United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 27, 2015

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
The Capitol, Room S230
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell:

As we rapidly approach the date on which the Department of Homeland Security's funding expires, and as law enforcement officials face major threats to our nation's safety and security, we write with one simple request: work with us to pass a clean bill that funds Homeland Security for the remainder of the fiscal year.

The House bill cannot pass the Senate. Democratic Leader Harry Reid has called for a clean funding bill for the Department of Homeland Security. The President has also made clear that he will veto any bill that expressly limits his authority to exercise prosecutorial discretion on immigration matters. While we agree our current immigration system needs comprehensive reform, including border security enhancements, this appropriations bill is not the place for this debate.

In light of recent events in Paris, Ottawa and Australia, the threat of ISIS and the proliferation of foreign fighters that return home radicalized, DHS funding should not be tied to divisive political issues that could jeopardize this critical funding.

We are now four months into the fiscal year. A series of short-term continuing resolutions to fund DHS should be off the table. Secretary Jeh Johnson has noted that if DHS continues to operate on CRs, counterterrorism efforts will be limited, border security initiatives and grants to state and local law enforcement will go unfunded, and aviation security efforts will be hampered.

Every day, new threats emerge that endanger our citizens at home and our allies abroad. We should not cast doubt on future funding for the Department of Homeland Security at a time when the entire nation should be marshalling collective resources to defend against terrorism. Uncertainty undermines security.

Last December, House and Senate negotiators reached a bipartisan agreement on a bill to fund DHS for the entire fiscal year. The best way to provide certainty and stability for the men and women who fulfill DHS's mission to protect the United States from harm is to immediately schedule a vote so that this compromise bill can become law.

We know that you share our desire to keep our nation safe in these dangerous times, and we thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,

Senator Jeanne Shaheen

Senator Barbara A. Mikulski

Senator Richard J. Durbin

Senator Charles E. Schumer

Senator Patty Murray

Senator Debbie Stabenow

Senator Elizabeth Warren

Senator Thomas R. Carper

Senator Edward J. Markey

Senator Tammy Baldwin

Senator Dianne Feinstein

Senator Mazie K. Hirono

Senator Heidi Heitkamp

Senator Patrick J. Leahy

Senator Angus S. King Jr.

Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand

Senator Mark R. Warner

Senator Jack Reed

Senator Richard Blumenthal

Senator Sherrod Brown

Senator Bernard Sanders

Senator Robert Menendez

Senator Sheldon Whitehouse

Senator Christopher A. Coons

Senator Benjamin L. Cardin

Senator Brian Schatz

Senator Christopher Murphy

Senator Ron Wyden

Senator Tim Kaine

Senator Barbara Boxer

Senator Cory A. Booker

Senator Tom Udall

Senator Jon Tester

Senator Michael F. Bennet

Senator Amy Klobuchar

Senator Martin Heinrich

Senator Claire McCaskill

Senator Bill Nelson

Senator Gary Peters

Senator Jeff Merkley

Senator Al Franken

Senator Robert P. Casey Jr.

Senator Maria Cantwell

Senator Joe Manchin III

Senator Joe Donnelly