

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****Statement of Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson*****Examining TSA's Cadre of Criminal Investigators***

January 28, 2014 (Washington) – Today, Committee on Homeland Security Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS) delivered the following prepared remarks for the Transportation Security subcommittee hearing entitled “Examining TSA’s Cadre of Criminal Investigators”:

“Last September, the Department of Homeland Security’s Office of Inspector General released a report that was highly critical of the way the Office of Inspection classifies its employees and documents its work.

The OIG report was not the first to identify inefficiencies within TSA’s Office of Inspection. Indeed, it is the third such report in the last three years to come to the same conclusion. In 2011, TSA’s Office of Human Capital conducted a position management review of the Office of Inspection and found that its workload did not support the number of criminal investigators in the office.

Following this review, the Office of Human Capital contracted with a private company to conduct a comprehensive position classification audit of the Office of Inspection. The result was the same; positions were found to have been misclassified.

The findings of a single report may be the result of anomalies or misunderstandings. Three consecutive reports conducted by distinct entities with the same conclusions cannot be so easily dismissed. Clearly, reforms within the Office of Inspection are in order.

I can assure you that if TSA does not act to see that the office is reorganized and made more efficient, this Committee will take it upon itself to mandate the reforms needed. When Congress established TSA in 2001, it gave the agency broad authority to set its personnel practices as it saw fit to best accomplish its critical mission. With that authority comes a great deal of responsibility.

Unfortunately, it appears TSA’s Office of Inspection has not been a responsible steward of its authority to classify positions. As a result, the office has more employees designated as criminal investigators than any independent audit shows they need. This dynamic has resulted in increased cost to taxpayers and less efficiency within a critical component of TSA.

To the witnesses here today from TSA, Mr. Allison and Ms. Shelton Waters, I look forward to hearing from you about the steps you intend to take to address the findings and recommendations in the Inspector General’s report.

Beyond the concerns I have about classification of employees within the Office of Inspection, I am gravely concerned by the Inspector General’s finding that management at TSA may not be able to rely on the office’s work.

As Assistant Administrator Allison’s written testimony points out, the Office of Inspection’s mission is to ensure the integrity, efficiency, and effectiveness of TSA’s workforce, operations, and programs.

If structural and organizational flaws within the Office of Inspection compromise its ability to

perform its mission, the entire agency suffers.

If those same deficiencies result in the Administrator not being able to rely on the office's work, we have a much bigger problem on our hands.

Both the Administrator and the workforce must have confidence that the Office of Inspection is an efficient and effective entity that holds itself to the highest possible standard. The Inspector General's report calls that into question.

To all of the witnesses appearing before us today, I thank you for appearing and for your service. It is my hope that today's hearing will allow for a productive dialog whereby solutions to the problems that have plagued the Office of Inspection since long before Assistant Administrator Allison took over responsibility for the office can be identified."

# # #

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Please contact Adam Comis at (202) 225-9978

United States House of Representatives  
Committee on Homeland Security  
H2-117, Ford House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515  
Phone: (202) 226-2616 | Fax: (202) 226-4499  
<http://chsdemocrats.house.gov>