

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****Facility Protection: Implications of the Navy Yard Shooting on Homeland Security***

October 30, 2013 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency hearing entitled “Facility Protection: Implications of the Navy Yard Shooting on Homeland Security”:

“The purpose of this hearing is to review the security protocols in place to safeguard federal facilities and the federal personnel who work within them, and the visitors to those buildings. I am a long-standing observer of the Federal Protective Service, or FPS, and at the beginning of this Congress, I reintroduced my legislation, H.R. 735, the Federal Protective Service Improvement and Accountability Act of 2013. My legislation seeks to move FPS away from its over reliance on contract security guards, and to instead build up the agency’s internal capacity.

Also, at my request, the Government Accountability Office has produced ten reports related to FPS, the most recent of which pertains to today’s topic of federal facility security protocols and which was released in January of this year. We are all cognizant of the recent shooting at the Navy Yard on September 16, yet incidents of active shooters who breach federal facilities have become all too commonplace.

In my own home district of Jackson, Mississippi, a man was arrested on October 2 for attempting to walk inside the Veterans Affairs regional affairs office with a pistol and was then recommended to undergo a psychiatric evaluation. Some other recent examples of individuals who have attempted to open fire on federal facilities include a former police officer in Wheeling, West Virginia who fired more than 20 shots at a federal courthouse located there on October 8 of this year;

On February 15, 2012, an ICE agent shot and killed one colleague and wounded another in the federal building in Long Beach, California; and A bag containing an improvised explosive device, or IED was left undetected for several weeks inside the federal building in Detroit, Michigan in February 2011. An FPS contract guard brought the bag inside the building and placed in under a screening console where the IED remained in the bag until it was discovered 21 days later.

Clearly, we must ensure that the personnel who oversee physical security programs at our federal facilities are adhering closely to the uniform set of standards provided by the Interagency Security Committee. In 1995, after the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah federal building in Oklahoma City, President Bill Clinton signed Executive Order 12977. As an outcome of Executive Order 12977, the Interagency Security Committee was created to produce a coherent set of physical security standards that can be tailored to meet the diverse needs of federal agencies and departments.

This hearing should allow us to determine how closely federal agencies and departments are complying with the Interagency Committee’s security protocols, and demonstrate what remaining outreach work DHS must undertake to make sure that its physical security protocols are being implemented and adhered to in the interest of national safety.”

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