



## HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE

### Statement of Subcommittee Chairman Peter T. King (R-NY) Counterterrorism and Intelligence Subcommittee

“Sixteen Years After 9/11: Assessing Suspicious Activity Reporting Efforts”

September 13, 2017

Remarks as Prepared

In the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001, a series of new words and phrases entered the American vernacular “Ground Zero,” “Al Qaeda,” “connect the dots,” and others, became commonplace practically overnight. In the years that followed, one new phrase dominated advertising space and the public’s attention at train stations, airports, sporting venues and more. It reflected the commitment Americans made in the hours and days after the attack to work together to prevent the next major attack — a mutual pledge to remain vigilant for threats to the homeland: “If You See Something, Say Something.”

No phrase better captures the critical role that the American public plays in reporting suspicious activity to law enforcement. See Something, Say something underscores the value of efficient and effective information sharing: the public shares information with the authorities who subsequently analyze, collaborate, and respond to potential terrorist threats. This valuable phrase was created by the New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and they continue to dedicate resources to promote this campaign and share the trademark with DHS and other entities.

Today, just over sixteen years after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, this Subcommittee is meeting to review the progress made in ensuring DHS and other law enforcement agencies are working together to evaluate tips and leads provided by the public. The National Suspicious Activity Reporting Initiative (NSI) is a joint effort by DHS and FBI which allows state and local partners to share information that they receive from the public and send to our federal partners for further investigation. It is an integral part of the homeland security landscape — but of course it is reliant on an engaged public and sustained cooperation and support between all levels of law enforcement.

The witnesses appearing with us today represent each level of this partnership. Each will speak to the value that programs like the NSI provide at the Federal, State, and local level, as well as the challenges of educating the public about the threats we face as a nation and how best to effectively work together.

These issues are often in the background of our busy lives and they are frequently overlooked. However, nearly all terrorist incidents, from attacks such as 9/11, to the more recent attacks such as the San Bernardino shooting to the Boston Marathon bombing— among many more in between — highlight issues with public reporting or ongoing challenges with interagency cooperation.

Ensuring programs like the Nationwide SAR Initiative and corresponding public awareness campaigns continue is vital and a major priority for this Subcommittee. “If you see something, Say Something” has not only been a clever reminder for travelers to keep their eyes open, but it truly reflects some of the most important lessons learned after the 2001 attacks.

The public must remain vigilant and determined to report possible threats to our nation. Federal, state, and local departments and agencies responsible for keeping people safe must work together.

I am therefore pleased to welcome our witnesses to today’s hearing and look forward to their testimony.

###