



Committee on
HOMELAND SECURITY
Chairman Michael McCaul

Opening Statement

October 29, 2013

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**Statement of Chairman Michael McCaul (R-Texas)
Committee on Homeland Security**

Full Committee Markup: HR 1095, HR 1204, HR 1791, HR 2719, HR 2952, and HR 3107

Remarks as Prepared

As we gather to consider today's bills, we are reminded of the devastation and personal loss caused by Hurricane Sandy just one year ago. We witnessed the power of nature's fury, but also that of the human spirit and the resolve of the people of NY, NJ and many other states along the East Coast and New England. We know many of Sandy's victims continue to struggle with the after effects of the storm. They still need help. To them I say: "you are not forgotten." As we consider today's legislation, we should be guided by that spirit.

The bills before us today span such critical areas as transportation security, infrastructure protection, cybersecurity, and emergency preparedness. Each is the result of vigorous oversight, stakeholder engagement, and strong collaboration with the members of this committee.

At the outset, I would like to recognize the work of my colleagues on the Committee: Chairmen Hudson, Meehan and Brooks, and Ranking Members Thompson, Richmond, Clarke, and Payne. I appreciate your commitment to protecting the homeland, and addressing some of our most difficult challenges.

The first bill we will consider today is **H.R. 2719, the "Transportation Security Acquisition Reform Act"**. TSA is by-and-large the public face of DHS. It has one of the largest budgets of any agency in the Department and - in light of the continuing threats posed to our aviation systems by al-Qaeda and its affiliates - one of the most critical missions.

Unfortunately, TSA still has a long way to go to provide the most effective and efficient security for the traveling public.

I believe H.R. 2719 is an important step toward greater TSA accountability. It requires the agency to develop a multiyear technology investment plan to serve as a roadmap for industry and shed new light on TSA spending decisions. It would also give Congress early warning when technology programs exceed their intended costs or timelines or do not provide the security results initially promised. It also requires TSA to get a handle on its broken inventory-management process, which has left almost \$200 million worth of equipment sitting in warehouses.

This bill was developed with valuable input from stakeholders and experts. I look forward to its consideration here today, and commend Chairman Hudson and Ranking Member Richmond for their leadership.

The second bill under consideration is **H.R. 1204, the “Aviation Security Stakeholder Participation Act of 2013”**, sponsored by Ranking Member Thompson. The bill would permanently authorize the Aviation Security Advisory Committee, or ASAC, which is a body comprised of airport operators, cargo and passenger airlines, and other industry and security experts that have a major stake in TSA’s security decisions.

Just months ago, there was a very public disagreement between TSA and our dedicated flight attendants over the proposed policy changes to allow small knives on airplanes. The reason this occurred was because of a failure to discuss the change with stakeholders early on in the process. I think many of my colleagues would agree that we do not want to see another public “battle ” between TSA and our aviation sector like this one.

The Aviation Security Advisory Committee established in this bill ensures that critical stakeholders are consulted at the outset, instead of after changes are made. The Committee has approved similar legislation previously and I want to thank the Ranking Member for his dedication to the issue.

The third bill is **H.R. 1095, the “TSA Loose Change Act”**, sponsored by my good friend, and Chairman of the Veterans’ Affairs Committee, Congressman Jeff Miller. Many of us can relate to inadvertently leaving behind pocket change at an airport checkpoint. That loose change adds up to roughly half a million dollars every year across the country. TSA is currently authorized to keep that money for its own use.

Chairman Miller has identified an opportunity, through his bill, to apply this money toward supporting a comfortable place to relax at airports for our nation’s military service members, rather than continuing to apply it toward TSA, a government agency with a \$7 billion annual budget. The bill has 42 bipartisan co-sponsors.

The fourth bill is **H.R. 2952, the “Critical Infrastructure Research and Development Advancement Act of 2013”**, sponsored by Chairman Meehan.

This legislation is vital in our nation’s efforts to protect our critical infrastructure from attacks. DHS has identified 16 sectors of the U.S. economy so vital that disruption or destruction would result in catastrophic life threatening or life-altering challenges. The CIRDA Act will assist DHS by encouraging the development and procurement of new technologies aimed at infrastructure protection.

I thank Chairman Meehan for his efforts in crafting thoughtful legislation that will enhance DHS's research and development tools, streamline its public-private coordination efforts, while ensuring that technological and product solutions are shared between DHS and its private sector partners.

This bill is a bipartisan effort that was passed out of subcommittee by voice vote, and I thank the Subcommittee Chairman and Ranking Member for their work.

Fifth is **H.R. 3107, the "Homeland Security Cybersecurity Boots-on-the-Ground Act"**, sponsored by Ranking Member Clarke.

H.R. 3107 includes important provisions to bolster the cybersecurity workforce at DHS. Across our nation, businesses, colleges and universities are transforming their organizations to include strong and robust cybersecurity practices. It is essential that DHS is hiring the best and the brightest that this emerging field has to offer. The Department's efforts to protect the homeland from an attack depend on it.

The legislation offered by Ms. Clarke was introduced and passed out of the subcommittee with bipartisan support. It will require the Department to take inventory of its cyber workforce, including those of other Federal agencies. Subsequently, the Secretary will be required to present to Congress a workforce strategy, focused on how to attract and maintain top cybersecurity experts.

Finally, we will consider **H.R. 1791, the "Medical Preparedness Allowable Use Act"**, introduced by Congressman Bilirakis, Mrs. Brooks and Mr. King. Mr. Bilirakis served as the Chairman of the Emergency Preparedness, Response and Communications Subcommittee last Congress, and of course Mrs. Brooks is the current Chairman of that Subcommittee.

This bill ensures that homeland security grant money will continue to be available for medical preparedness and helps state and local governments to prepare for and respond to the medical consequences of disasters. This bill is the product of a number of hearings on medical preparedness and medical countermeasures in the Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response and Communications last Congress and it passed the House last year on suspension by a vote of 397 – 1. It is strongly supported by first responder groups, including the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the Emergency Services Coalition for Medical Preparedness and the International Association of Emergency Managers.

I support each of these bills and look forward to today's mark-up.

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