

RANKING MEMBER RON BARBER (D-AZ) OPENING STATEMENT

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY

“Facility Protection: Implications of the Navy Yard Shooting on Homeland Security”

October 30, 2013

Thank you, Chairman Duncan, for holding this very important hearing to examine how extensively standards for federal facility security are being followed to ensure the safety of federal personnel and visitors to these buildings.

Across the country, we are experiencing a rise in attempts by individuals to shoot at or otherwise attack federal facilities, and it is both timely and critical that we hear today from Department officials and other witnesses about the efficacy of the standards put in place by the Interagency Security Committee to protect our people as well federal facilities.

In addition to my own personal experience as the unintended victim of a shooting incident, we seem to get all too frequent news reports of attempts by mentally unstable or disgruntled individuals who open fire at federal facilities.

I will be interested to hear today from the witnesses how effective they think the Interagency Security Committee has been to date not only in establishing a set of physical security standards, but also in providing enough guidance to federal agencies and departments to increase their adoption of these standards.

It is not sufficient to issue standards—it is also incumbent upon the Interagency Security Committee and the Federal Protective Service, or FPS as the implementing agency to make sure that executive branch agencies understand how the government’s standards for physical security can best be utilized.

In the Government Accountability Office or GAO report issued at Ranking Member Thompson’s request in January, GAO states that the Interagency Security Committee’s standards are frequently the second choice of federal physical security managers after their own institutional knowledge.

This is a troubling finding by GAO, and given the recent uptick in attempted shootings at federal facilities, it is incumbent upon all of us to assist the Interagency Security Committee in strengthening its outreach and guidance regarding its standards for the safety of all federal personnel and visitors.

In addition, GAO states in their testimony that federal facility security is further jeopardized by FPS’ ongoing mismanagement of its contract guard force, and alarmingly, but the agency’s failure to ensure that its guards receive the required active shooter response training that would best prepare them to protect federal facilities.

Further, GAO’s testimony indicates that FPS and several other federal agencies are not currently using an appropriate methodology to assess risk at federal facilities which only increases the vulnerability of those who work in or visit federal buildings. I look forward to hear the witnesses address these and other pertinent issues related to federal facility security.