

Ranking Member Barber Opening Statement

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY

MARKUP OF:

H.R. 4228, “DHS ACQUISITION ACCOUNTABILITY AND EFFICIENCY ACT”

2:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Thank you for introducing H.R. 4228, the “*DHS Acquisition Accountability and Efficiency Act*” and taking the lead on this important legislation. I was pleased to serve as an original co-sponsor of this measure and commend the bipartisan discussions that led to the introduction of the bill we are considering today.

This bill goes to the heart of this Subcommittee’s goal to ensure the effective management of the Department of Homeland Security. It is this subcommittee’s responsibility to ensure the Department spends taxpayer dollars wisely. And I take that responsibility seriously as Ranking Member.

Each year, the Department spends approximately one-fourth of its entire budget on procuring goods and services. Currently, there are approximately 135 programs that are defined by the Department as “major acquisitions.” Of these 135 programs, 75% have an estimated life-cycle cost of more than \$300 million each. Over the last four years, the Department has taken steps to improve the management of its acquisitions. The establishment of the Office of Program Accountability and Risk Management, or PARM, has resulted in better outcomes for the Department

However, much more work remains to be done to ensure an efficient and effective acquisition process. In particular, until all Components fully participate in the acquisitions process and follow Department-wide directives, cost-overruns and scheduling delays will continue to impede the Department’s success.

I have seen taxpayer dollars wasted on projects that over-promised and under-delivered, where the absence of these requirements has led to inefficient spending of taxpayer dollars and ineffective programs. According to the Government Accountability Office, costs increased from \$19.7 billion in 2008 to \$52.2 billion in 2011, **an increase of 166%** in 16 of the Department’s major acquisitions.

H.R. 4228 seeks to remedy these problems by creating a process to prevent programs from going over-budget and off-schedule in the first place and correcting those that veer off course. Where the Department’s acquisition process has been effective – such as the PARM, this bill codifies those structures and turns what was once paper into law.

H.R. 4228 will ensure, for the first time, that the entire Department participates in the Acquisition Review Board process. It will also ensure that the Department maximizes opportunities for small businesses and will ensure that Congress is notified when major acquisition programs fail to meet cost or schedule baselines.

I am committed to bringing transparency, accountability, and consistency to Department operations. This bill will apply those principles to the Department’s acquisition process, will save taxpayer money, and will help the Department efficiently fulfill its mission. I am proud to work with Congressman Duncan on this important legislation and am pleased to serve as an original cosponsor of H.R. 4228.