

March 19, 2018

Dear Leaders McConnell and Schumer:

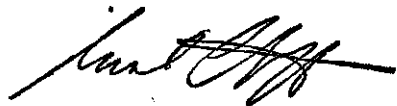
Sixteen years after the Department of Homeland Security was created, congressional oversight of the Department remains a jumble of overlapping committees, subcommittees, caucuses and groups. By our count, in the 112th Congress, DHS answered to 92 congressional committees and subcommittees and 27 additional caucuses and groups. Collectively, we both testified publicly before Congress dozens of times while in office.

There is an urgent need to streamline and consolidate oversight of DHS. This remains, twelve years after its publication, the only major unimplemented recommendation of the 9/11 Commission Report, a recommendation echoed by other studies across the political spectrum and endorsed by scores of experts. This is a critical matter of homeland security, as to which there is broad bipartisan agreement.

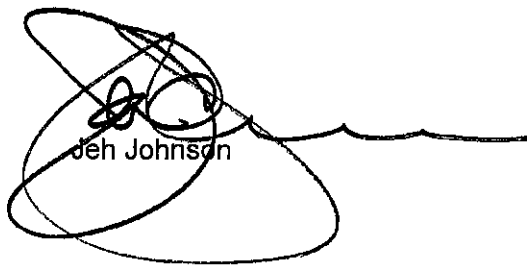
Recently, and for the first time since DHS was created, a House-sponsored reauthorization bill, H.R. 2825, was approved in the last session that sets priorities and provides guidance for the Department. A rewrite of that bill has been passed out of Senate Committee and is headed to the Senate floor. Notably, it would create a study commission including members of both Houses that would gather information and make a recommendation for how to streamline and consolidate the congressional oversight function, and would require the Department to collect data on how often DHS and subcomponent officials must report to the existing network of committees.

Our nation today faces significant challenges to its homeland security through cyberwarfare, election hacking, terrorism and other threats. Congress and DHS must work in tandem to protect the nation. We come together to express our sincere hope that Congress will, finally, proceed toward congressional oversight reform, provided it does not become simply another burden on the Department to gather and report data. We cannot afford to have congressional oversight that is dispersed and conflicting.

Respectfully,



Michael Chertoff



Jeh Johnson

cc. Chairman Johnson

Ranking Member McCaskill