

**U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
Nomination of the Honorable Alejandro N. Mayorkas to be Secretary, U.S.
Department of Homeland Security January 19, 2021
Opening Statement of Ranking Member Gary C. Peters**

Thank you Senator Portman for helping convene today's hearing. Our nation is facing serious threats and challenges right now, and I appreciate your willingness to work together in a bipartisan way to ensure that we can swiftly consider this important national security nomination.

I'm looking forward to working with you this Congress to return this committee to its longstanding tradition of bipartisanship, strengthen our nation's security, and help ensure that government is working effectively for the American people.

I am also grateful to Alejandro Mayorkas and his family for joining us today as we consider your nomination to be the Secretary of Homeland Security. Thank you for your willingness to serve your country again.

Mr. Mayorkas, once confirmed, you will have a daunting job before you. But you are a qualified and experienced leader, and I look forward to hearing more about your plans to safeguard our national security today.

There is no question, we need strong and stable leadership at the Department of Homeland Security, now more than ever.

Over the last four years, the Department has endured chaos, mismanagement, and instability. As our third largest federal agency with more than 240,000 employees, DHS is in desperate need of principled leadership.

The turmoil and uncertainty at DHS headquarters has only been compounded by the growing security threats facing our nation.

In recent weeks, we saw a widespread cyber breach of our federal government and a terrible attack on our Capitol building, all while we continue to battle a raging pandemic that is taking thousands of American lives every day.

Whether its bolstering cybersecurity, combatting the rise of domestic terrorism, including white supremacist and anti-government violence, controlling the Coronavirus pandemic, or tackling longer-term threats like climate change, our nation needs an experienced Homeland Security Secretary.

Mr. Mayorkas, your record as a national security official is extensive. You have the support of former Homeland Security Secretaries, and law enforcement organizations including the Fraternal Order of Police.

You have also been entrusted to help lead the Department before, and have been confirmed by the Senate three times.

In those roles, you led efforts to protect the homeland from foreign and domestic terrorism, strengthen our nation's cybersecurity, and increase cooperation between the federal government and local law enforcement agencies. And your role as the Deputy Secretary gives you unique qualifications to take the reins at DHS.

Today's hearing is an important opportunity for me and my colleagues to ask questions about your record, and I look forward to hearing more about how you plan to lead the Department.

We have recently lived through some of our nation's darkest moments, but I am confident there is still light and hope all across our country.

Our committee must work thoroughly and quickly to fully evaluate your credentials and then put in place Senate-confirmed leadership at the top of the Department of Homeland Security.

Thank you again for your willingness to serve and for being with us today.

I look forward to having a comprehensive discussion about how all of us can work together to address the serious and pressing security issues facing our nation, and your efforts to help strengthen our national security in the years ahead.