



Committee on
HOMELAND SECURITY
Chairman Michael McCaul

Opening Statement

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**Statement of Subcommittee Chairman Martha McSally (R-Ariz.)
Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications**

“Subcommittee Markup of H.R. 1300, H.R. 2200, and H.R. 2206”

Remarks as Prepared

I’m pleased the Subcommittee is meeting today to consider three bipartisan bills that have been informed by hearings and briefings the Subcommittee has held this year.

We will first consider H.R. 2200, the *CBRN Intelligence and Information Sharing Act of 2015*. I introduced H.R. 2200 following the Subcommittee’s hearings on the threat of chemical and biological terrorism. As we heard from our witnesses at both of these hearings, information sharing with appropriate state and local officials and emergency response providers about these threats is critical.

My legislation seeks to increase the analysis and sharing of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) threat information. The bill is similar to legislation introduced by Congressman Meehan in the 112th and 113th Congresses and I appreciate his willingness to work with me and my staff on this issue.

We will next consider H.R. 1300, the *First Responder Anthrax Preparedness Act*, introduced by Congressman Peter King, former Chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security. This bill directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish a program to provide pre-event anthrax vaccinations, on a voluntary basis, to emergency response providers – those would be the first on the scene in the event of an anthrax attack.

It is vital that we work to protect our protectors and this bill seeks to do just that. In fact, I think it is fitting that we are considering this legislation during National Police Week and as we prepare to observe National EMS Week next week.

The program required by this bill is a long time coming. At a September 2012 hearing in this Subcommittee on biosurveillance, former Chairman Bilirakis asked the former Assistant Secretary of Health Affairs, Alexander Garza, about the timing for the establishment of this program. Dr. Garza

replied, “We’re fairly close to having this rolled out.” Two and a half years later, we’ve yet to have a first responder vaccinated.

That’s not to suggest there hasn’t been progress. I know the Office of Health Affairs has been working to establish this program. However, H.R. 1300 will establish timelines for its rollout and I appreciate the feedback that we received from the Office of Health Affairs as we were preparing for this markup.

This bill is supported by the International Association of Firefighters, the International Association of EMS Chiefs, and the Alliance for Biosecurity. I ask unanimous consent to insert their letters of support in the record along with a letter from the bill’s sponsors, Congressman King and Congressman Pascrell.

Finally, the Subcommittee will consider H.R. 2206, the *SWIC Enhancement Act*. As we discussed with Admiral Hewitt, the Director of the Department of Homeland Security’s Office of Emergency Communications earlier this year, Statewide Interoperability Coordinators, or SWICs, play an important role in ensuring emergency response providers in their states have the ability to communicate.

They complete Statewide Interoperable Communications Plans, ensure grant investments are coordinated state-wide, and oversee communications projects. Many SWICs also serve as the State Point of Contact to FirstNet for the design and construction of the Public Safety Broadband Network.

H.R. 2206 recognizes the importance of the role played by SWICs and requires governors to certify, as part of their applications for State Homeland Security Grant Program funds, that they have designated a person to serve as the SWIC or, if not, that the functions of a SWIC are being carried out in another manner.

In preparing for this markup, I reached out to the Director of the Arizona Department of Emergency Management to receive her feedback on this legislation. I am pleased to report that Arizona has a SWIC and that Ms. Smith-Reeve echoed the importance of that role and her support of this legislation.

I look forward to working with the Ranking Member and all the members of the Subcommittee on the bills before us this morning and I urge support of the three measures.

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