

Ranking Member William Keating Opening Statement

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT, INVESTIGATIONS & MANAGEMENT

MARKUP OF H.R. 5913, *DHS ACCOUNTABILITY ACT*

Wednesday, August 1, 2012

Thank you Chairman McCaul for introducing H.R. 5913, the *DHS Accountability Act of 2012*. I was pleased to serve as an original co-sponsor of this measure and appreciate the bipartisan discussions that led to the introduction of the amended version we are considering today. This bill goes to the heart of this Subcommittee's mandate, and that is ensuring the effective management of the Department of Homeland Security.

According to the Committee on Homeland Security's oversight plan, among other things, this Subcommittee is responsible for "overseeing the Department of Homeland Security's day-to-day operations to ensure that it is operating in the most efficient and effective manner possible."

Ensuring the effective management of the Department of Homeland is not a partisan matter; and it should serve as a priority for all Members of this Committee and Congress as a whole because it is essential to our homeland security.

Since its inception, the Department of Homeland Security has faced significant management challenges - many of which stem from the very nature of its creation and the need to transform twenty-two legacy agencies into one cohesive, unified Department.

To its credit, the Department has come a long way since its inception, but more work remains to be done. Some may say that the issues confronted by the Department - low morale, aging IT systems, financial management challenges - are government-wide occurrences.

While this may be true, what sets the Department apart is its mission and the fact that its success has a direct correlation to our nation's security. So when it comes to getting it right, we have no time to waste.

The independent advisory panel established by H.R. 5913 will be charged with two main responsibilities: to comprehensively assess the management structure and capabilities related to the Department **and** make recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the management of the Department.

The legislation instructs the panel to examine five broad categories: (1) the efficiency and effectiveness of the management structure and capabilities; (2) whether unnecessary duplication exists; (3) the extent to which management of key homeland security missions is centralized under the Department; (4) options for reducing or eliminating, if appropriate, waste and duplication; and (5) measures used to evaluate the Department's progress in reducing and eliminating waste and duplication from its management structure and capabilities.

The experts that will comprise this panel are also mandated to consult with and leverage the work performed and recommendations made by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) in its previous work examining the management structure and capabilities of the Department and additional matters currently under review pursuant to requests made by myself and Chairman McCaul.

Further, this bill touches on the larger issue of waste and duplication within the agency. Targeting these examples will supply us with a leaner, more easily managed Department and will bring us one bipartisan step closer to a reduced deficit.

I am pleased to serve as an original cosponsor of H.R. 5913, and urge my colleagues to support its passage.