

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1802

February 24, 2015

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner,

I am writing to express my concern about the impending expiration of funding for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). As legislators, national security should be our most pressing concern at all times. Shutting down DHS because of a temper tantrum over immigration and the President's executive order ignores that responsibility and puts partisanship before the safety of the American people. The threats of terrorism and natural disaster are ever present and it is imperative that DHS is prepared to prevent or mitigate any potential dangers.

Groups like ISIS and al-Shabab have illustrated the shift of modern terrorism. These groups are using digital and social media to inspire lone wolf actors across the globe to harm innocent people. By hindering DHS' ability to operate at full strength, we only leave ourselves more vulnerable to threats like the one recently issued against the Mall of America.

Perhaps the most troubling consequence of this standoff is the potential adverse impact on cybersecurity defense. Failing to provide full-year funding to DHS prevents it from making strategic improvements to its cybersecurity capabilities. It would be difficult to overstate the importance of the internet in the day-to-day lives of American citizens as well as the critical operations of corporations and government entities. In light of the emerging cyber-threats, we cannot afford for the Department's cybersecurity activities to function on autopilot.

The adverse impacts of the appropriations limbo are real and impact not only DHS, but State and local governments. Critical State and local grant programs will be delayed, border security will be undermined, and immigration enforcement will be weakened, not enhanced. The American people have entrusted us with ensuring the safety and security of our nation. We cannot continue to allow political gamesmanship to jeopardize this responsibility.

With that, I strongly urge you to bring H.R. 861, Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2015, to the floor for a vote. This funding bill, which carries no additional conditions, would allow DHS to continue to carry out its vital mission uninterrupted by partisan political tactics.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Richmond', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Cedric L. Richmond
Member of Congress