

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
United States Senate Majority Leader  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid  
United States Senator Minority Leader  
522 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

As former U.S. Secretaries of Homeland Security, we write to you today to respectfully request that you consider decoupling critical legislation to fund the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 from a legislative response to President Obama's executive actions on immigration.

As the recent terrorist attacks in Paris and the cyber-attacks on a major American corporation and on the U.S. Military's Central Command remind us, the threats facing the U.S. are very real. The national security role that DHS plays, and by extension the funding that allows it to carry out its vital national security mission, is critical to ensuring that our nation is safe from harm. Funding for the DHS is used to protect our ports and our borders; to secure our air travel and cargo; to protect the federal government and our nation's information, technology, and infrastructure from cyber-attacks; to fund essential law enforcement activities; to guard against violent extremists; to mobilize response networks after emergencies; and to ensure the safety of the president and national leaders.

Moreover, we appreciate that Congress possesses the authority to authorize and appropriate funds expended by the federal government. We do not question your desire to have a larger debate about the nation's immigration laws. However, we cannot emphasize enough that the DHS's responsibilities are much broader than its responsibility to oversee the federal immigration agencies and to protect our borders. And funding for the entire agency should not be put in jeopardy by the debate about immigration. The President has said very publicly that he will "oppose any legislative effort to undermine the executive actions that he" has taken on immigration. Therefore, by tethering a bill to fund DHS in FY 2015 to a legislative response to the President's executive actions on immigration, the likelihood of a Department of Homeland Security shutdown increases.

It is imperative that we ensure that DHS is ready, willing, and able to protect the American people. To that end, we urge you not to risk funding for the operations that protect every American and to pass a clean DHS funding bill.



Sincerely,

