

News from Congressman Christopher Carney

Representing Northeast and Central Pennsylvania

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CARNEY STATEMENT FOR HOMELAND SECURITY HEARING

Washington, D.C.--Congressman Christopher P. Carney, Chairman of the House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Management, Investigations and Oversight, issued the following opening statement for the Subcommittee hearing, "Moving Beyond the First Five Years: Solving the Department of Homeland Security's Management Challenges":

"After five years, DHS stands at the proverbial fork in the road.

"One path is the easy way: keep on blundering forward, never stopping to ask whether what you're doing makes sense or whether you need to rethink your route.

"This way would lead the Department to more wasteful contracts, painful congressional hearings, remaining as the butt of late night comedians' jokes and, god forbid, perhaps another bungled Katrina response.

"This route may well also lead to the breaking up the Department, and result in our preparedness efforts being set back a decade.

"The other path requires taking a hard look at what has worked over the past five years and what has not. It requires setting pride and emotion aside and, where necessary, admitting error.

"It requires respecting those who conduct oversight, not resisting - and resenting - them.

"This road will be hard, and it will not lead to instant success. Rather, it will bring slow, incremental improvements.

"But in five years, there would still be a Department of Homeland Security, and it would be much improved from the one that we know today.

"No large organization is perfect, whether in the public or the private sector. We do not expect perfection.

"But organizations that are not accountable for their failings do not survive.

"So what we ask is for accountability, introspection, and gradual improvement.

"Five years from now, we need a Department that has embraced the concept of "one DHS" while still recognizing the special skills and missions of the individual components.

"We need a Department that has a full seat at the Federal table, leading the government in preparing for and - if necessary - responding to the next disaster.

"We need a Department that has enough contracting officers to develop and oversee its major procurements.

"We need a Department that does not rely on expensive contractors to perform the every day functions that should be carried out by government workers.

"The transition to the next Presidential administration is a crucial point in the Department's development.

"If it is botched, the Department will suffer - and the nation will suffer.

"As the committee charged with oversight of DHS, it is our responsibility to ensure that transition planning is on track.

"So as I said, we are at a fork in the road. I hope DHS chooses the tough road - but the one that will make it better, and make all Americans safer.

"Before I close, I want to take a moment to thank all of our witnesses for getting their testimony in on time.

"Ms. Duke, you and your staff's effort in this regard are much appreciated, and I hope that the Department will make this a habit in the future."

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