

## **Statement of Ranking Member Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX)**

### **Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security Committee on Homeland Security**

#### **MARKUP of H.R. 1417, the “Border Security Results Act of 2013” Wednesday, April 24, 2013**

I am proud to have introduced this bill with my colleague from Texas, Chairman McCaul, Ranking Member Thompson and the Chair of this subcommittee, Mrs. Miller. It reflects years of oversight into how DHS is executing its border security mission.

Already this Congress, our Subcommittee has held hearings on achieving “operational control” of America’s borders and measuring the Department of Homeland Security’s progress toward that goal.

The measure before us today has been informed by much of what we heard from DHS and other witnesses at those hearings. I would note that, like the gentlewoman from Michigan, I am dismayed that the Department has not provided timely technical assistance on H.R. 1417 in advance of today’s markup.

I understand we will be receiving that assistance as the bill moves to the Full Committee. I look forward to working with DHS and my partners on the other side of the aisle to further refine this measure, as it moves through the legislative process, to ensure that H.R. 1417 is a robust bill with achievable benchmarks.

As to border metrics, our hearings have underscored the importance of Congress having an accurate picture of the state of our borders, so that we can measure progress and identify areas for improvement.

The legislation before us today will require DHS to develop and implement rigorous border security metrics. Based in part on these metrics, the measure requires the Secretary of Homeland Security to certify to Congress when the Department has achieved operational control of the borders.

These provisions will help DHS better quantify what is a difficult concept to capture in numbers – the extent to which our Nation’s borders are secure.

I have long advocated for a comprehensive, DHS-wide strategy for achieving border security that would bring together the various components, personnel, and resources that play a role in the Department’s border security mission.

I am particularly pleased that the measure requires DHS to develop a strategy and implementation plan for achieving situational awareness and operational control of our borders. Given that Congress has provided unprecedented border security resources over the last decade, it is especially important that the Department use those resources in a coordinated fashion that gives us the best return on our limited border security dollars.

Taken as a whole, the measure before us today is an important step forward in the ongoing discussions in Congress on border security and immigration matters.

I would like thank Chairman Miller for the bipartisan nature of those discussions thus far. I believe our efforts offer an example of the progress Members of both parties can make when we work cooperatively, and I look forward to continued cooperation on this and other matters before the Subcommittee.