

Ranking Member Brian Higgins (D-NY) Opening Statement

Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence

Markup

Thursday, September 17, 2015

311 Cannon House Office Building

I appreciate the opportunity to consider these legislative measures today. Together, these five measures advance the important goals of making the Department more effective and enhancing the security of our country.

The first one I would like to discuss is H.R. 3350, the “Know CBRN Threats to Transportation Act.” A bill I introduced in July that speaks to a timely homeland security concern.

Terrorists and militant groups have expressed an interest in using weapons of mass destruction, *especially chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear materials*, to carry out attacks.

My bill addresses the threats associated with the transporting of such materials on our roadways and across our land borders. It does so by specifically directing the Office of Intelligence and Analysis to conduct an assessment of the risks associated with the transportation of chemical, biological, nuclear, and radiological materials.

The other Democratic-sponsored bill we will consider is H.R. 3505, the “Department of Homeland Security Clearance Management and Administration Act,” as introduced by Ranking Member Thompson.

It seeks to improve how the Department goes about managing its security clearance process and, if enacted, has the potential of not only improving how the Department administers its clearance program but, by requiring the Department to do a better job of designing positions that require a clearance, has the potential of saving taxpayer dollars.

Today, we will also be considering a related measure, authored by Chairman King. H.R. 3361, the “Department of Homeland Security Insider Threat and Mitigation Act of 2015” is timely, as a survey published by “Federal Times” yesterday reflected that 45 percent of Federal agencies have employees or contractors that tried to access or take unauthorized data over the last year.

The final two bills under consideration tackle longstanding bipartisan goals to provide better support for the National Network of Fusion Centers in important ways. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of all of the legislation being considered today.