



The Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) supports the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as it secures the nation while preserving individual liberty, fairness, and equality under the law.



Statement from Secretary Nielsen on President Trump’s National Security Strategy

Release Date: December 18, 2017 - Today, Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen M. Nielsen released the following statement on President Donald J. Trump’s National Security Strategy:

“Today, the President released a bold vision for our nation’s security and outlined how we will defend our homeland by putting America first. Our highest responsibility as a government is to protect our people, and the President’s strategy makes it clear we will do that by implementing sweeping security enhancements covering cyberspace and our borders. The strategy also makes clear that homeland security extends beyond our territory, which is why we will pursue threats to their source—whether they are from terrorist groups or transnational criminal organizations. The men and women of the Department of Homeland Security stand ready to implement the President’s agenda and to protect the United States from any and all threats.”

Kirstjen M. Nielsen Sworn-in as the Sixth Homeland Security Secretary

Release Date: December 6, 2017 - Today, Ms. Kirstjen M. Nielsen was sworn-in as the sixth Secretary of Homeland Security. Secretary Nielsen was joined by White House and Department officials during a brief swearing-in at the White House. Secretary Nielsen is now the first former Department of Homeland Security (DHS) employee to become the secretary.



“It is my greatest honor to serve as Secretary alongside the remarkable men and women of DHS,” said Secretary Nielsen. “Our nation faces a complex threat landscape that is constantly evolving. I will do my utmost to ensure that the Department meets the threats of today and tomorrow, and to ensure our frontline personnel have the tools and resources to accomplish their vital missions.”

“I am humbled by the trust placed in me to lead our Department. I want to thank Deputy Secretary Elaine Duke for her exceptional leadership over the past four months - especially her work leading the response during the destructive Atlantic hurricane season. I look forward to continuing this Administration's work to raise the standards for the security of our homeland in all areas - including securing our borders, protecting Americans from terrorist threats, and securing our cyber networks.”

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CRCL Releases FY 2016 Annual Report to Congress

CRCL is pleased to announce the release of its [Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2016 Annual Report to Congress](#). In accordance with 6 U.S.C. § 345 and 42 U.S.C. § 2000ee-1, the report highlights the activities and accomplishments of the Office during FY 2016. Some of CRCL's most significant initiatives and achievements over the reporting period include:

- The secretary of Homeland Security's meetings with diverse community groups;
- Ensuring that recipients of DHS financial assistance comply with civil rights requirements;
- CRCL hosting the inaugural department-wide equal employment opportunity and diversity training conference;
- CRCL enhancing oversight of immigration detainee housing; and
- Expansion of the federal interagency core awareness training on the information sharing environment.

These efforts continue to reflect the department's dedication to securing the country while protecting our freedoms, including core civil rights and civil liberties values of liberty, fairness, and equality under the law.

CRCL Officer Meets with Community Stakeholders and CBP Personnel in Arizona

Earlier this month, CRCL Officer Cameron Quinn traveled to southern Arizona for a series of engagement events and meetings with diverse communities, advocacy groups, local law enforcement, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) partners, including visiting a number of CBP facilities.

In Tucson, in addition to a quarterly community engagement roundtable meeting, and meetings with local stakeholder advocates, Officer Quinn attended a walking tour of CBP's Tucson Coordination Center where she observed processing and viewed the short-term hold rooms used by the Tucson Sector. Officer Quinn also visited CBP's Port of Nogales, DeConcini Crossing where she observed both pedestrian and vehicle primary operations. The Port of Nogales inspected almost 900,000 passengers just during the month of October 2017 and is one of the busiest ports of entry. While in Nogales she toured the difficult terrain which adds to U.S. Border Patrol's enforcement challenges. The site visits highlighted the critical and often dangerous work that CBP personnel perform each day in southern Arizona, as well as the unheralded humanitarian role CBP agents play in well over 1,000 rescue operations every year.



In Phoenix, in addition to a quarterly community engagement meeting hosted by Phoenix Police Chief Jeri Williams, and meetings with local stakeholder advocates, Officer Quinn met with staff at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and toured the Eloy Detention Center for a better perspective on complaints received by CRCL from detainees and/or advocates on their behalf.

CRCL Leads Stakeholder Call on Disability Access

CRCL and the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Office of Disability Integration and Coordination and the Office of Equal Rights recently hosted a conference call with over a dozen disability stakeholders to discuss disability access in disaster planning.

CRCL Officer Cameron Quinn opened the call with updates on issues that CRCL and FEMA have focused on in response to concerns raised by various stakeholders following the 2017 hurricanes. Specifically, CRCL and FEMA have worked on improvements to accessible sheltering, including updating public information on service animals in shelters; coordinating with federal partners to address questions about access to oxygen for individuals in need in Puerto Rico; and communicating with state emergency management agencies and reminding them of their civil rights obligations in disaster response and recovery operations. Officer Quinn and

FEMA leaders Linda Mastandrea and Regis Phelan discussed other activities planned to ensure compliance with civil rights in disasters including ongoing participation in national planning conferences, holding stakeholder listening tours across the country, improving communication with disaster survivors with disabilities through a series of videos on FEMA's website, and participating in national-level emergency preparedness exercises, among many other activities.

Call participants discussed several other issues including improving communications between nongovernmental organizations and federal entities, especially during disaster response, and refining the current rapid-response team model to better coordinate on disability issues for future disaster situations. Advocates appreciated the update, and made clear they would welcome closer collaboration during 2018 and beyond to continue improving DHS response to both disasters, as well as other DHS issues that affect persons with disabilities.

CRCL and FEMA proactively committed to collaborate with disability advocates through future calls and meetings, with the medium-term goal of improving disaster planning and preparedness for the whole community—including individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, and the long-term goal of further improvement in all DHS programs to better serve individuals with disabilities and other with access and functional needs.

CRCL on the Road, December

December 4-6 – Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona

CRCL convened its quarterly community engagement roundtable with diverse ethnic and community-based organizations. CRCL Officer Cameron Quinn conducted a series of meetings with diverse communities, advocacy groups, local law enforcement, and DHS partners.

December 7 – Tampa and Orlando, Florida

CRCL convened its quarterly community engagement roundtable with diverse ethnic and community-based organizations.

December 10-12 – Detroit, Michigan

CRCL Officer Cameron Quinn conducted a series of meetings with diverse communities

December 14 – Denver, Colorado

CRCL convened its quarterly community engagement roundtable with diverse ethnic and community-based organizations.

December 18 – New York, New York

CRCL convened its quarterly community engagement roundtable with diverse ethnic and community-based organizations.

For more information on engagement events, email: communityengagement@hq.dhs.gov.

Additional information, and contacting us

The goal of this periodic newsletter is to inform members of the public about the activities of the DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, including: how to file complaints; ongoing and upcoming projects; opportunities to offer comments and feedback; etc. We distribute our newsletters via our stakeholder email list and make them available to community groups for redistribution. Issues of the newsletter can be accessed online at: www.dhs.gov/crcl-newsletter.

If you would like to receive this newsletter via email, want to request back issues, or have other comments or questions, please let us know by emailing crcloutreach@dhs.gov. For more information, including how to make a civil rights or civil liberties complaint about DHS activities, visit: www.dhs.gov/crcl.

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