

Opening Statement by Ranking Member Bonnie Watson Coleman

Markup of H.R. 1615, 1626, 1633, 1640, 1646

Subcommittee on Oversight and Management Efficiency

May 13, 2015

I appreciate this opportunity to consider a number of legislative measures that seek to help the Department of Homeland Security address certain management and planning issues as well as an emerging homeland security issue—the security risks posed by drones in U.S. airspace.

At the outset, let me say that I think this Subcommittee is uniquely positioned to improve the accountability, efficiency, and performance of the Department of Homeland Security.

By constructively engaging the Department about its management challenges, including its gaps in human capital and resources, we can help the Department fulfill its vital homeland and non-homeland security missions. The bills on the agenda today are in that spirit.

They are:

- H.R. 1615, legislation regarding the Department's processing of requests under the Freedom of Information Act;
- H.R. 1626, a bill to address Department's management of information technology systems;
- H.R. 1633, a measure primarily focused on establishing Department-wide systems for tracking and reporting paid administrative leave;
- H.R. 1640, a bill regarding the DHS headquarters consolidation project; and
- H.R. 1646, legislation I introduced that directs the Department to analyze, research and address the security risks posed by small and medium-sized drones operating in U.S. airspace.

While, individually, each of these bills has some merit and potential for cost savings, they also place new mandates on the Department that, to my knowledge are not anticipated in the Department's pending budget request. As such, down the road, it may be important for this committee to explore whether the authorization of additional appropriations or personnel resources may make sense.

We would not want to put the Department's top managers or, for that matter, a component head, such as the Commissioner of Customs and Border Protection, in a position of having to divert their limited resources from core activities including critical homeland security missions, to meet new, unfunded, mandates.

This is not a vague notion. In fact the President of the National Treasury Employees Union, which represents 25,000 CBP Officers, made this very point in a letter to me dated May 11, 2015. With that, I look forward to consideration of these measures and yield back the balance of my time.