

Statement of the Ranking Member Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX)
Subcommittee on Transportation Security
Committee on Homeland Security

Hearing “TSA Reform: Exploring Innovations in Technology Procurement to Stimulate Job Growth”

September 22, 2011

TSA and the Science and Technology Directorate at DHS are tasked with the critical mission of delivering technologies that can improve transportation security. I cannot overstate the importance of this mission.

Given the risks to our aviation and mass transit sectors, it is imperative that we take a close look at how DHS integrates an effective security technology approach into our transportation security programs.

Last Congress, this Subcommittee took the first step in this evaluation.

I held a hearing exploring the Department’s effectiveness in acquiring and deploying passenger screening technologies and procedures.

Coordination between the Science and Technology Directorate and the Transportation Security Administration is essential to ensuring that the best technology is deployed in a systematic way.

We cannot address emerging threats with an ad hoc practice and a lack of process.

To be clear, Mr. Chairman, the Department has come a long way since its establishment but more must be done to ensure an effective research, and development program that leads to purchases in the real world.

However, because my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have proposed to slash S&T’s budget below the President’s FY 12 request, I have little hope that S&T will be able to fulfill its mission.

We ask the Department to improve efficiency, delivery and coordination efforts but we want them to do this with inadequate funding.

Doing more with less is a good campaign slogan, but it does not explain how we get the necessary research and development done.

And it doesn’t explain how we keep this nation safe from emerging threats.

Mr. Chairman, I know from my discussions with you, that we share the same commitment to securing our Nation’s transportation systems.