

**Opening Statement  
Ranking Member John Cornyn**

**Senate Committee on Finance, Subcommittee on  
International Trade, Customs, and Global  
Competitiveness**

**“Examining Trade Enforcement and Entry of  
Merchandise at U.S. Ports”**

**May 21, 2024**

- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses for joining today.
- Trade is critical to promoting economic security and improving the lives of all Americans, and it is especially important to my home state of Texas.
- Texas is home to over 30 air, land, and sea ports of entry – more than any other state in the nation.
- Included in that list are three of the five busiest land ports of entry and the number one inland port, in terms of total volume, along the entire U.S.-Mexico border.
- To further put this in perspective – about half of all U.S.-Mexico trade moves through a Texas port of entry.
- Texas fuels America’s economic growth, but I continue to hear about growing challenges at our ports.

- U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has the thankless job of facilitating legitimate trade and travel while enforcing both trade and immigration laws.
- In recent years, the surge in illegal migration along the southern border has led to the temporary shutdown of passenger and rail crossings.
- Such delays caused by the ongoing border crisis have resulted in an overall loss of commerce, which is costly to both businesses and consumers.
- In addition to hindering legitimate trade and travel, these challenges also make it hard to keep unlawful imports such as products made with forced labor, counterfeits, and deadly drugs like fentanyl from entering the United States.
- This is why I introduced the *CATCH Fentanyl Act*, which requires CBP to analyze and test new technologies at land ports of entry to determine which ones are most effective, efficient, and affordable.
- But this is only one piece of the broader changes that are needed to keep up with the changing global trade environment.

- Ports of entry across the U.S. are understaffed, yet the workload continues to grow.
- We owe a great deal to the men and women who serve at our ports of entry day in and day out.
- Last year, CBP processed over \$5 trillion in combined imports and exports, and nearly 37 million imported cargo containers at U.S. ports of entry.
- While this continued growth is an overall positive for our economy, we aren't equipped with the resources to maintain it.
- Evolving supply chains, new players entering the marketplace, and the growing volume of commerce crossing our borders all present unique challenges for CBP and its industry partners.
- I'm eager to hear more from today's witnesses about the best ways to meet those challenges.
- We also need to find ways to increase efficiencies across ports of entry.
- Trusted trader programs are one way to accomplish this goal as they allow CBP officers to focus on higher risk goods and travelers.

- We should work to enhance and expand these programs where it makes sense, and I introduced legislation with Chairman Carper to do just that.
- The CTPAT Pilot Program Act of 2023 requires DHS to create a pilot program to assess the value of allowing additional third party logistics providers to participate in the program.
- There are many opportunities to strengthen U.S. trade by implementing much-needed changes at America's ports.
- I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses on how Congress might help ease the burden on legitimate trade and travel, while increasing compliance and enforcing our trade laws.