



Committee on  
**HOMELAND SECURITY**  
Chairman Peter T. King

**Opening Statement**

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**Statement of Chairman Michael T. McCaul (R-TX)  
Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations, and Management**

**“Building One DHS: Why is Employee Morale Low”**

**March 22, 2012  
Remarks as Prepared**

More than 200,000 men and women whose job it is to keep Americans safe from terrorist attacks have a low level of morale, and equally as important a low level of confidence in their leadership.

Simply put, the Department of Homeland Security, whose employees’ job responsibilities range from law enforcement to intelligence analysis, from screening airline passengers to protecting cyberspace, has a morale problem.

To quote a memo written by the Department of Homeland Security, “vulnerability in leadership is a vulnerability in homeland security.”

I could not agree more.

With such a diverse workforce there are bound to be inherent leadership challenges. But after nine years the Department continues to struggle with low employee morale.

DHS employees strongly believe in their work and mission. But what does it say when only 37% of DHS employees believe senior leaders motivate them and only 37% are satisfied with their senior leaders' policies and practices? Those numbers are some of the poor grades assigned to the Department's leadership in the Office of Personnel Management's Federal Viewpoints Survey.

This is unacceptable.

DHS's mission is the safety and security of this country and the success or failure of that mission depends on the people in that organization. We need to ensure our men and women on the front lines of securing our homeland have the support of the nation and their own leadership.

These hard-working individuals deserve the best the Department has to offer. Instead, DHS ranks 31 out of 33 federal organizations in the Best Places to Work survey.

We should also be concerned about the range of employee satisfaction in the various DHS subordinate agencies, especially the differences. The United States Coast Guard made gains this year in the survey and ranked 37 out of 240 subcomponents in the federal government while the Office of Science and Technology ranked 238 out of 240. Of course various DHS components have different mission sets but they should not have different mindsets.

Today we look forward to hearing from Admiral Thad Allen about building morale in organizations. As most of us know, Admiral Allen, besides a distinguished military career, led the successful response and cleanup of the Gulf oil spill.

Morale can drive an organization forward or it can fuel the fire of deeper discontent among employees, eventually compromising its mission. There is too much at stake for the American people to allow this to continue.

We hope to hear today what is causing low morale in DHS, how DHS plans to improve morale by communicating a vision, energizing staff and developing loyalty and a team mentality within its workforce. Without these essential elements the goal of developing what Secretary Napolitano wants, "One DHS," cannot be accomplished.

This is our fourth hearing examining DHS management issues. There is a sense of déjà' vu for anyone following these hearings. While I believe DHS management is working to address their problems and moving in the right direction, by their own admission they have a long road ahead.

Merely combining 22 agencies with the mission of "homeland security" will not produce better performance or a coherent policy. This is the job of leadership.

In order to create "One DHS", greater attention and focus needs to be placed on the issues we have highlighted over the past two months. Resolving the management issues such as developing a clear and focused strategy in line with budget allocations, technology integration and eliminating waste and duplication in the department are issues I believe will go a long way to improving workforce morale.

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