution). Of particular note, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Emergency Management Performance Grants, which contribute 50 percent of the salaries of state and local emergency management personnel, cannot be funded.

Fifth, public assistance disaster recovery payments to communities affected by previous disasters will grind to a halt. Though these payments are funded with prior-year money, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's staff that processes them must be furloughed.

Sixth, depending upon the length of a shutdown, DHS will no longer be able to support state and local authorities with planning, safety, and security resources for special security events such as the Boston and Chicago Marathons.

Seventh, depending upon the length of a shutdown, work to complete construction of the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility in Kansas, which will replace the aging 1950s-era Plum Island facility in New York, could be disrupted.

Eighth, new hires across the Department must be halted, disrupting critical missions to secure the border, protect millions of daily airline passengers, strengthen security at the White House, and deploy new ICE investigators. Routine attrition hiring would cease across the Department, seriously undermining our homeland security frontline staffing needs. Our plans to increase CBP staffing at our ports of entry by 2,000 officers, and to maintain the

Transportation Security Administration's workforce of airport screeners and air marshals will be undermined. Our plans to hire additional Secret Service uniformed officers and special agents will also be disrupted.

Ninth, without funding, all training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers will cease. Up to 2,000 local, state, and federal law enforcement trainees from across the country will be sent home.

Finally, as I have noted many times, mere extension of a continuing resolution has many of the same negative impacts. A short-term continuing resolution exacerbates the uncertainty for my workforce and puts us back in the same position, on the brink of a shutdown just days from now.

I urge Congress, as soon as possible, to pass a clean, full -year Fiscal Year 2015 appropriations bill for the Department of Homeland Security.

The American people are counting on us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeh Charles Johnson". The signature is highly stylized and somewhat illegible due to its cursive and scribbled nature.

Jeh Charles Johnson