

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****TSA's Recent Scanner Shuffle: Real Strategy or Wasteful Smokescreen?***

November 15, 2012 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Transportation Security subcommittee hearing entitled “TSA’s Recent Scanner Shuffle: Real Strategy or Wasteful Smokescreen?”:

“This hearing will provide an opportunity to examine TSA’s procurement and use of machines located at airport checkpoints all over this country.

As we know, this generation of machines, called advanced imaging technology or A-I-T, were purchased and installed after the failed Christmas day bomber plot.

When they were deployed, Congress asked that these machines be equipped with technology that would not only allow for the detection of dangerous concealed items, but we also asked that the machines perform their function without compromising the bodily integrity of the passenger. That did not seem like too much to ask, but apparently it was.

Recently, TSA announced plans to relocate some of the A-I-T machines. Three years ago, we were told that these machines were the best technology on the market. It appears that TSA’s decision to relocate these machines is based on the inability of these machines to quickly scan passengers.

And while the challenges surrounding the utility of these machines is troubling, I am interested in understanding why TSA plans on placing 91 of these machines in a warehouse. That constitutes roughly \$16 million dollars worth of security equipment in a warehouse. I hope this hearing will explain that decision.

Before yielding back Mr. Chairman, I must confess that there are a few other things I need to understand today. I was bewildered by the Majority’s decision not to accommodate our request for a witness at today’s hearing. This subcommittee has a rich history of true bipartisanship.

Yet the decision to deny the Democrats a witness because of “time constraints” not only infringes upon the basic rights of the Minority, but also unnecessarily undermines the working relationship that has led to the many accomplishments of this subcommittee. Although our witness was not allowed to appear, I hope you allow the written statement of the Electronic Privacy Information Center to be entered in the record.”

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