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A Message from Secretary Kirstjen M. Nielsen on ICE Deputy Director Tom Homan

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It is my distinct pleasure to congratulate Thomas D. Homan, Deputy Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), for receiving one of the law enforcement community's most prestigious honors tonight– the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association Foundation's "National Law Enforcement Leader of the Year" award, a well-deserved recognition of his achievements.

Tom's career has spanned the lifecycle of the immigration system – beginning in 1984 in the Border Patrol in Campo, California; joining the then-Immigration and Naturalization Service as a special agent; and ultimately rising through the ranks of ICE to become the head of ERO prior to his current role. Tom's depth of knowledge and experience with the entirety of the ICE mission have made him uniquely qualified to lead the agency – and the results speak for themselves.

Under his exceptional leadership, the men and women of ICE have made significant progress in restoring the rule of law to our immigration system. Consistent with the priorities set out by President Trump, the past year has seen arrests increase by 40 percent, interior removals increase by 30 percent, and the highest number of MS-13 arrests since 2008. But perhaps most important to Tom is that employee morale at ICE is the highest it has been since 2010, which I believe is due in large part to his passionate leadership.

Tom is a patriot and a true public servant who has consistently put service before self. He has made my predecessors and myself better secretaries, faithfully upholding the Constitution and executing ICE's law enforcement mission. These efforts have not gone unnoticed. In recognition of the profound respect he has earned throughout his years of service under six different administrations, Tom was honored with the prestigious Presidential Rank Award for Distinguished Service in 2015.

This evening, Tom will also announce his decision to retire from federal service this summer after 34 years as a career federal law enforcement officer. When Tom informed me earlier this year of his plans to retire, I asked him to remain in his position to assist with transition planning. Once again, he selflessly agreed to extend his service, as he did last January when former Secretary John Kelly asked him to stay. True to his guiding principle of “mission first,” Tom made the difficult decision to forego an opportunity in the private sector and returned to work three days after retiring to assume leadership of the agency. That decision – made more than a year ago – came at great personal sacrifice, and I know Tom is looking forward to spending more time with his family, who made their own sacrifices in order for him to lead ICE. I thank them for sharing Tom with a grateful nation.

It has been a privilege and an honor to have served with such an inspiring leader over the past year. There is no advocate more passionate for the mission and men and women of ICE and I cannot imagine a more fitting capstone to his remarkable career than the award he received tonight.

I wish Tom and his family the very best in his retirement, and I know he will remain an experienced advocate of the men and women of ICE, and the entire DHS community. I am grateful for and proud of his tremendous service to our country.

Best regards,

Kirstjen M. Nielsen

Secretary of Homeland Security

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