



**TESTIMONY OF ANTHONY M. REARDON
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NATIONAL TREASURY EMPLOYEES UNION
IMPROVING AVIATION SECURITY AROUND THE GLOBE
BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
AND PROTECTIVE SECURITY
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

September 26, 2017

Chairman Katko, Ranking Member Watson Coleman, distinguished members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement on Customs and Border Protection (CBP) staffing issues that affect aviation security around the globe on behalf of the 25,000 CBP Officers, Agriculture Specialists and trade enforcement personnel stationed at 328 land, sea and air ports of entry across the United States (U.S.) and at preclearance stations currently in Ireland, the Caribbean, Canada and United Arab Emirates airports represented by the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU).

As of June 2017, CBP's Office of Field Operations (OFO) has 22,810 CBP Officers onboard at the ports of entry—1,404 short of its FY 2017 on-boarding target of 24,214. The FY 2018 House appropriations bill includes funding to filling the current vacancies to meet the FY 2017 target of 24,214, but provides no new funding to address the current CBP Officer staffing shortage of at least 2,107 additional CBP Officers as stipulated by CBP's own FY 2017 Workload Staff Model and to fund an additional 631 CBP Agriculture Specialists as stipulated by CBP's own FY 2107 Agriculture Resource Allocation Model (see appendix.)

CBP Preclearance Program

The U.S. currently has 15 airport preclearance locations in six countries: Aruba; Freeport and Nassau; the Bahamas; Bermuda; Calgary, Toronto, Edmonton, Halifax, Montreal, Ottawa, Vancouver, and Winnipeg, Canada; Dublin and Shannon, Ireland; and Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. More than 600 CBP law enforcement officers are stationed at 15 locations around the world checking travel documents, passports, visas and making sure travelers abide by strict customs and agriculture importation rules. Passengers departing these airports are treated the same as domestic travelers, and do not have to go through customs when they arrive in the U.S.

Airports with preclearance programs accounted for about 18 million travelers in 2016--15 percent of all commercial air travellers to the U.S. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has stated that it would like to see this increased to 33 percent of foreign passengers annually by 2024. The effort is designed to extend the U.S.' border security to foreign airports as part of new initiatives to reduce the risk of potential terrorists entering the country.

The preclearance operations in the United Arab Emirates and the foreign airports to be chosen for new preclearance operations are responsible for most of the program's costs, including a significant portion of CBP Officers and Agriculture Specialists' salaries and benefits, as well as the construction and maintenance of the space dedicated to the preclearance operation inside the airport.

In May 2015, the U.S. identified airports in nine countries as possible participants in the program—Punta Cana, Tokyo, Stockholm, London, Manchester, Istanbul, Oslo, Madrid, Amsterdam, and Brussels. Agreements with CBP were reached late last year for new facilities at Stockholm Arlanda Airport in Sweden and Punta Cana International Airport in the Dominican Republic. CBP is expected to reach final agreements with a few of the other foreign airports that were named in its 2015 expansion round. Preclearance operations in these airports may begin as early as 2019.

In November 2016, DHS selected eleven additional foreign airports, located in nine countries, for possible Preclearance expansion. The new airports selected to potentially take part are El Dorado International Airport in Bogota; Ministro Pistarini International Airport in Buenos Aires; Scotland's Edinburgh Airport; Keflavik International Airport in Iceland; Mexico City International Airport; Italy's Milan-Malpensa Airport; Kansai International Airport in Osaka; Rio de Janeiro-Galeão International Airport; Rome's Leonardo da Vinci-Fiumicino Airport; São Paulo-Guarulhos International Airport in Brazil; and Princess Juliana International Airport in St. Maarten. More than 10 million travelers fly to the United States from these airports annually.

NTEU recognizes the security benefits of preclearance including preventing high-risk travelers from boarding aircraft bound for the U.S. and reduced wait times for passenger processing at the busiest U.S. international airports. Nonetheless, NTEU has serious concerns about the impact of preclearance expansion on the already critical staffing shortages at the nation's ports of entry.

CBP at the Ports of Entry Staffing Shortage

There is an existing vacancy rate of nearly 1,400 funded CBP Officers at the ports and, according to CBP's analytic workload staffing model, an additional 2,100 CBP Officers need to be funded and hired in order to meet 2017 staffing needs—translating into **a total CBP Officer staffing shortage of 3,500 today.**

The economic cost of this shortage is also staggering. For every 33 additional CBP Officers hired, the U.S. can potentially gain over 1,000 private sector jobs. If Congress fully staffed the ports with the needed 3,500 additional CBP Officers, 106,000 private sector jobs could be created. Understaffed ports lead to long delays in travel and cargo lanes and also create a significant hardship for frontline employees. Both involuntary overtime and involuntary work

assignments far from home disrupt CBP Officers' family life and destroy morale. Notably, ongoing CBP staffing shortages directly contribute to CBP's perennial low ranking in federal employee workforce satisfaction surveys.

In addition to CBP's trade and travel security, processing and facilitation mission, CBP employees at the ports of entry are the second largest source of revenue collection for the U.S. government. In 2016, CBP processed more than \$2.2 trillion in imports and collected more than \$44 billion in duties, taxes, and other fees.

As you know, the President's January Executive Order calls for hiring 5,000 additional Border Patrol Agents (BPAs) and 10,000 new Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, but does not ask for one additional CBP officer new hire, despite the fact that CBP officers at the ports of entry in 2016 encountered over 274,000 undocumented immigrants and seized over 600,000 pounds of illegal drugs, and over \$62 million in illicit currency, while processing over 390 million travelers and \$2.2 trillion in imports through the ports.

As preclearance operations come on board, NTEU asks how can CBP OFO staff these new locations when it has a current staffing shortage of 3,500 CBP Officer and 631 Agriculture Specialist positions?

The 1,400 existing vacancies at U.S. ports of entry must be filled first and 2,100 new CBP Officer staffing positions needs to be funded by Congress. CBP Officers should not be diverted to new preclearance operations before the existing staffing shortage at the U.S. ports of entry is resolved.

Congress should reevaluate CBP's funding priorities as it finalizes its FY 2018 appropriations bills. Unlike other DHS components operating between the ports of entry and at ICE, both of which received significant increases in personnel funding in the FY 18 appropriation bill recently approved by the House, CBP at the ports of entry has established and documented Workload Staffing Models that justify the need to hire 3,500 CBP Officers and 631 Agriculture Specialists today. Because of the ongoing staffing shortages at the nations' ports, CBP Officers at some ports work up to 16 hours a day and since 2015, CBP OFO has had to divert several hundred CBP Officers from already short staffed ports to the critically short-staffed land ports at San Ysidro and Tucson for 90 day stints.

Even though the salaries of CBP personnel at the new preclearance ports will be primarily funded by the foreign countries hosting the new preclearance facilities, there are no excess CBP employees today that can be reassigned to preclearance ports without exacerbating the staffing shortages at domestic ports of entry.

Delays at the U.S. ports of entry result in real losses to the U.S. economy. Understaffed ports lead to long delays in travel and cargo lanes, hurting businesses and consumers, and also create a significant hardship for frontline employees. NTEU agrees that expanding CBP inspection facilities at preclearance locations adds another level of security to the homeland, but until Congress acknowledges and addresses the current critical CBP staffing shortages at the

ports of entry, preclearance expansion will only exacerbate current deficiencies at domestic air, sea and land ports.

If Congress is serious about improving aviation security around the globe, there is an opportunity to address the justified and documented need to fund additional CBP staffing at the ports in the Omnibus bill that will be considered later this year. On behalf of the men and women represented by NTEU at the nation's ports of entry, I urge you to authorize and fund CBP Officers and Agriculture Specialists at least to the levels that BPAs and ICE agents are funded in the recently approved FY 18 House appropriations bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement to the Committee.

CBP Resource Optimization Strategy

CBPO Staffing
Requirements through
FY 2017: 28,414
Gap: 2,107¹

Funding Source	CBPOs	
Appropriations, CBPO Staff		15,104
User Fees, CBPO Staff	◆	8,867
User Fees, Core Overtime	◆	2,474
COBRA User Fee Increase - Up to	◆	840
IUF Increase - Air - Up to	◆	1,230
Mission/Operational Support Specialists	◆	194
FY 2017 Total Funding		28,709
CBPO WSM Requirements		28,414
Non-CBPO WSM Mission and Operational Support Specialists		295

CBP Agriculture
Specialist Staffing
Requirements through
FY 2017: 3,048
Gap: 631

Funding Source	CBPAS	
Appropriations and AQI User Fees, CBPA Staff		2,417
Non-CBPO WSM Mission and Operational Support	◆	295
AQIUF Increase - Up to	◆	145
Mission/Operational Support Specialists	◆	17
FY 2017 Total Funding		2,874
CBPAS AGRAM Requirements		3,048
Remaining CBPAS Requirements		(174)

1. Incorporates legislative proposal fee increases in staff gap calculation.



U.S. Customs and
Border Protection