



Committee on Foreign Affairs

CHAIRMAN ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN



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Opening Statement

Markup Hearing – Remarks on H.R. 6018, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2013

June 27, 2012

I want to thank the Ranking Member and all Members on both sides of the aisle for their cooperation in this bipartisan effort to draft and adopt a State Department authorization bill for Fiscal Year 2013.

H.R. 6018 is a carefully crafted bill which focuses on those basic funding and operational authorities on which we have been able to reach bipartisan agreement. Despite significant efforts by this Committee, the Department of State has not been authorized for nearly a decade. The last authorization bill to become law – co-authored by our esteemed former Chairmen Henry Hyde and Tom Lantos – was enacted in September of 2002.

The lack of authorities in the intervening years has eroded our foreign policy leverage with our primary agency of jurisdiction, the Department of State. By adopting this bill, the Committee will strengthen its role in exercising effective oversight of the Department of State and fulfill our obligations to the American public. The text authorizes basic funding for the State Department, the Broadcasting Board of Governors, and the Peace Corps at fiscally responsible levels coordinated with the Appropriations Committee. Most accounts are authorized at the bipartisan levels from the FY12 omnibus bill.

H.R. 6018 also includes management reforms to increase the efficiency, accountability, and safety of our personnel overseas. It establishes important jurisdiction and oversight authorities in the expanding fields of cybersecurity, counterterrorism communications, and arms export controls. It helps American businesses by modifying Arms Export Control authorities to reduce obstacles and streamline the process for exporting selected equipment and parts. At the same time, it enhances U.S. security by increasing safeguards against the transfer of U.S. technologies to State Sponsors of Terrorism and countries subject to U.S. arms embargoes.

For all of these reasons, H.R. 6018 deserves the bipartisan support that it has received this morning. I am confident that the strong signal sent by today's Committee action will lead to prompt consideration by the full House and, ultimately, the enactment of these basic authorities into law. I again want to thank the Ranking Member and all of our Members for their assistance and cooperation.