

**Full Committee Markup**  
**Committee on Homeland Security**  
**Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-CA) Opening Statement**  
**June 11, 2014**

I am pleased that the Full Committee is meeting to consider legislation that will enhance border security, transportation security, and emergency preparedness and response. As the former chairwoman and member of the Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee, I am pleased that we are considering H.R. 3202, the “Essential Transportation Worker Identification Credential Assessment Act”, H.R. 3488, legislation setting forth requirements for CBP’s preclearance program, and H.R. 3846, the United States Customs and Border Protection Authorization Act.”

H.R. 3202 seeks to ensure that Transportation Worker Identification Credential program, as implemented by TSA and the Coast Guard, deliver the security benefits that Congress envisioned in the SAFE Port Act of 2006. We have worked hard, on a bipartisan basis, to make this program work. However, as documented by the Government Accountability Office, TWIC has not lived up to our expectations and working-class Americans whose livelihoods depend on accessing ports have borne the brunt. Longshoremen are paying hard earned money for biometric cards that today are essentially “flash passes.” If DHS’ end-state vision for this program is for only a few ports to install biometric readers, as seems to be the case, then workers should get some relief and be offered more affordable TWIC cards without a biometric capability. That’s the crux of an amendment that Ranking Member Thompson filed in advance of today’s markup.

Turning to preclearance, many Members of Congress have serious concerns about the deal that the prior DHS Leadership cut to establish preclearance operations in Abu Dhabi. Over 150 Members of Congress cosponsored H.R. 3488 out of concern about the potential impact this expansion could have on U.S. air carriers who, all too often, are denied opportunities by foreign governments to access their airports. It is critical that even as we consider Chairman McCaul’s amendment-in-the-nature-of-a-substitute, we not lose sight of this concern and stand strong against foreign states that may seek to dictate how we operate the ingress and egress into our country. Further, I strongly believe that establishment of such programs should always be done at a risk-based manner. I am all for “pushing out the borders” but we must do so in a way that makes us more secure, does not divert limited CBP staffing resources, and does not harm U.S. carriers. Before turning to the next measure, I would like to acknowledge Mr. Meehan, a real leader on this issue. He has worked tirelessly, alongside Ms. Jackson-Lee, Mr. DeFazio, and others to address these concerns.

The last bill out of the BMS Subcommittee was authored by Chairman Miller and, importantly, seeks to authorize CBP for the first time since the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security. This bill is a bipartisan product that has been a give and take. In Subcommittee, Chairwoman Miller negotiated in good faith with me regarding language on the electronic search and seizure and standards at short term detention facilities, including limiting the practice of night time repatriation. Today, I plan to offer amendments to further improve this bill and look forward to working with the gentlelady from Michigan to move this bill forward.

I know that there are a number of amendments that were filed that speak to the current crisis that the Federal government is undertaking to address the unprecedented number of unaccompanied alien children, mostly from Central America, who are seeking safety in the U.S. I would urge my colleagues to work with me to address this issue responsibly and humanely and resist the urge to politicize the situation.

Out of the Emergency Preparedness Subcommittee, we have two bills that will advance preparedness at a number of critical levels. Rep. Brooks' Social Media Working Group bill is a critical step in modernizing the way our country responds to a crisis and natural disasters. With the development of various platforms of social media, like Google, Twitter and Facebook, we have new ways to inform people during a time of emergency. I commend Mrs. Brooks of Indiana on her forward-thinking approach to this homeland security challenge.

Another homeland security challenge that we are all-too-well-aware-of is the Department's lack of interoperability. I commend the gentleman from New Jersey for introducing this critical bill in ensuring that DHS, within itself, can communicate to the different components under the umbrella of DHS. Another place where the challenge of interoperability came into sharp focus was in my own back yard, at LAX, when a shooter opened fire and targeted Transportation Security Officers. As someone who travels to and from LAX weekly, I was shocked to hear about the shootings at that airport last November.

Through the oversight conducted by Mr. Hudson and Mr. Richmond on the Transportation Security Subcommittee, we have a better understanding of what steps need to be taken to enhance preparedness and response, particularly with respect to active shooters. It is heartbreaking that it took the death of a dedicated Transportation Security Officer and the injuring of others to bring into focus what needs to be done but I hope we can come together to advance this legislation and raise the level of security across this country for the men and women that work and use our nation's airports.

In these tight budgetary times, no Federal agency has a dollar to waste. However, that seems to be what is going on at TSA, in the Office of Inspections. Legislation introduced by Rep. Sanford seeks to ensure accountability in that office and demands only those individuals who qualify as "criminal investigators" are designated as such. I plan to offer an amendment to that bill regarding the Federal Air Marshall and their ability to purchase firearms for personal use.

It mirrors language already adopted by the Homeland Security Appropriations Committee and hope to get your support in this effort.

Finally, I want to express my support for legislation that Mr. Richmond introduced, the "Honor Flight Act." Last week, I had the opportunity to attend the 70th Anniversary of D-Day in Normandy. Ensuring that these veterans are treated with the respect and honor they deserve when they visit the monuments dedicated to their service is our solemn obligation in this House. I wholeheartedly support Mr. Richmond's legislation.