

Crapo Statement at Nomination Hearing
October 19, 2021

Washington, D.C.--U.S. Senator Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), Ranking Member of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee, delivered the following remarks at a hearing to consider the nomination of Chris Magnus, of Arizona, to be Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security.

The text of Ranking Member Crapo's remarks, as prepared, is below.

"Thank you Mr. Chairman. Mr. Magnus, welcome.

"U.S. Customs and Border Protection, or CBP, is the nation's largest federal law enforcement agency. It needs to be. Its responsibilities are staggering.

"CBP is tasked with facilitating lawful international trade and travel. The United States is a leader in international commerce—and that leadership depends on ensuring that lawful trade and visits flow smoothly. It also requires that we safeguard our borders from terrorists, drug traffickers, and transnational criminals.

"In 2020—a year where the pandemic curtailed trade and travel—the 63,000 men and women of CBP on an average day: processed 650,000 passengers and 77,000 truck, rail, and sea containers; arrested 39 criminals at U.S. ports of entry; seized 3,600 pounds of drugs; caught \$3.6 million worth of products that infringe intellectual property rights; and discovered 250 pests that could potentially cause untold damage to U.S. farmers.

"But CBP's work is not just point of entry inspections.

"CBP also undertakes sophisticated investigations to ensure our customs laws are properly enforced. This includes identifying actors who try to smuggle goods made with forced labor into the United States or evade our antidumping or countervailing duties.

"Deliberate evasion of antidumping and countervailing duties not only undercuts revenue lawfully owed to the government, but prevents our workers and businesses from redressing unfair trade practices.

"Softwood lumber producers in my home state of Idaho rely on antidumping and countervailing measures to combat unfair trade—and CBP's work ensures that those measures are effective.

"CBP also maintains international operations. CBP operates Attaché Offices in 23 countries around the world. CBP's Container Security Initiative screens containers that pose a risk of terrorism at foreign ports before they are placed on vessels destined for the United States. Through this program, CBP can prescreen over 80 percent of all maritime containerized cargo imported into the United States.

“Under normal circumstances, overseeing all of this work would require extraordinary skill, experience, and judgment. But these are not normal times.

“Specifically, I am referring to the heartbreaking situation unfolding on our southern border.

“In August of this year, CBP had over 200,000 encounters on the southwest border, significantly higher than the preceding August that had only 50,000 encounters which, itself, was down from 60,000 in August of 2019.

“In fiscal year 2021 there were 1.4 million encounters, even without accounting for September numbers that are not yet known, which is more than double the 458,000 encounters in fiscal year 2020.

“Once in office, the Administration’s initial approach to this surge was to downplay, or worse, undermine its own tools to address it. It eliminated the successful “Remain in Mexico” policy, known as the Migrant Protection Protocols.

“This program wisely required certain migrants to remain in Mexico while their claims were decided. The sudden termination of the program was not only rash, but—as confirmed by the Supreme Court in August—contrary to law.

“Moreover, the men and women of CBP have been left demoralized and adrift by the Administration’s approach. Indeed, the President of the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association has written that the Administration needs to ‘stop blaming the federal law enforcement officers at the border—who are over tasked, under resourced, and underappreciated. It is the lack of a coherent strategy that has escalated the crisis at the border, not the border officers.’

“In sum, the crisis—and that is precisely what it is—is absolutely unacceptable. This Committee must ensure that CBP is headed by someone who has the requisite ability and commitment to end it as soon as possible.

“Failing to ensure as much will only prolong this tragedy.

“Accordingly, I look forward to hearing the nominee’s testimony and his responses to questions.”

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