



## **Johnson stresses border security as he takes over Senate committee chair**

1/10/2015

MILWAUKEE -- U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson said Friday securing the nation's borders is needed to not only curb illegal immigration but to prevent diseases and terrorists from entering the country.

"We have to secure our border, not just to solve the illegal immigration problem, but it's also imperative for public health and safety," Johnson said at a Milwaukee press conference as he takes over chair of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.

Johnson highlighted the Senate version of a bill he introduced that would defund President Obama's executive orders allowing certain undocumented immigrants to stay in the country.

The Oshkosh Republican said he feared the president's actions would lead to increased pressure on the border, similar to that which was seen with children crossing over during the summer.

In addition to focusing on border security, Johnson said his other security-related priorities include improving cyber- and infrastructure security and combating "homegrown" terrorists.

Referring to the rise of ISIS and the recent terrorist attacks in France, he said terrorists have grown stronger.

"President Obama said over a year ago that the war on terror is over; it's not," Johnson said. "This is a cancer that hasn't been controlled. It's a cancer that has metastasized around the world."

Johnson said it was important for the U.S. to have a powerful intelligence gathering system that balances freedom with security. He criticized Obama for slowly closing the prison at Guantanamo Bay, contending keeping it open is essential to gathering information about terrorists abroad and on U.S. soil.

Johnson said was also critical of Obama's approach to degrading and defeating ISIS.

"I support President Obama's goal. I just don't see a strategy," Johnson said.

On the oversight role of the committee, Johnson said he'll focus on eliminating waste, fraud and duplicative programs, and work to enact regulatory reform.

"There are literally thousands of regulations we can take a look at, that we can streamline, modernize or potentially eliminate to help businesses create better-paying jobs," Johnson said. "That's how you build a strong middle class."

Johnson said one of the first bills he wants to take up is the "End Government Shutdowns Act."

The legislation, which has already has garnered support from members of the Senate and the House, would continue government spending automatically at last year's spending levels if no appropriation bill is passed. The legislation would start to put pressure on the process by dropping funding levels as time passed, he said.

As he leads the committee, Johnson said he hopes to follow in the footsteps of the previous leaders by continuing a bipartisan approach.

"I always start my negotiations not arguing, but trying to find things we agree on," Johnson said.

But Johnson has had a hard time finding common ground with Obama. He currently has a lawsuit against the president relating to the Affordable Care Act. Most recently, he introduced legislation that would block funding for the president's executive actions on immigration.

"He started that relationship picking a fight," Johnson said about Obama's executive actions on immigration shortly after election of the new Congress.

*By Jordyn Noennig*  
*WisPolitics.com*

<http://www.wispolitics.com/index.iml?Article=339564>