

The **UNITED STATES SENATE**
COMMITTEE *on* **FINANCE**
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**Wyden Statement at Finance Committee Hearing on the Nomination of Chris Magnus to Lead
CBP**
As Prepared for Delivery

This morning the Finance Committee meets to discuss President Biden’s nomination of Chief Chris Magnus to lead Customs and Border Protection. I want to thank Chief Magnus for joining the committee today and for his willingness to take on this extraordinarily difficult job.

Chief Magnus is the Chief of Police in Tucson, Arizona. He started out in Lansing, Michigan, and his career in public safety has taken him to the East coast, West coast, north and south. If confirmed, Chief Magnus would lead an agency with tens of thousands of employees. CBP is responsible for over 300 points of entry into the U.S. and it enforces the country’s immigration laws.

This committee has a special interest in ensuring that CBP’s trade mission doesn’t get short shrift. Enforcing trade laws vigorously and working to stay a step ahead of trade cheats is key to protecting jobs, businesses and innovators in America, and CBP is right at the heart of that challenge. Too often in the past, including during the Trump administration, trade enforcement has been a secondary issue for CBP.

This committee has worked hard over the last few years to give CBP fresh and modern trade enforcement tools. The goal is to help our trade enforcers work faster and communicate more closely with businesses and other organizations that spot trade cheats undercutting American workers and firms. Those upgrades have already begun to make a big difference over the slower, outdated approach of previous decades. But in my view, there’s always room for improvement, so this committee is going to continue looking for ways to strengthen our trade enforcement even further.

One such issue that’s posing a serious danger to our country’s values and American jobs is the use of forced labor in China and elsewhere. It is an abhorrent practice – modern day slavery. The Finance Committee’s authority over trade laws is a big part of what needs to be an all-out effort to end it.

Until just a few years ago, there had been a loophole in the laws on the books that allowed some products made by forced labor to be imported to the country. Senator Brown and I wrote an amendment that closed that loophole in 2016.

Since then, for example, the U.S. has taken action to block the import of cotton and tomatoes picked by slave labor in Western China. However, there are many more areas and industries in which forced labor

is ongoing. In addition to goods coming from Xinjiang, Senator Brown and I are concerned about imports of mica, palm oil and cocoa which may also be produced with forced labor.

CBP not only investigates allegations of forced labor and demands remediation where appropriate, it also enforces the ban on forced labor products entering the country. This is a difficult job, and once again, it requires quick action and lots of communication with businesses, human rights organizations and others. This committee is going to continue working on this issue in the months and years ahead, and I look forward to discussing that with Chief Magnus today.

Immigration is outside this committee's jurisdiction, but it's sure to come up during today's discussion. The Trump administration made it fashionable to believe that enforcing our immigration laws required abusing immigrants and asylum seekers at the border. Recently, the American people saw images of what that mindset looks like in practice. It's absolutely, unquestionably wrong.

Enforcing our immigration laws and treating people humanely are not mutually exclusive – period. Embracing immigration and asylum seekers is not only part of our national character, it's also an economic win for America. I appreciate the discussion I had with Chief Magnus on this issue in our recent meeting.

I'll close with one final point on an issue that dates back to before Chief Magnus's nomination. In the summer of 2020, the Trump administration deployed federal law enforcement troops in cities including my hometown of Portland, Oregon. They left Portlanders with serious injuries, and their use of tear gas has created serious health issues. They even left tear gas canisters in a sandbox at a school. Additionally, the conduct of Homeland Security intelligence officials constituted a serious abuse of power.

For many months I'd been demanding reviews of policies regarding DHS's use of force, including use of chemical munitions, as well as the release of a key investigation into what happened. There has been significant progress on these issues.

I want to thank Secretary Mayorkas for that progress, and I look forward to continuing to work with him and the department on this subject, because my neighbors in Portland are still reeling from the harm that the Trump administration inflicted upon them.

With that, I want to congratulate Chief Magnus on his nomination and thank him once again for joining the committee today. I look forward to the discussion.

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