

Ranking Member Yvette D. Clarke (D-NY)
Opening Statement as prepared

**Subcommittee on CYBERSECURITY, INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION AND SECURITY
TECHNOLOGIES**
Committee on Homeland Security

“Securing Federal Facilities: Challenges of the Federal Protective Service and the Need for Reform”

July 13, 2011

We are here to examine the Federal Protective Service’s management of its contract guard service and its status within the National Protection and Programs Directorate.

FPS is responsible for safeguarding federal facilities.

FPS employs 13,000 contract security guards who protect 9,000 Federal buildings all over our nation.

Despite this important role, FPS has long been viewed as a step child within the Department.

Since FPS moved to the Department from the General Services Administration, poor management practices and funding issues have hampered its ability to fulfill its mission.

This Committee has held multiple hearings on FPS. GAO has issued several reports documenting the challenges FPS faces. Mr. Chairman, we know what the issues are facing FPS, and we are here today to find out what concrete solutions are being put in place.

I come from New York City--a well-known target for terrorist attacks.

I am a member of this Committee because I want the rest of this country to learn from New York’s experience.

Experience has taught the people of New York about the need for a robust protection of critical facilities.

In January, Ranking Member Thompson reintroduced H.R. 176, the Federal Protective Service Improvement and Accountability Act of 2011. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this bill.

This bill calls for improvement in FPS management, stabilization of FPS workforce and a study to determine the whether the conversion of contract guard staff into Federal employees would enhance the protection of federal facilities.

Mr. Chairman, we know the problems. The only question remaining is whether we have the will to solve them.

Here on Capitol Hill, we are fortunate. All of our buildings are protected by the Capitol police. As Members of Congress, we know that the Capitol police will stand between us and all threats.

Every person who works in or visits a federal building should share our sense of safety and the confidence we have in those who protect these hallowed halls.

I am sad to say that as long as doubts about training and contracting surround FPS, feelings of security and confidence would be misplaced.